



TRX SEARCH CANDIDATE RESOURCE | RESUME STRATEGY

The Resume Guide

Make your experience clear. Make your value visible. Earn the next conversation.

The purpose of this guide

A modern resume may need to work for applicant tracking systems, AI-assisted search and ranking tools, and people who may be reviewing dozens or hundreds of candidates. This guide is designed to help you build one document that works across all three - without tricks, hype or unnecessary complexity.

A practical guide for making your experience easier to find, understand and evaluate.

1. Make your why visible quickly
2. Build for readability before decoration
3. Show context, ownership and evidence
4. Understand what ATS and AI actually do
5. Understand how LinkedIn search uses profile and resume data
6. Write for the human who scans before reading deeply
7. Stop overthinking the rules that do not matter
8. Finish with a resume you can defend in conversation

Your resume does not need to tell your whole life story.

Its job is to give someone enough relevant evidence to decide that a conversation with you is worth having.

What should someone understand after reading it?

- What kind of work do you do?
- At what level and scale?
- What environments, markets or business situations do you understand?
- What have you actually owned?
- What have you built, changed, improved or delivered?
- Why might that experience matter to the opportunity in front of you?

TRX perspective

Your resume is an edited professional document. It does not need to include everything. It needs to make the relevant parts of your experience easier to understand.

The first objective is not "impressive." It is "clear."

If the reader has to reconstruct your career from titles, decode internal terminology or hunt through dense paragraphs to understand your scope, the document is creating unnecessary friction.

Clarity does not make a resume less sophisticated. It makes your experience easier to evaluate.

Give someone eight seconds. What do they get?

A recruiter or hiring leader may eventually study your resume carefully. The first pass, however, is often a scan for relevance.

Try this before you send it
Give your resume to someone who does not know your career particularly well. Give them eight seconds. Take it away. Then ask what they learned.

What do I do? Could they identify your primary function or professional identity?	At what level? Could they tell roughly where you operate - individual contributor, manager, director, executive?
In what environment? Could they identify the industries, markets, company types or operating settings you know?	Why keep reading? Could they name anything that made your background feel potentially relevant or distinctive?

They are not supposed to understand your entire career in eight seconds. That is not the exercise. The question is whether the document gives them enough orientation to understand why they should keep reading.

TRX perspective
When someone has 80 resumes to review, your job is not to make them admire your template. Your job is to make the reason you deserve a closer look easy to see.

The top of the resume should orient the reader - not impress them with adjectives.

Your opening should quickly establish the kind of work you do, the environments you know and the capabilities that are most relevant to the next conversation.

TOO GENERIC	MORE USEFUL
Results-driven, strategic and dynamic executive with a proven track record of success and a passion for developing high-performing teams.	Manufacturing and operations leader with multi-site responsibility across building-products environments, including plant start-ups, Lean transformation, capital expansion and leadership of hourly and salaried teams.

A useful sequence

Professional identity -> Relevant context -> Scope -> Differentiating capability
Start with enough information to orient the reader. Then let the experience section prove the claims.

Avoid an adjective wall

Words such as visionary, transformational, dynamic, strategic and results-oriented do not establish seniority. Scope, complexity, decision-making, leadership responsibility and business outcomes do.

TRX perspective
You do not need to prove that you are universally impressive. You need to make the evidence for the work you want to do next easy to see.

Formatting matters. Content matters more.

A resume should be easy to scan and comfortable to read. Good design supports the substance. It cannot replace it.

Make employers obvious Company names, titles and dates should be easy to locate.	Use visual hierarchy Headings, spacing and bullets should guide the reader through the document.
Protect readability Use reasonable font sizes, margins and white space. Do not make the reader work to fit your career onto a page.	Keep design subordinate Color, icons, columns and graphics should never compete with the experience itself.

Beautiful does not automatically mean useful

Recruiters see beautifully designed resumes with surprisingly little real content. The document may have perfect typography, polished graphics and a sophisticated layout - yet still fail to answer the basic question: what did this person actually do?

Content trumps formatting every day.
You do not need a fancy resume. You need a resume that is easy to read and worth reading.

Multiple columns, charts, icons, rating bars and highly decorative templates can also make important information harder for both humans and technology to interpret. Simple does not mean unsophisticated. Clear is sophisticated.

Make the chronology easy to follow.

Most professionals do not need an unusual resume architecture. Familiar structure helps the reader understand the content faster.

A practical structure

- Name and contact information
- LinkedIn profile URL
- Professional positioning or summary - if it adds useful context
- Professional experience
- Education
- Relevant certifications, credentials or technical knowledge

Do not make the reader decode the document.

