

How to write a resume

File: Published articles

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File #: BF. 14

A positive resume usually rises to the top of the pile. If you think life is a popularity contest, it is. Your positive past performances and how people perceive you should be exploited. A successful resume should convey four positive ingredients: your image, contribution, appeal, and your ability to get along with others [peers, subordinates, and supervisors].

With any employer, every person has fundamental and functional responsibilities. If you were a car, your fundamental responsibility would be to provide reliable transportation, all parts would be working toward that goal, but each part would have a functional responsibility: the brakes, tires, engine, etc. would all have different functions [yet all would be working in unison].

These functional responsibilities are the achievement highlights that bring your resume to life. Most people fail to separate the responsibility portion and the achievement portion of a career. Achievements equal results, and results are what get people jobs. The reason some get ahead in life and others don't is because of results. It's real.

If your resume lacks this distinction, take a few days to recall the achievements in your career, a report card on yourself. You'll find things about yourself that you might not have included in your most current resume. Be patient in this process, it's your whole life you're thinking about.

Remember, it's not what you're responsible for that gets you a job [your peers have the identical responsibilities], it's what you do well within your responsibilities that separates the winners from the losers.

Better jobs have become more competitive in the new millennium, and as efficiencies continue to improve, jobs will become even more specialized, not to mention what continued effect the internet will have on job seekers.

As the times change, so does the perception of your resume. Here's what's in and what's out.

Enjoy!

What's In

- White or gray paper only on standard size.
- Specialization is key. The better jobs require increased specialized skills. More than one resume is OK.
- Spellcheck, proofread, and have a friend proofread.
- List charitable, trade and civic associations, but be brief. Being too wordy creates a perception of too much play and not enough work.
- Always have a clean copy delivered to your references. They might not remember as much about you as you think.
- Always use a courier or overnight delivery service when applying for high level jobs. You can be assured it's opened and read immediately.
- Keep cover letters brief and to the point. Knowing your audience and delivering makes a big difference.
- Always keep a report card on yourself and save all reviews from permanent employers. It is the starting point for proper preparation.
- Achievements should be highlighted with measurable criteria e.g. "Reduced accounts receivable average from 122 days to 54 days turning negative cash flow to \$1 million positive cash flow." Dollars and cents are the best known measuring sticks and separates the good from the great.
- Know your audience and play to them. Having a basic understanding of the reader's interests, hobbies, educational background and specialized needs creates synergy.
- Always leave plenty of white space and adequate margins. Your resume should breathe as it is read.
- Dream, because anything is possible.

What's Out

- Gimmicks, colored paper, pictures, and wordy cover letters.
- Avoid comments about lack of flexibility, stating preferences, or certain desires.
- Never reveal salary.
- Eliminate any comments about race, religion, color, national origin or sex.
- Do not mention political organizations, union affiliations, religious or fraternal organizations. You have more to lose than gain.
- Do not include a photograph. You'll offend more people than you think.
- Do not include height, weight, or physical characteristics.
- **NEVER** lie. Someone will eventually find out and you lose credibility never to be regained.
- Never abbreviate terms or jargons, certain readers can confuse too easily.
- Never include company phone number unless it's a confidential voice mail.
- Do not include references. It's taken for granted you have them and employers will inquire when ready.
- Avoid clutter: Social security numbers, addresses of employers and educational institutions, and classes attended occupy unnecessary space.
- Avoid any negative remarks about past employers [no matter how bad it was] and reasons for terminations. There are two sides to every story and somewhere in between lies the truth. Everyone who hires knows this and is willing to listen.
- Avoid such over used sayings as "per se", "pro active" and "streamlined." They're over used and boring.

