

Should Your Resume be Clean or Fancy?

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Decorative attributes, such as fancy fonts, designer paper, and graphics may provide a nice touch to a party invitation or love note. On a resume, however, these elaborative features could be visual annoyances for a recruiter or hiring manager.

The design of your resume should be clean, consistent and easy-to-follow. Can the employer or recruiter locate key information in your resume easily? Or is the layout of the resume confusing, inconsistent, sloppy, junky, or perhaps even too fancy?

Avoid fancy font styles. Usually, Times Roman (or Times New Roman or Palatino) is a good font style for the body text of your resume and no smaller than 11 point size. In contrast, Arial (or Calibri or Helvetica) often works well for resume section headings.

Generally, you should limit your font styles to Times Roman and Arial because they reside in most computer applications. So if you use a less-common font (such as Orlando, Elephant or

Mistral) your electronic resume may appear with a different font style if that same font style does not reside in the hiring manager's computer as well.

Use plain white paper when printing your hard copy version; avoid using "designer" paper. In a true-life scenario, a job-seeker printed his resume on designer paper with pre-printed illustrations of zoo animals. The candidate was looking for a job as an elementary school teacher. Unfortunately, the graphics were so large and distracting, the hiring manager found it difficult to focus on the content of the resume.

Keep this in mind: A resume may contain excellent information about your qualifications. However, an effective resume should make a favorable initial impression within about 30 seconds or less. Don't lose out on a good job opportunity because of a poorly-designed resume.