Employers, titles and dates should be obvious. Promotions should be visible. Acquisitions or company-name changes should be explained when they would otherwise create confusion.

Include LinkedIn

For experienced professionals - and particularly for leadership roles - LinkedIn matters. Include a clean LinkedIn URL with your contact information and make sure the profile is current before you send the resume.

Your resume and LinkedIn profile do not need to be word-for-word copies. They do need to tell a coherent story.

Titles do not tell the whole story.

A title means different things in different organizations. Give the reader enough context to understand the scale, environment and responsibility behind it.

Scale Revenue, P&L, spend, team size, locations, geography, customer base or capital responsibility.	Environment Public, private, founder-led, PE-backed, multi-site, high-growth, turnaround, integration or start-up.
Market context Products, customers, channels, manufacturing environment or technical complexity.	Decision scope What you owned, what you influenced, who you led and where you had authority.

If the company is not widely known, explain it

Example
Privately held, \$250M manufacturer of precast concrete systems serving commercial construction markets.

Make ownership unmistakable

"Responsible for," "worked on" and "participated in" can hide the most important part of the story: what you personally owned.

- Led
- Built
- Decided
- Changed
- Created
- Negotiated
- Implemented
- Restructured
- Integrated
- Launched
- Improved
- Delivered

TRX perspective
Teams accomplish things together. That is normal. Your resume should still make your individual contribution clear.

Responsibilities describe the job. Evidence describes you.

A resume becomes more useful when the reader can understand what was happening, what you owned, what you did and what changed.

RESPONSIBILITY	EVIDENCE
Responsible for supply-chain operations across three facilities.	Led planning, procurement and inventory across three manufacturing sites while standardizing S&OP processes during a period of rapid growth.

Situation -> Ownership -> Action -> Result

You do not have to force every bullet into a rigid formula. Use the framework to make sure the strongest parts of your experience contain enough evidence to evaluate.

Quantify when the number helps

Numbers can establish scale and impact. They can show the difference between \$5M and \$500M, one location and twelve, six employees and 600, or a local territory and a national organization.

- Revenue or growth
- Margin or cost savings
- Inventory or spend
- Throughput or productivity
- Team size or sites
- Territory or customer scope
- Capital investment or project value

Not every bullet needs a percentage. A useful number adds context or demonstrates impact. If it does neither, you probably do not need it.

Make progression visible.

For leadership hiring, the pattern across roles often matters as much as any one accomplishment.

Increasing scope Did responsibility expand across people, dollars, locations, products or functions?	Promotions If you advanced several times at the same company, make the progression visible.
Complexity Did you move into larger, faster-growing, more challenged or more technical environments?	Breadth Did you add functions, markets, customers, integrations or broader leadership responsibility?

Do not automatically bury older relevant experience

Older experience may still be highly relevant. If the strongest proof of a capability occurred 12 or 15 years ago, preserve enough detail for the reader to see it. Recent experience deserves appropriate weight, but relevance matters more than an arbitrary age cutoff.

TRX perspective
Your chronology should make the story easier to understand - not force the reader to reconstruct it.

Take some of the magic out of the system.

There is no single applicant tracking system, configuration or hiring workflow used by every employer. The technology varies, and so does the way organizations use it.

An applicant tracking system is primarily a system for managing applicants and candidate information. Depending on the product and the employer configuration, it may store resumes, extract information, organize applicants, make candidate data searchable, use screening questions and connect with other recruiting tools.

The system may try to identify

- Name and contact information
- Employers and job titles
- Dates of employment
- Education and certifications
- Skills and professional terminology

Searchability matters

A recruiter may later search a database for terms such as S&OP, precast, SAP, contract manufacturing, M&A integration, technical sales or Lean manufacturing. If you genuinely have that experience but never use the terminology, you may be harder to find.

Use the language your profession actually uses.

That is different from keyword stuffing. Relevant terminology improves discovery. It does not create experience that is not there.

There is no universal ATS score

Do not assume every employer assigns one mysterious resume percentage and rejects everyone below it. Systems and employer configurations differ. In some cases, a required screening question - work authorization, relocation, licensure or on-site availability, for example - may affect the application before a human reviews the resume.

AI can help interpret relevance - not just count words.

Recruiting technology increasingly uses AI to extract, summarize, search and compare candidate information. That makes context more important, not less.

KEYWORD ONLY	KEYWORD + CONTEXT + EVIDENCE
M&A Integration	Led post-acquisition integration of supply-chain planning and procurement across three manufacturing sites, standardizing processes while maintaining customer service through the transition.

