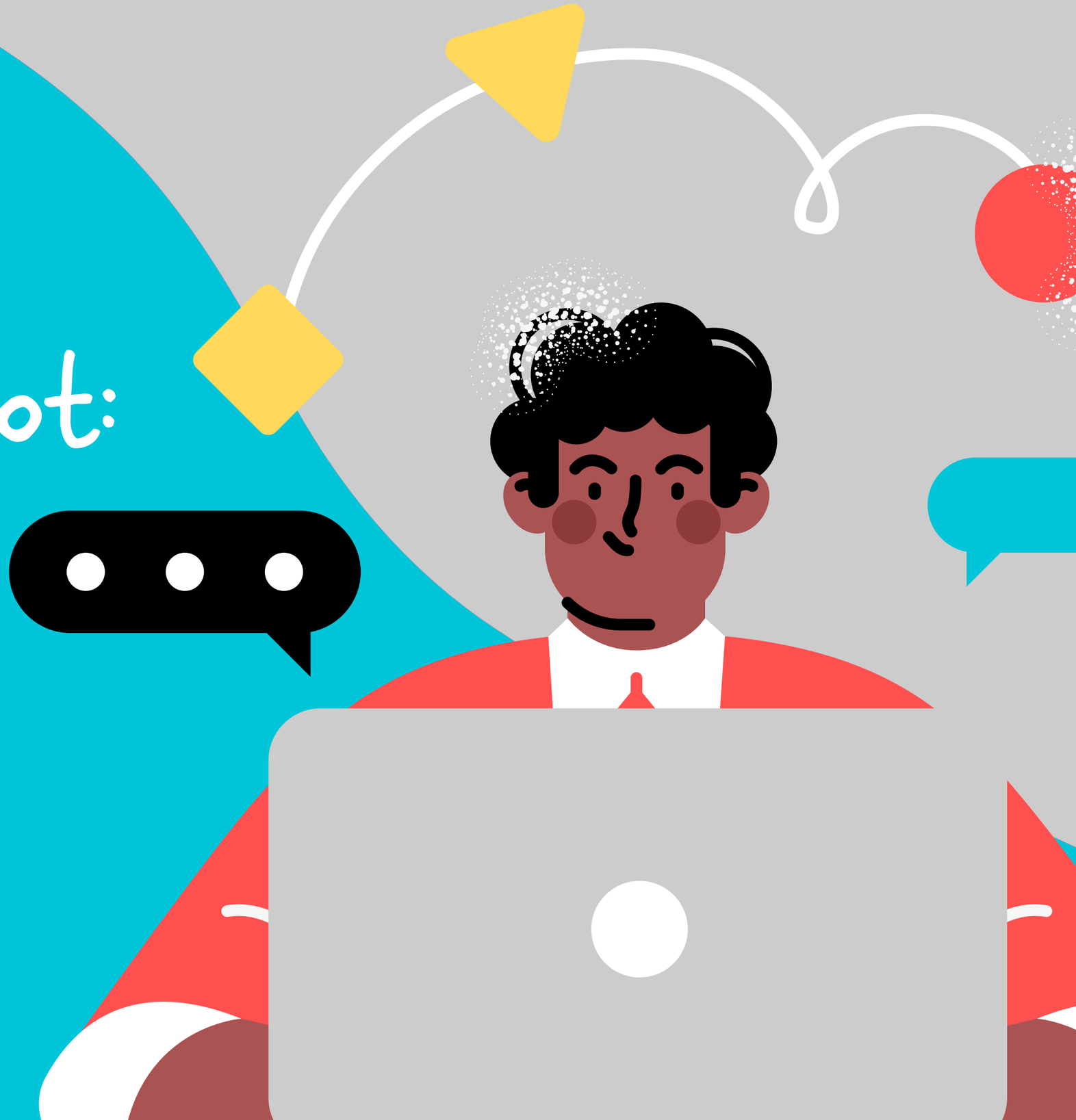
Resume Reboot:

Get Noticed.
Get the Interview.
Get Hired!



IS YOUR RESUME READY FOR A NEW ECONOMY?

Remember the old days? Like, early 2020. Back in the before-times when the dynamics of the job market were completely different.

Times have changed dramatically since then. COVID disrupted the economy and reshaped the labor market. This has had a major impact. Jobs, and the skills needed to perform them, have evolved.

