

HIRING

Google Recruiters Say Using the 'X-Y-Z Formula' on Your Resume Will Improve Your Odds of Getting Hired at Google

Alternative: Reverse engineer their advice and improve recruitment at your business. [🔗](#)

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More than two million people apply to work for Google each year, which is more than 20 times the number of employees at the company at any given time.

With that kind of volume, it makes sense that Google proactively tries to tell applicants what they should do to improve their odds of getting noticed within the herd.

Among its tools are a series of YouTube videos and articles detailing best practices for resumes (embedded below, along with two articles by Google's former senior vice president of personnel operations).

Here are some of the most important resume tips the company offers, including the simple, three-part formula that Google says applicants should always use. Even if you're not eager to work at Google, reverse engineering their expectations could give you some smart ideas regarding how to ask candidates to apply for opportunities with your business.

1. Basic formatting

Google very rarely requests or will even look at a cover letter, so there is a lot riding on resumes. At the outset, the key rule is to keep things simple when it comes to format, and ensure that your resume is highly readable. That includes things like:

Formatting your resume as a pdf. This seems like a no-brainer in 2019, but Google's guides repeat this advice several times, so we have to assume not everyone does this automatically.

Skipping the objective. (They know what your objective is: to land this particular job.)

Using black text, and keep the font and size clean, simple, and consistent.

Checking for typos. This is so important, we'll say it again: Check for typos.

Using bullet points. (How's this for meta advice, since you're reading it in a bullet point?) Don't include long lines of descriptive text. Put yourself in the place of a human resume-reviewer, who is likely reading dozens of resumes at a time.

Making sure you include your contact info. Yes, this seems obvious – but make sure your name and email address are prominent. If you're applying for technical positions, include your Github link (more on that below).

2. Customization

You should write a new, tailored resume for every position you apply for. Also, the Google recruiters advise keeping it under a single page.

The exception to this is that if you are applying for a technical or engineering position, you can legitimately have a large number of relevant projects to list, and that might take you onto a second page.

But for almost any other type of position, one page is the rule.

This also means that you have to be a ruthless editor. If you have tons of relative experience, you'll want to describe it all as succinctly as possible, while still getting your message across.

One specific piece of advice is that if any bullet point on your resume spills over by a word or two into a second line, figure out a way to write shorter, so it stays on one line. Space is at a premium with a suggested one-page maximum.

3. Use the X by Y by Z formula

This is the crux of the advice by Laszlo Bock, a former Google senior vice president of personnel operations. You want to adhere to the bullet-points format as we've discussed, and articulate your experience in this very specific way.

Google describes this as: "Accomplished [X] as measured by [Y], by doing [Z]."
But just to make it easier to remember, let's shorten it to X-Y-Z.

This means that you want to focus on accomplishments – quantitative results and the impact that you had as a result. It's probably easiest to explain this by using a few examples from the Google recruiters' YouTube videos themselves.

For example, imagine an applicant who wants to make clear that he or she is a member of a prestigious group. Here's the OK way, the better way, and the best way to describe this on a resume, according to Google:

OK: "Member of Leadership for Tomorrow Society"

Better: "Selected as one of 275 for this 12-month professional development program for high-achieving diverse talent."

Best: "Selected as one of 275 participants nationwide for this 12-month professional development program for high-achieving diverse talent based on leadership potential and academic success."

Here's another example, this one for a technical position in which the applicant wants to point out that he or she placed second in a hackathon.

OK: "Won second place in hackathon."

Better: "Won second place out of 50 teams in hackathon."

Best: "Won second place out of 50 teams in hackathon at NJ Tech by working with two colleagues to develop an app that synchronizes mobile calendars."

(In this case, the last, "best" is my own interpretation; Google doesn't actually provide the third suggestion. But I hope the point is clear.)

Here's a final example, intended for a business applicant who wants to show how much he or she contributed in a client support role:

OK: "Grew revenue for small and medium business clients."

Better: "Grew revenue for small and medium business clients by 10% QoQ"

Best: "Grew revenue for 15 small and medium business clients by 10% QoQ by mapping new software features as solutions to their business goals."