The second example gives technology recognizable terminology, enough context to understand what the experience means and a human something concrete to evaluate.

The practical goal

Use the right terminology so you can be found. Add enough context so technology can understand relevance. Provide enough evidence so a human believes it.

Do not write in "AI language"

If a sentence could describe 5,000 other candidates, it is probably not helping. Generic executive language may sound polished while removing the details that make your career distinctive.

LinkedIn is part of the resume conversation now.

For leadership roles, assume that recruiters and hiring leaders may view your resume and LinkedIn profile together.

Resume Search can add information from the resume

LinkedIn Recruiter says Resume Search can pull relevant skills, job titles and experience from resumes and display that information alongside the member profile in Recruiter. It can also surface resume-derived positions, alternate titles and alternate company names.

LinkedIn also notes that irregular resume formatting or file types can make some information harder for its systems to extract with confidence.

Recruiter search is increasingly contextual

LinkedIn Recruiter supports AI-assisted search using natural-language requests. Advanced AI-assisted search can also work from a job description, job link or intake notes and translate them into required and preferred qualifications, with recruiter-facing summaries and relevance information.

Skills can come from more than the Skills section

LinkedIn Recruiter describes explicit skills, skills mentioned elsewhere on the profile, resume skills and implicit skills inferred from evidence of experience. That is why a meaningful skill is stronger when it appears in the profile and is supported by actual work context.

TRX perspective

There is not one permanent LinkedIn score attached to your career. Relevance depends on what the recruiter is searching for and what LinkedIn can understand about your experience.

Treat LinkedIn as part of the professional package.

Your resume is an evidence document. LinkedIn is a searchable professional profile. The two should reinforce one another without being identical.

Professional photo Use a current, appropriate photo that makes the profile feel complete and credible.	Useful headline Say something more informative than a title alone when context would help.
Current experience Make sure recent roles, titles and dates are up to date and reasonably consistent with the resume.	Meaningful skills Include skills that matter to the work you actually do and support them with experience context.
Enough scope Do not leave the experience section so sparse that a recruiter cannot understand what you do.	Clean URL Use a clean/custom LinkedIn URL when available and include it on the resume.

Different jobs, same story

The resume can go deeper on scope, evidence and accomplishments most relevant to an opportunity. LinkedIn can provide a broader professional picture and make you discoverable before you ever apply.

For leadership searches, LinkedIn matters.
If your resume says one thing and your LinkedIn profile tells a materially different story, you have created a question the recruiter did not need to have.

Humans scan before they study.

Technology may help determine what gets surfaced. The human still needs to understand why the resume deserves attention.

The first pass is often a relevance check

- Is this person approximately at the right level?
- Do they appear to have relevant or reasonably adjacent experience?
- Can I understand what they have actually done?
- Is there enough evidence here to justify a deeper read?

That is why the strongest relevance should not be buried. Employers, titles, scope and meaningful outcomes should be easy to find. Dense blocks of text make that harder.

Do not make the reader guess

- If the employer is obscure, explain what it does.
- If the title is unusual, clarify the function.
- If you were promoted, show the progression.
- If an acquisition changed the company name, explain it.
- If you ran a \$300M business, do not make the reader reverse-engineer that fact from six bullets.

TRX perspective

Every time a recruiter has to stop and decode something, you are using attention that could have been spent understanding your value.

Optimization should improve clarity - not create tricks.

Some resume advice is built around fear of algorithms. The better standard is whether technology can accurately interpret your experience and whether the human can trust what it sees.

Avoid

- Hidden white-text keywords
- Copying an entire job description into the resume
- Massive keyword lists with little evidence
- Repeating the same term unnaturally
- Claiming skills you cannot support
- Placing essential information only inside graphics, icons or decorative elements

Keywords help you get found. Context helps you get understood. Evidence gives someone a reason to call. Readability gives them a reason to keep going.

You need all four.

The objective is not ATS versus AI versus human

Build one resume that is structured enough to parse, specific enough to search, contextual enough to interpret and readable enough for a person to understand quickly.

A lot of capable people get stuck trying to perfect rules that are not universal.

Resume anxiety often creates more editing than improvement. Use judgment instead of treating every piece of internet advice as a requirement.