Has your resume kept pace?

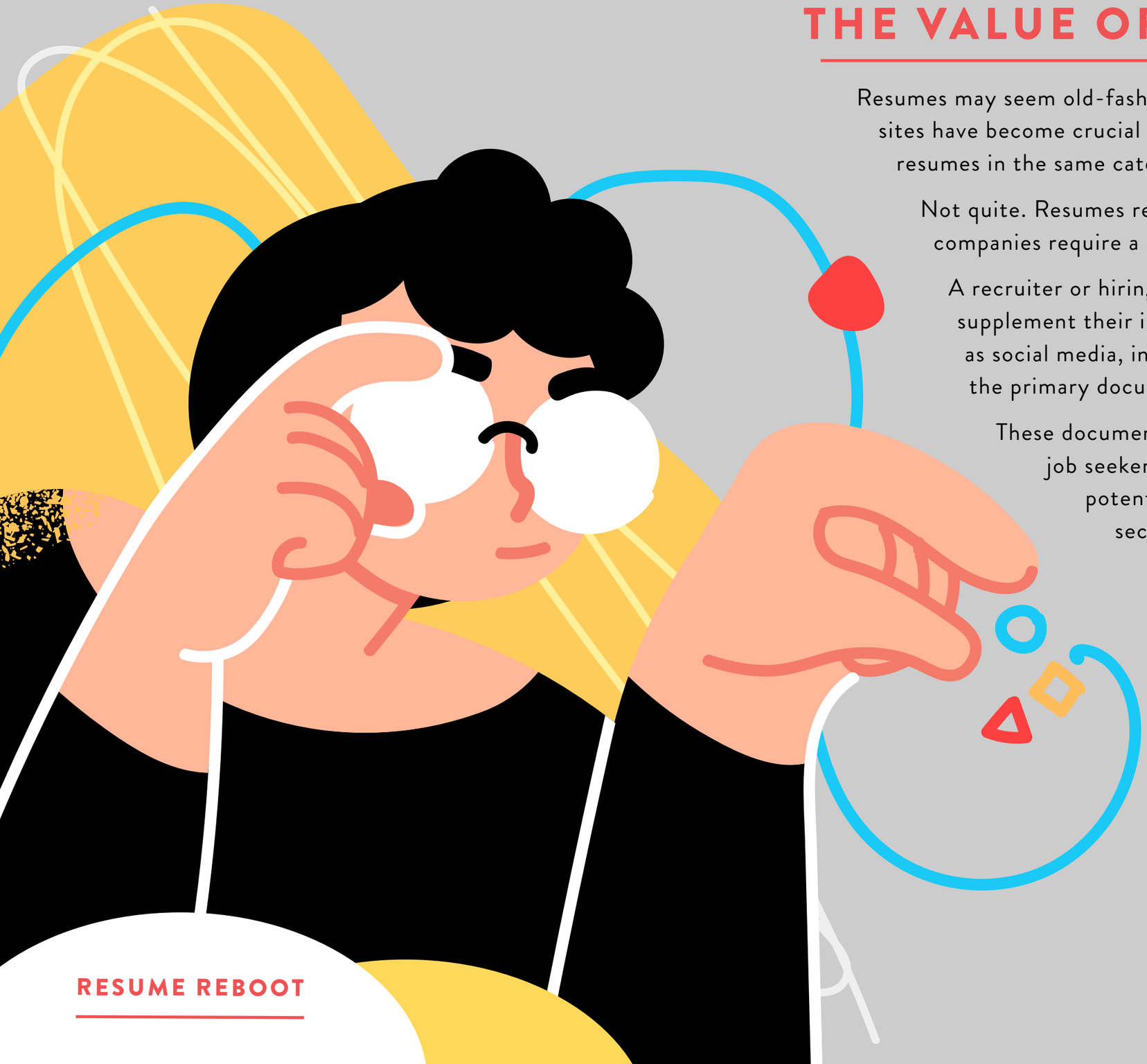
Probably not – but that's OK! Resume changes tend to lag behind developments. Your career and your overall industry could have utterly transformed before you had time to update your resume.

TIME TO CATCH UP.

Here's how to retool your resume, so it stands out. We'll also show you how to position yourself as an ideal candidate. With these tips, you'll land more interviews and eventually receive more offers.

