

Resumes

Written by Ann Thomas, Founder, Transgender Talent, LLC

A resume is how we convey what we do to prospective employers (casting directors, producers, writers). You should probably have one for each field you are focusing on. This could be one for acting, another for writing, another for behind the lens, another for dancing. But this depends on how much experience and training you have for each skill. For something you're really passionate about, you will likely have enough to fill a whole page. For something you REALLY want, you can even customize a resume just for the one audition or interview. For this guide, we're focusing on acting primarily.

Keep in mind, how we put together resumes is fairly fluid, since this is a creative industry, so rules are not as hard and fast like they are for non-entertainment business resumes.

How long should it be?

The target is one page, especially for acting, as it's typically stapled on all four edges to a full page headshot on the reverse. It's ok to do two pages if you are older, and/or more experienced. Just staple it on one side only to the headshot to allow it to be folded open.

What to put in your resume

Your related experience:

There's multiple categories for this. These typically are TV, film, and theater. For TV and film, you can have separate sections for them if you have more than one entry for a section, otherwise combine them. TV/film acting is different from theater acting, so it's fairly informative to keep them separate. If you have non-speaking roles, such as background acting, do not fill your resume with those, unless that is your career goal - fewer of them than speaking roles listed is always best.

Your training:

This should be anything you've been to, which could include ongoing classes or private lessons, or individual workshops or seminars. Degrees in related fields should be listed, even if it's not directly related. Some actors actually have major degrees in totally unrelated fields, and add authenticity to their characters because of the depth of understanding they can bring.

Other industry experience:

This could be behind the scenes experience if you are focusing on acting, or vice versa if you've done acting in the past and are shifting to behind the lens. This shows that you have experience in the protocols of the entertainment industry on set.

Your skills that could be useful:

This is typically physical skills that can come in useful for a character. It can also be for common skills that other actors study for, but you haven't and are naturally gifted in them (like dancing or singing, for example.)

Awards:

This could be anything major. Besides the ones everyone thinks of in this industry (Oscar, Emmy, etc), there are others less known, such as film festival awards, or awards from other associations or guilds (see the complete list of associations and guilds [here](#).)

What NOT to put in your resume:

Really old experience, unless it's really noteworthy:

Typically on all types of resumes, anything over ten years in your past is not helpful. In Hollywood, not working for over two years is troubling. So only go back to things up to a two year gap. If you end up with almost nothing to show for it due to that, include them anyway. It might be best to focus on building your recent resume entries through nonpaid theater or student film or deferred pay sizzle reel roles if you are short on recent experience.

Unrelated experience or training:

Working for a decade as a barista won't impress on your resume. Be practical in how you determine what might attract positive attention. If you've worked in a higher level job that has a similar equivalent in the entertainment industry, that could be ok.

Really old training, unless it's noteworthy:

Lots of people have done junior high or high school drama. But that's not going to attract any positive attention unless you're still in it, or have graduated from high school in the last couple of years. If you've gone for a degree or postgraduate degree in a related field (like you have an MFA), keep that on your resume for life.

How to organize it

Start with your name across the top, centered, but not the full page width, maybe the center 1/3 of the page. The name you put there should be your stage name - the one your IMDb has on it. If it's too long to be all on one line, split it accordingly that makes sense. You could make the font slightly smaller for a longer portion on the longer line, to help it fit better. Examples are below:

John Smith

Janette
Smith-Cortez

Maximillian
Smith

Your statistics should be under that, which include height, weight, hair color, and eye color. DO NOT include your age or birthdate. Your playable age range is ok.

Most standard resumes in the business world say put your career goals in a little paragraph - for this industry, don't include that paragraph, or even a title.

Upper left corner is for a thumbnail of your headshot, and leaving room in your upper right corner for your representation contact info. If you do not have representation, put your direct contact info there, with the title "Direct Contact" at the top. If you have representation, DO NOT include direct contact info.

Below this are major sections that go the full page width. Float this down to make room for your headshot thumbnail.