"It has to be one page." No. Use the space needed to communicate relevant experience clearly. For many experienced professionals, two pages is entirely reasonable.	"Every bullet needs a metric." No. Use numbers when they establish scale or impact. Forced metrics usually add noise.
"I need to sound more executive." Seniority is demonstrated through scope, decisions, complexity and outcomes - not a wall of adjectives.	"I need to match the job description exactly." Tailor for relevance. Do not copy the employer language until your own experience disappears.
"A gap will ruin me." Clear chronology usually creates more trust than formatting designed to hide normal career complexity.	"The design has to make me stand out." You want the experience to stand out. A template is useful only if it makes the content easier to understand.

Selectivity is not dishonesty. Accuracy still matters.

A resume is not a legal employment history and it is not a defense brief. It is an edited professional document.

"I have to include everything." Something can be important to your career and still not deserve much space on the current resume.	"My older experience is too old to matter." Older experience can still be the best evidence of a capability. Preserve what remains relevant.
"My title does not sound senior enough." Do not inflate it. Add context about scope, responsibility and scale.	"I need to explain every move." Explain what prevents obvious confusion. Save the full career story for the conversation.
"They can just look at LinkedIn." They probably will - but LinkedIn does not replace a well-built evidence document.	"AI can write this better than I can." AI can help with structure and clarity. It can also turn distinctive experience into generic or overstated language.

A useful truth test

Could you comfortably explain and defend every meaningful statement on this resume in an interview? If not, change it.

AI can be an editor. It should not become the author of accomplishments you never had.

Use technology to improve the document without allowing it to change the truth of the work.

AI can be useful for

- Identifying unclear or missing context
- Tightening repetitive language
- Testing whether bullets communicate ownership
- Suggesting clearer structure
- Spotting terminology you genuinely use but may have omitted
- Helping you compare the resume with a role for relevant emphasis

Watch for inflation

WHAT YOU ACTUALLY DID	WHAT AI MIGHT OVERSTATE
Supported an ERP implementation.	Led an enterprise-wide digital transformation that revolutionized organizational performance.

The second sentence may sound much stronger. It may also be untrue. If the resume becomes difficult to defend in a real interview, the optimization has failed.

TRX perspective
Your resume should sound like a clearer version of your experience - not like a different person wrote a more impressive career for you.

Before you send it, check the document from every audience.

The goal is not perfection. It is clarity, relevance, accuracy and enough evidence to earn the next conversation.

The human test

- What does this person actually do?
- At what level and scale?
- What industries, markets or operating environments do they understand?
- What have they personally owned?
- What have they built, changed or accomplished?
- How has their responsibility progressed?
- What capabilities distinguish them?
- Why might they be worth talking to about this opportunity?

The system + AI test

- Are employers, titles and dates easy to identify?
- Does the resume use the professional terminology that genuinely applies?
- Is important experience presented as text rather than hidden in decoration?
- Is there enough context for the experience to mean something?

The truth test

Could I comfortably defend everything written here?

If the answer is yes, you are probably much closer than you think.

Optimize for clarity - not tricks.

A modern resume may need to work across several audiences. You should not have to choose between an "ATS resume" and one that makes sense to a human.

SYSTEMS Can the information be accurately parsed and found?	AI + SEARCH Is there enough terminology and context to understand potential relevance?
PEOPLE Can someone quickly understand what you have actually done and why it matters?	YOU Is every claim accurate, specific and something you can comfortably discuss?

Want help applying the framework to your own resume?

TRX Resume Refiner™
The TRX Search Resume Refiner™ is designed to help you evaluate your resume through the same lenses covered in this guide: clarity, context, ownership, evidence, searchability, AI/ATS readability and human readability.

Use the TRX Resume Refiner™: [Open the Resume Refiner](#)

The Resume Refiner runs on a third-party AI platform. Please avoid entering proprietary company information, confidential business information, passwords, identification numbers or other highly sensitive personal information.

It is not designed to invent accomplishments.
The goal is to make your actual experience easier to understand - not manufacture keywords, inflate scope or turn your career into generic AI copy.

Resumes are like people: there is no such thing as perfect.

The goal is not perfection. The goal is clarity.

Your resume should be accurate, readable, relevant and specific enough that someone can understand what you have done and why it might matter.

At some point, continued polishing stops improving the document and starts delaying the conversation.

Your resume does not need to be perfect.

It needs to be strong enough to earn the next conversation.

LinkedIn product notes

LinkedIn features change over time. The LinkedIn sections in this guide were reviewed against LinkedIn Recruiter Help documentation in September 2026. Availability can vary by Recruiter product and account.

- [Discover candidates with Resume Search in Recruiter](#)
- [AI-Assisted Search and Projects in Recruiter](#)
- [Advanced AI-Assisted Search in Recruiter](#)
- [Skills filter in Recruiter and Recruiter Lite](#)

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