Here's what we'll cover:

- How a resume is a critical job-search tool
- Biggest resume mistakes to avoid
- How to choose the right format and design
- How to capture a recruiter's or hiring manager's attention
- How to highlight transferable, soft, and virtual work skills
- How to address COVID work gaps and other career disruptions
- How to showcase temporary work experiences



THE VALUE OF RESUMES

Resumes may seem old-fashioned. After all, LinkedIn and other social media sites have become crucial parts of the job-search process. Doesn't that put resumes in the same category as VHS tapes and printed newspapers?

Not quite. Resumes remain an important part of the process. Most companies require a resume as part of the initial application process.

A recruiter or hiring manager won't stop at a resume. They will supplement their information gathering with other sources, such as social media, interviews, and references. But resumes represent the primary document for centering a recruiting effort.

These documents provide a critical tool for you as well. As a job seeker, your resume becomes your introduction to a potential employer. It also offers your main route to securing an interview.

Resumes let you:

- Outline your work history.
- List your qualifications.
- Highlight your soft skills.
- Detail your education.
- Explain your value as an employee.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO UPDATE YOUR RESUME REGULARLY

When you have a job you like, updating your resume may seem like unnecessary work. It could even feel disloyal. If you're a superstitious type, you might even view the process as jinxing your success.

Don't let these concerns get in your way. Updating your resume is a normal part of career development. You should do it even if you don't plan to apply for a new job.

However, if you are considering a change, reviewing your resume becomes a crucial first step. Before applying for any new positions, a full resume assessment should be your first step.

Here are some reasons to keep your resume up to date:

RECRUITERS AND HR MANAGERS GIVE MORE WEIGHT TO RECENT EXPERIENCE

Ever hear the expression, "What have you done for me lately?" That's the position taken by most recruiters and hiring managers.

The older your professional experience, the less relevant it becomes in a job-search process. Your top selling points should come from the most recent stops on your work history. As such, an out-of-date resume becomes supremely irrelevant.

YOUR CAREER CONDITIONS CAN CHANGE AT ANY TIME

The main lesson of 2020: Be ready for anything. Keeping your resume current lets you stay prepared for any sudden change in your job situation.

You might feel satisfied in your current position, not even considering a jump to a new employer. Then, an unexpected event can send you seeking a new opportunity. This can happen in any number of ways:

- Major alterations to the economic landscape (i.e., recession, pandemic, etc.).
- Your company gets bought out.
- You get laid off.
- You get a new manager with whom you have trouble working.
- You get passed over for a promotion.

Whatever the case, you might need to find a new job quickly. An up-to-date resume leaves you ready to act at any moment. You can start submitting applications as soon as you spot an opportunity.

YOU SHOULD ALWAYS LOOK FOR THE NEXT CAREER UPGRADE

You don't need an external push to find a new job. To drive your professional development, you should constantly be scouting new opportunities.

Hopefully, you can move ahead in your current organization. However, this isn't always possible. If your career starts to stagnate, you want your resume ready to begin investigating new horizons.

STAY ALERT FOR OPPORTUNITIES

At the same time, you never know what unexpected opportunities could arise. Say you're at a conference and a client you respect asks for a copy of your work history. Or maybe a coveted position opens up in your own company and they need to make a decision quickly.

Can you send them a current version of your resume? Or will you have to rush to bring it up to date?

Routinely updating your resume opens you up to any possibility. With an updated version, you can jump on any potential chance to advance.

RESUMES: THE ULTIMATE MIRRORS FOR YOUR CAREER

When you want to see whether your exercise routine is working or your new outfit suits you, what do you do? You head to the mirror, right? (OK, maybe you take a selfie, but the same dynamics apply.)

Resumes let you do the same thing. Updating your work history lets you look closely at your career. Even if you plan on staying with the same company for the long haul, you can learn a lot from the process.

You might not apply for a new job right now. In fact, you might not even show the new resume to anyone else. But the mere act of updating your work history will give you insights into your career.

KEEP PUSHING YOUR DEVELOPMENT FORWARD

To maintain career momentum, you should continually add skills and experience. If you haven't learned something new since your last resume update, that points to a possible problem. Your professional development may have hit a slow patch.

Updating your resume lets you identify this problem. You'll see what you've learned since the last time. If you're disappointed with your progress, you can figure out what steps you need to take to jumpstart your development.