One point about jargon: Use shorthand like "QoQ" (for quarter over quarter) only if you're 100 percent sure that the resume reviewer will know exactly what you mean.

4. Advanced formatting

Beyond the basic formatting issues, like keeping it to one page and using bullet points, there are some slightly more advanced formatting issues to consider.

You want to be sure to organize things in the same way that recruiters and reviewers are used to seeing them. The rules include:

- education before experience if you're a student or a relatively recent graduate, or
- experience before education (in reverse chronological order), if you've been in the workforce for more than a position or two.

For recent graduates, Google insists on school, degree, major, GPA, and month and year of graduation. But the further away you are from college, the less college and university information you're expected to include.

"Generally the more recently you attended university, the more detail you should include here," Google technical recruiter Jeremy Ong says in one of the videos.

The one caveat here, and frankly it's not something that Google addresses, is how to handle year of graduation if you're an older applicant.

There's a point at which Google probably doesn't want to know your age, so as to reduce the odds of ever having to defend against an age discrimination claim. Obviously putting on your resume that you graduated from college in 1990 suggests you're well over 40.

Beyond that however, focus on things that are most relevant for the position, and don't be afraid to cut older positions and achievements, especially if they're not relevant.

If you have a lengthy work history that would push you beyond the one-page suggested maximum length, you might add a short, additional section mentioning that you have other, less relevant experience, without going into great detail.

5. For technical applicants

If you're applying for technical or engineering jobs, there are a couple of additional pieces of advice.

The first is to include your Github link, or equivalent, at the top with your contact information. (Ironic, since Microsoft has owned Github since last year.)

Additionally, they want to see your programming languages listed prominently. And as you list projects and experience – either in a separate section or as part of your employment history – include programming languages you used for each project.

Obviously, this is all for step one in the recruiting process – the resume and application – and Google has other videos on later-stage items like how to prepare for specific types of interviews.

But even as someone who isn't likely to apply for a job with Google or any other company anytime soon, I found it helpful in terms of the information to ask for when recruiting and interviewing.

Here are the links I promised, including two articles by Bock ([here](#) and [here](#)), and the two key YouTube videos, *[How to: Work at Google -- Resume Tips](#)* and *[Create Your Resume for Google: Tips and Advice](#)*.

