

WHY AN OBJECTIVE STATEMENT ON YOUR RESUME CAN BE RISKY?

This title might sound counterintuitive, but it's important to understand the risk associated with using an objective statement at the top of your resume. Over the past two decades, I've read thousands of resumes and participated in countless hiring actions. Based upon this experience, I'm confident saying the majority of objective statements delay the reader from getting to the most important aspects of your experience, are meaningless and often confusing or contradictory to your intent. Here's why:

Objective statements introduce risk:

A well written objective statement tells the recruiter, HR department or hiring manager that you understand something about the position or role within the organization, are interested and think that you might be qualified. This is the general assumption for every resume that's submitted, so what new information are you providing? The answer is typically "nothing new." At worst, these statements tell us that you're interested in a position yet have no idea what you might be doing, why you would do it and who you'll be working with. If this wasn't damaging enough, an ill prepared objective statement might also tell us that you're not qualified for the position and may never be qualified. It might also tell us that you're sending the same generic resume to multiple job openings and there's nothing special about this position. In short, objective statements don't tell us anything we don't already know or won't soon know about you after reviewing the full resume. These introduce greater risk to your application and seldom provide value that exceeds the level of risk introduced. As such, I recommend against using in a professional resume. Not convinced yet? Read on.....

Objective statements all sound similar and meaningless:

Yes, it's true – objective statements tend to sound about the same in relation to the position of interest. Everyone uses vague, generic and ultimately meaningless words such as: experienced, energetic, passionate, driven, focused, results oriented, proven, skilled, blah, blah, blah..... You're trying to differentiate yourself in a positive manner from all other candidates in your resume, so why use the same words as everyone else when you have the reader's undivided attention?

Objective statements can be confusing or contradictory:

Highlighting skills or experiences not fully demonstrated in the body of the resume or that contradict other parts of the resume can derail your chances of landing that dream job. Your definition of experienced, energetic, driven, proven or results oriented might be vastly different from that of the hiring manager. Be careful since self-assessments tend to be over-inflated and good hiring managers will look for inaccurate assessments. If you're inflating your objective statement, they might assume the same inflation is occurring in your full resume. Don't take the risk of telling the reader something that might derail your chances. Omit the objective statement and use the space to show the value you bring to their organization. My best advice is to quantify your accomplishments and ensure the most significant accomplishments that align with the position are at the top of your resume. This increases the chances your career highlights will be viewed which is really the intent of an objective statement.