BIGGEST RESUME MISTAKES TO AVOID

As you update your resume, be careful not to add problems that weren't there before. Keep in mind these common resume mistakes:

1. **BASIC ERRORS:** Grammar or spelling mistakes can end your candidacy before it even starts. Mercilessly proofread your resume so every detail can pass the closest scrutiny.
2. **INSUFFICIENT CONTACT INFO:** Employers aren't going to launch a search party to find you. If communicating with you becomes a challenge, they will move on to other candidates. Make sure your contact info (preferably phone number and email address) is easy to find on your resume.
3. **TOO MUCH INFORMATION:** Yes, recruiters and hiring managers want to learn as much pertinent information as possible. But they don't want to read your memoir. Balance the length of your resume accordingly.
4. **NOT TARGETED TO THE PARTICULAR POSITION:** Don't hesitate to customize your resume to target a specific position. Use the job description to focus on key qualifications. Then, reframe your template resume to fit that particular job.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT FORMAT AND DESIGN

The layout of your resume makes a big difference. You need to deliver a lot of information in a short period of time. Within a few seconds, a recruiter or hiring manager should get an impression that says, "This could be the one."

How do you do that? There are a few simple rules to follow:

1. **MAKE YOUR RESUME EASY TO READ.** Big blocks of text or complicated writing don't show off your communication skills – quite the opposite. Instead, simplify the presentation, so it's easy to absorb.
2. **MAKE YOUR RESUME EASY TO SKIM.** Let's face it: Few people will read every word of your resume. Rather, you should organize it so that a person (or a software program) can find the info they are searching for. Rely on bullet points and lists to get the details across.
3. **MAKE IT SEARCHABLE.** Many companies use software to speed up the resume stage. These programs search for keywords. Use the job description to identify likely terms and ensure these crucial phrases appear in your resume.
4. **MAKE IT PROFESSIONAL.** You might be tempted to add gimmicks to make your resume more eye-catching. Things like infographics or pictures can be memorable…but they can also turn off recruiters and hiring managers. A clean, concise, informative approach is usually the safest option.
5. **MAKE IT APPROPRIATE FOR THE JOB.** Change your resume as needed to fit the specific job you're applying for. This customization should help you impress the people running the job search. This includes highlighting relevant skills. You should also consider matching the tone of the resume to that of the company.

SETTING UP YOUR RESUME

Beyond the basic rules, there are some formatting tips to keep in mind as well. First off, consider the general structure of your resume. There are two basic forms to keep in mind:

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

This is the traditional resume format. In this setup, you list your experiences in reverse chronological order. You place your most recent job on top. Then, you go back in time, listing all the previous positions you've held.

This is relatively simple and easy to understand. Plus, as the default resume structure, it has the benefit of being familiar.

However, sometimes you can bury your most relevant abilities. What happens if you didn't showcase a critical skill in your most recent job? A hiring manager could miss it.

SKILL-BASED RESUME

A skill-based approach fixes some of the problems with the chronological version. Instead of a walk down memory lane, this structure presents your career as a series of skills learned.

The skill-based style involves listing the abilities you've mastered. Then, depending on the setup, you can provide examples of where you used those competencies.

The same information is presented as in the chronological approach. It's just arranged differently.

This approach makes it easier to highlight your most pertinent capabilities. At the same time, it's perfect for a software-driven keyword search.

There are potential downsides to consider, however. You have to think about how you organize the resume. Get sloppy, and the document could become difficult to follow. If a hiring manager gets confused or lost, they could simply give up.

HOW TO CAPTURE A RECRUITER'S OR HIRING MANAGER'S ATTENTION

Your resume represents your best chance to make an instant connection with decision-makers at a potential employer. After all, you don't get much time to make an impression. Studies have shown that hiring managers spend an average of about seven seconds looking at each resume.

Can you explain your unique value in less time than it takes the fastest runners on Earth to run a 100-meter dash? Well, that's your goal. Here are a few tips that will make it more likely:

FOCUS ON YOUR BIGGEST SELLING POINTS

Don't bury your most marketable skills. Organize your resume to highlight your top qualities.

THINK ABOUT WHAT MAKES YOU UNIQUE

Step #1: Qualify for the job.

Step #2: Show that you're better than the competition.