Create Your Resume for Google: Tips and Advice



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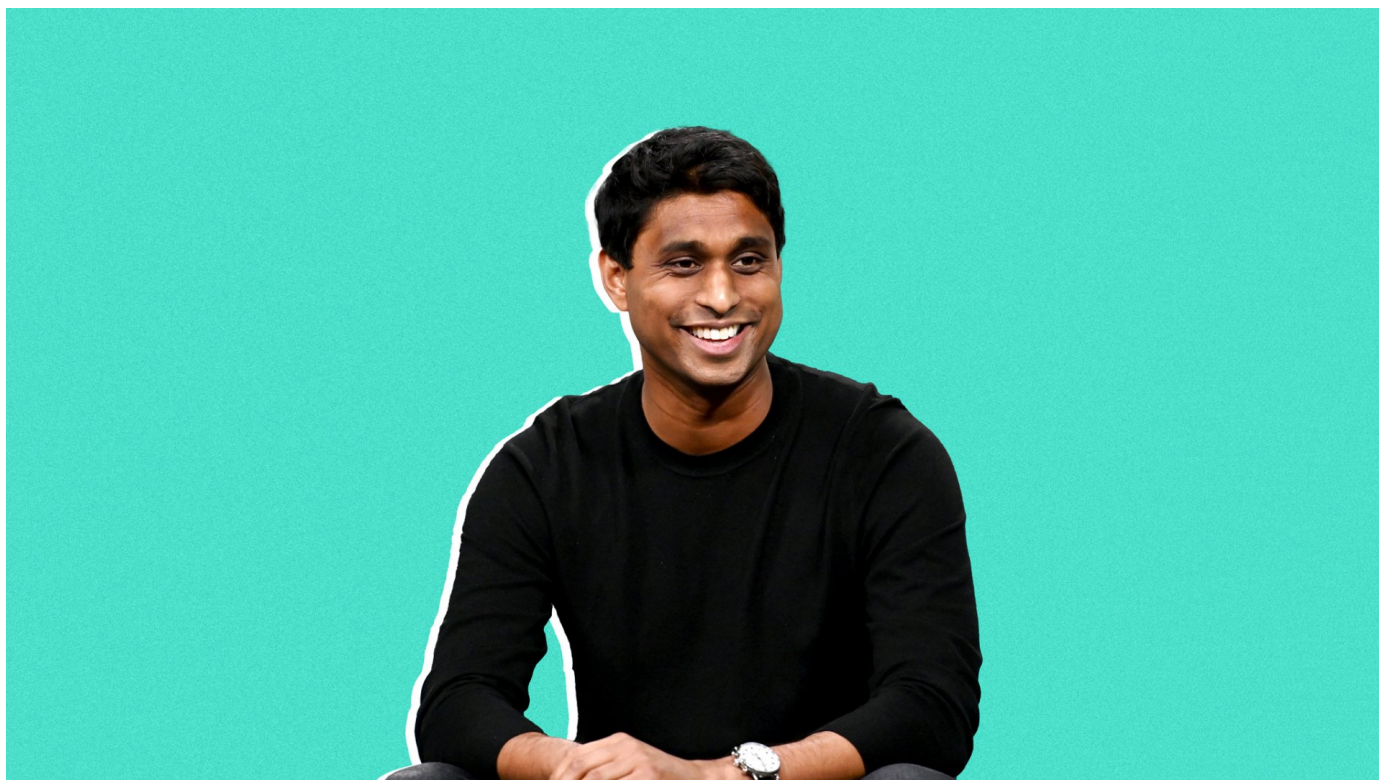
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BY TIM CRINO, ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR, INC. @TIMCRINO



Ankur Jain has achieved much of his success in business by creating win-win situations. With his company's latest initiative, he's trying to help displaced workers while at the same time filling a significant need in the health care industry.

Earlier this year Jain, the founder of New York City-based investment firm Kairos, came across a report that stated that about 40 percent of jobs lost in the economic crisis wouldn't return, in part because of the time needed to reopen businesses in hard-hit industries such as retail and restaurants.

So the Kairos team started to think about what they could do to help create jobs quickly. Their solution: Pair out-of-work Americans with elderly and sick patients in need of home health care.

The idea made sense because, as the virus spread, elderly people began staying away from nursing homes to avoid getting sick. Meanwhile, according to Jain, the workers left unemployed by the pandemic were in the right stage of life to move into the 500,000 unfilled jobs in the health care industry.

"When Covid hit, obviously there was the health care scare, but for our generation I think a lot of the fear had to do with the economic challenges," he says. "Most of the jobs that were lost were people under the age of 35."

Kairos pledged to fund the training of 10,000 American health care workers in partnership with CareAcademy and Care.com. Since the initiative launched in mid-July, about 2,000 people have signed up for the training. Kairos and CareAcademy cover the cost to trainees. Jain says a comparable program would cost about \$1,000 and take about 60 hours to complete. Trainees can then find a job via CareAcademy placement partners like Care.com.

Home health care aides typically don't command high salaries—Glassdoor lists the average base pay as \$22,470 per year—but Jain says it's comparable to a hospitality or retail worker's base pay. Plus, the training and job placement puts workers on the path to a career in health care by setting them up for further training as a licensed practical nurse or registered nurse.

"It's a no-cost option to build a skill set, and lets you get to work when you're ready," Jain says.

Kairos launched a similar job-training initiative in June through its London-based health care company, Cera. After 10,000 people were trained, the U.K. government agreed to take over and fund training for an additional 100,000 workers. If the program in the U.S. takes off, Kairos plans to make a similar handoff to the government. It's already in discussions with the city of Miami, which has a large number of elderly people and displaced hospitality workers.

"Everything we're building at Kairos is: 'Solve a big problem and build a great business out of it,'" Jain says. "The biggest problems present the biggest opportunities."

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How to: Work at Google – Resume Tips