Section order:

Your top three sections will be **Television, Film, and Theater**, in whatever order fits you best. The top section needs to be your primary focus. So, if you want to do tv acting, put that section on top, even if your more recent experience is in theater or film. Each of these experience sections is in three columns. (Do not include on camera adult film experience. Contact us about behind the scenes experience, as it may vary.) You may also want to split tv and film into other sections, such as **Television - industrial, Television - commercial, Television - scripted, Film - documentary, Film - short, Film - Student**, etc.

The next section is **training**. This doesn't have to be in columns unless you feel it looks better that way.

Your last section will be **Special Skills**. This is usually not in columns, but just a list of skills separated by commas. (Ie, "archery, canoeing, downhill skiing")

If you have **Awards**, you would add that section in the groupings as you think it might help you. If they are minor awards, and from long ago, put the Awards section last, below Special Skills. If they're major, it needs to be the first section, above any experience. Also, this doesn't have to be in columns unless you feel it looks better that way. Whether they are major or minor depends on who awarded it and why it was awarded. For example, a Congressional Award is really an honor, but is no indication of your acting skills.

You do not need to have column headings for any of the sections unless you have plenty of extra room that would be nice to use up.

Date order:

In each section, order the entries in date order, most recent first.

Entry Content:

For experience, each line should be the project title in column one, the role type and role name (if so) in column two, and the director in column three (producer if behind the lens.) Note there is no date included. Column widths can be adjusted to fit accordingly.

- For role type, that would be something like "lead", "supporting", "background" (don't put "extra"), followed by the character name (if there is one). If it's for behind the scenes, put in your credited title, such as "2nd AD", "PA", "HMU", etc.
- The third column is the director, unless the experience listed is behind the scenes, in which case put in your highest level supervisor, such as a the director or a full producer or executive producer. The more well known this person is, the better.

For **training**, include the class or workshop name, and who taught it. Some people include the year(s), others do not - that can be good to include if it's for a long time, like 2 years under someone. If it's private lessons or coaching, put that in, such as "private vocal coaching".

For each **award**, include the title, organization, and year it was awarded.

For **special skills**, make sure they are things you can do currently. Don't include skills you've not done or practiced in years and are horribly rusty in.

Artwork

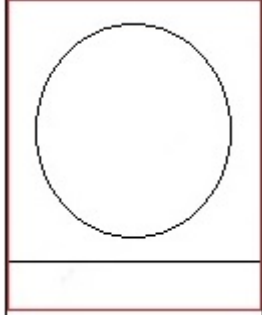
Some folks like to have fancy graphics, fancy backgrounds, and so on. That is fine if it is not too distracting. It can also help express your culture, if you want to make sure that is forefront in what you do. It also needs to not take up a bunch of highly useable space if you need it for the actual meat of your resume. But, if you have a thin resume, with little on it, it can be useful to fill up awkward empty space.

Final copies

Keep copies of your resume in the word processor format, as well as in PDF format for emailing, or for printing. PDFs can be printed cheaply on nice photocopiers that have a USB plugin spot. You need the word processor format to send to your representation, so that they can make changes to it easily. PDFs don't always convert back to word processing formats cleanly.

File name:

Remember that when you email your resume, it's going to someone that has hundreds of them, so naming it "acting resume.pdf" is totally silly. Put your stage name in the document name, like "John Doe acting resume.pdf"



John Smith

Height: 5' 10"

Weight: 150 lbs.

Hair: Brown

Eye color: Blue

Transgender Talent, LLC
Ann Thomas, manager
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Television

Gone With The Breeze	Lead – Harold	Gerald R. Tist, dir.
Life of Phyllis	Supporting – Arthur	Jan U. Ary, dir.
Megacorp – industrial	featured background	N. O. Body, dir.

Film

Exploring Caves	documentary - self	Nat G. O. Graphic, dir.
Beach Blanket Zombies	background	Vincent Priceless, dir.

Theater

Taming of the Schwinn	Supporting – Larry	John A. Labama
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Training

Scene Study, Backwoods school of Acting, Harry Hermit
Character Development, The Dramatists Hut, George J. Ungle

Special Skills

Skateboarding, horseback riding, swimming, archery, spelunking, American Sign Language, fluent in Spanish