That first part should be obvious. Don't apply for jobs when you lack the minimum requirements. The trick for most jobs is succeeding at Step #2. Ensure the recruiter or hiring manager sees what makes you a better choice than the other candidates applying for the same position.

WATCH YOUR FORMATTING

We've covered this before, but it's worth mentioning again. Make sure your resume is easy to read, and all pertinent information is simple to find.

GET THE MOST OUT OF NAMES AND TITLES

Your job titles should act as a quick summary of your skills and experience. They should evoke your overall work history. Choose these titles to make your point as succinctly as possible.

Also, get as much value as possible out of big names. If you worked for a well-regarded company, make that obvious. Hiring managers are looking for signs that you are an achiever. As a result, they will be drawn to these top brands.

INCLUDE KEYWORDS

Remember, your recruiter (for the resume stage, at least) might be a robot. Tweak your resume to contain the optimal keywords, using the job description as your guide. That way, a software program will flag you as a qualified applicant – and a human reader can quickly skim for specific qualities.

MATCH THE RESUME TO THE JOB

Customization will help you capture a potential employer's attention. Even small changes can make you seem like the ideal match for a particular position.

HOW TO HIGHLIGHT TRANSFERABLE, SOFT, AND VIRTUAL WORK SKILLS

Landing a job isn't just about proving you can fulfill the technical requirements of the position. You want to go beyond the day-to-day duties. Employers also want to see general skills. Ideally, they want a strong team member and someone who can advance within the organization.

As a result, highlight your "soft skills." These are abilities that apply to almost any position. They include things like:

- Leadership
- Organization
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Reliability
- The ability to learn quickly

Meanwhile, COVID has made virtual skills a must for most organizations. Companies want to know that you can stay on task with minimal oversight and communicate effectively while outside the office. You'll want to stress your experience displaying these traits as well.

Transferrable, soft, and virtual skills can prove challenging to highlight on a resume. In truth, you'll likely get a better chance to showcase them at your interview. But first, you need to get to that stage.

As such, find ways to point out your soft skills in your resume:

CREATE A SKILLS SECTION

Even in a chronological resume, you can carve out room to list your abilities. This skills section should include your softer attributes.

INCLUDE SOFT SKILLS IN YOUR WORK HISTORY

As you outline your work experiences, pepper your work history with vital soft skills. For example, note when you took a leadership position or operated as part of a team.

LOOK FOR CONCRETE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Consider ways to turn your more general abilities into resume bullet points. This will "harden" your soft skills by displaying them as undeniable accomplishments.

Does your current company offer a leadership program? That certificate could get listed on your resume. Does your local community college offer a class in business communication? Completing that course could become an achievement included in your education section.

HOW TO ADDRESS COVID (AND OTHER) WORK GAPS

The recent COVID pandemic disrupted the economy and halted careers. If you were one of the millions of workers laid off during the outbreak, you might end up with a gap on your resume. Other causes of resume gaps include:

- Going back to school
- Taking care of a sick relative
- Raising kids
- Rehab or other medical conditions

Whatever the cause, a break in your work history doesn't have to ruin your chances of landing a job. To keep recruiters and hiring managers from viewing a resume gap as a red flag, you must proactively address concerns like:

- Are your skills out of date?
- Will you have trouble getting back into a work schedule?
- Will you face challenges recommitting to professional responsibilities?

Here are four strategies you can use to preempt an employer's apprehensions about a gap in work history:

1. **DON'T FOCUS ON DATES.** You want your resume to document your work history honestly. However, consider formats that de-emphasize your work dates. These will make a resume gap less obvious.
2. **CHOOSE A SKILL-BASED APPROACH.** If a chronological resume doesn't do your career justice, turn to a skill-based version. Organize the document to center on your abilities rather than on the narrative of your career.
3. **USE A COVER LETTER.** Most companies will allow you to submit a cover letter. This gives you an opportunity to explain any resume gaps. You can also expand on your skills and exhibit a little personality.
4. **GET SOME RECENT EXPERIENCE.** Recruiters and HR managers heavily weigh recent experience, so an old gap has less impact than a current one. As such, find a job – any job – to show that you've been working recently. This could include temporary, part-time, or contract work.

HOW TO SHOWCASE TEMPORARY WORK EXPERIENCES

Resumes are built with a specific career rhythm in mind. You get a job. You hold that job for a time. Then, you get another job. One thing follows another in a clear progression.

However, not all careers unfold that way. In fact, with the rise of the gig economy, this depiction of professional life has become increasingly old-fashioned.

If you've worked as a temporary associate, contractor, or freelancer, you have likely learned crucial skills in those positions or gained valuable experience that will make you a perfect fit for a particular job.

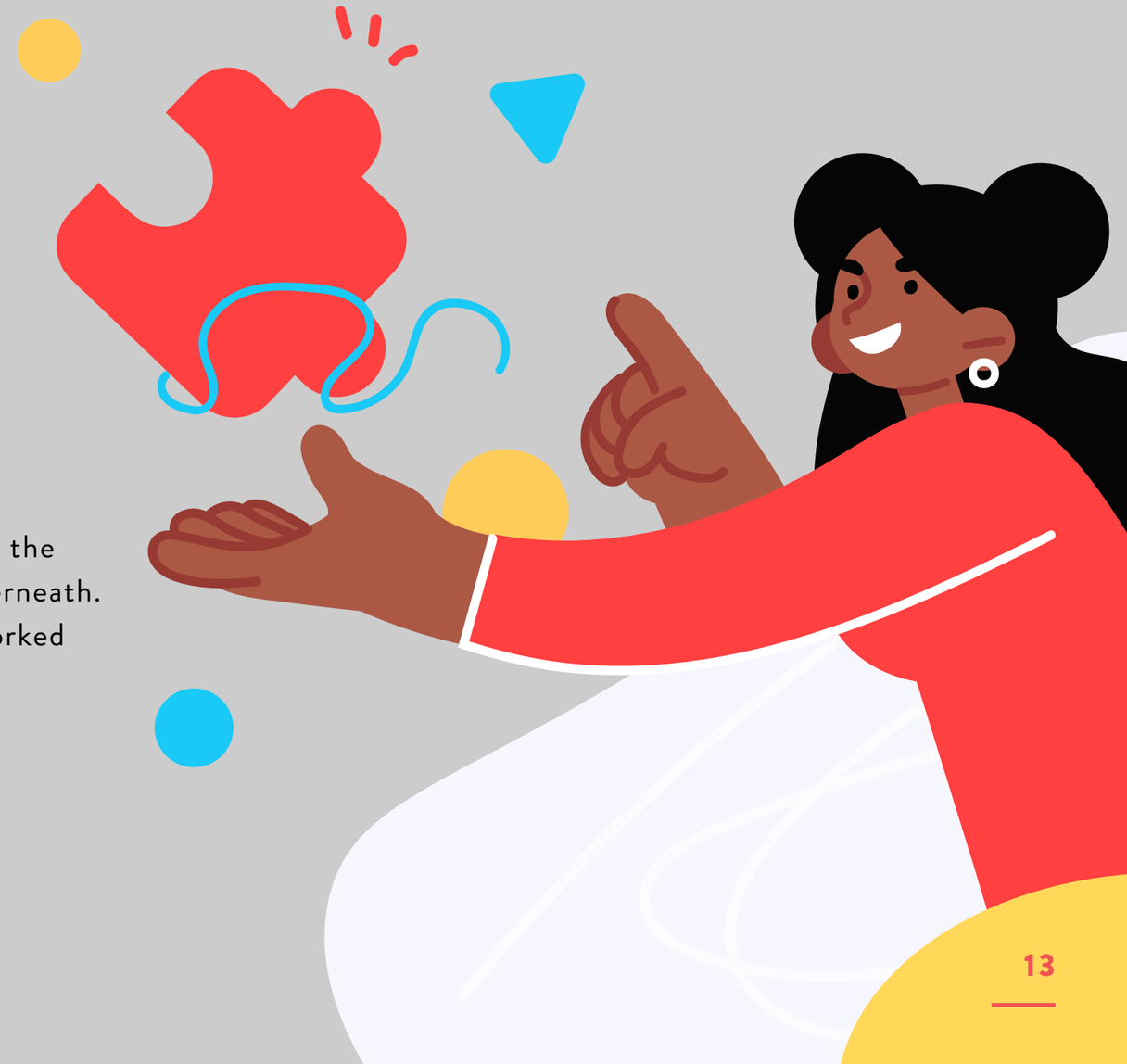
You just need a way to show that off on your resume! Here are a few options:

CONCENTRATE ON LONGER ASSIGNMENTS

Leave out the little gigs. If you can barely remember an assignment, it's probably not worth mentioning. Remember: You'll get quizzed on these jobs during your interview, so don't list employers you can't recall clearly.

HIGHLIGHT EMPLOYMENT CONTINUITY

Overcome the "transient" or "job-hopping" stigma by listing the length of time you worked for a single staffing service. Provide your dates of employment for the staffing agency, and then organize individual assignments chronologically underneath. This way, the employer's attention is drawn to the entire length of time you worked through the employment agency.



CHOOSE REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES

Select the temp gigs that showcase the general skills you've learned. These become stand-ins for all the smaller assignments you don't have a chance to include.

Or, to put it another way, your overall work history should highlight all your best qualities. If two temp positions used similar skills, you could probably drop one of them from your resume. Instead, search for a third example that brings out something different.

PICK BIGGER NAMES

Don't be shy about name-dropping. If you worked for a well-respected company, include it on your resume. The organization's reputation alone could land you an interview.

CREATE WORK CLUSTERS

Similar to a skill-based resume, group similar positions into separate sections. For example, if you're applying for a manufacturing job, you can list all your temporary assembly positions in one section.

ADD A SKILL SECTION (OR A "TEMP WORK" SECTION)

If you can't cover everything in your work history, you can complement this with a skills section.

Alternatively, list all your temp assignments in a separate part of your resume. You don't want to overwhelm the reader. If you have a lot of experience, no need to include everything; highlight interesting and recent work that applies to the job at hand.

GO BEYOND YOUR RESUME

Your resume provides a great starting place to introduce yourself to hiring managers. However, it shouldn't represent the final word on your abilities. Complement your resume with other resources:

COVER LETTER

If you get a chance to submit a cover letter, use it to supplement your resume. Don’t just repeat the info from your work history with better grammar. Take the opportunity to introduce yourself to recruiters and hiring managers.

LINKEDIN

This is a crucial resource for any job seeker. It has more than 750 million members and features jobs from over nine million companies. In addition, it provides powerful features that go beyond a simple work history and skill list.

SOCIAL MEDIA

LinkedIn stands as the top professional social network. However, you can use other platforms to build your career as well. Though they aren't directly focused on your work life, places like Facebook and Twitter give you a chance to connect with potential employers as well.

WORK PORTFOLIO

Show how well you can perform in a real-life setting. If applicable, prepare an online portfolio of your work. You can use simple website builders like Wix or WordPress to make a professional-looking collection of your best output.

USE YOUR RESUME AS A HUB

For all the examples listed above, you can include links on your resume. Then, recruiters and hiring managers can easily click on the additional resources while they review your qualifications. In this way, your resume becomes a hub: a launching point for a multimedia presentation of your value.

A warning, though: Think about what you want to include. Don’t mindlessly add your Twitter handle to your resume without considering the content you tend to upload. If you’re looking for a job, you should either scrub your social media presence or make it impossible for a potential employer to find.

YOUR JOB-SEARCH JOURNEY

Updating your resume should represent the first step on your journey to a better career. It gives you the opportunity to reflect on your experiences and serves as your main introduction to potential employers.

However, don't stop at a resume. The modern job market requires a comprehensive approach. You want to take advantage of any tool out there. That includes platforms like LinkedIn and other social media services.

GET EXPERT GUIDANCE TO ACCELERATE YOUR JOB SEARCH.

A recruiter or staffing agency can provide the direction and insight you need to optimize your career opportunities.

- A recruiter can help shape your resume and give you an insider's perspective on your background. You might not even recognize your top selling points or your most marketable skills. A recruiter will ensure you put your best foot forward each time.
- More than that, a strong relationship with a staffing agency will help you end up with a better resume altogether. These experts can place you in the ideal assignments for this point in your career. You'll build out your work history and add valuable skills.
- Finally, a staffing recruiter can ensure your resume gets the proper attention from hiring managers. Employers rely on staffing agencies to provide only highly qualified candidates; they trust staffing recruiters' recommendations.

With the right resume (and the right direction), you can launch an exciting, rewarding, and enriching career adventure. To take the first step, contact a qualified staffing agency today.