

RESUME BASICS

HOW TO WRITE A JOB WINNING RESUME THAT PUTS YOURS ON TOP

Many people would love to get a better job. And most of these same people have the proper training and skills to achieve this goal. Unfortunately, so many job hunters have very poor communication skills. They are unable to clearly tell potential employers about their job qualifications. In short, they do not have good job seeking skills. In many cases, this prevents them from getting a high paying job that they could easily do. Often, the job will go to someone who is less skilled but who has written an eye-catching resume.

Often, job seekers have a few mistaken opinions about potential employers. They believe that employers are able to easily separate the qualified job applicants from the less qualified applicants. But this is likely not true. Sometimes there are from 30 to 300 resumes for the same job. So the interviewer first does a fast screening of all the resumes to eliminate as many as possible. The "good" resumes usually make it through the screening process. Many times the best job candidate is screened out due to a poor resume.

In today's business world there is often many qualified applicants applying for the same job. What if, out of all of those who apply, one job seeker turns in a skillful resume? Who do you think stands the best chance of getting the job? It's the one with the "best" resume, of course. This is so often true even through some of the other applicants may be better qualified for the job.

In order to get a good job you must communicate to the employer that you are ready, willing, and able to do the job. So if you are capable of producing a top notch job resume, you definitely increase your chances of getting a better job.

Virtually every potential employer will want to see a resume from you. The resume will determine who gets a job interview. Your resume is a mini-statement about yourself. After reading your resume the employer should have a better "feel" for you as a person and as a potential employer. It serves to get acquainted with the employer so that they can decide if they want to know more about you.

The resume is the first step, your introduction to an employer. First impressions really do count. If you make a poor first impression, you'll never get to step two, the job interview.

To the purpose of your resume is to make a good first impression. In effect, your resume should tell the employer that you have good abilities and are truly interested in working. This report will help you make that good first impression. And it could very well help you to get the better job you're looking for.

THE BASICS

All good resumes follow the same general basic guidelines. While there is some flexibility in these guidelines, you don't want to stray too far from them. You want a resume that is bold, exciting, and enticing. But not too much so. You also want a resume that is somewhat conservative. In other words, it must be bold. Not flashy. You must show that you have confidence in your abilities, but not sound like a braggart. You must sound eager to do the job, but not desperate. So there is a fine line that you must walk in order to produce the best possible resume.

You want to use intelligent language. However, you don't want to try and impress the employer with long, flowery, or uncommon words or phrases. Use everyday language whenever possible. Of course, if you are applying for a highly technical position, it's acceptable to use some of the special terms used in that particular profession. But as a rule you should keep it simple and straight to the point.

The word resume comes from the French word "resumer" which means to summarize. So the exact purpose of a resume is to summarize your experience, knowledge, and accomplishments. Therefore, you must avoid being too wordy. Say exactly what you mean in the least number of words possible.

The length of your resume is important. Resumes should be from 1 to 3 pages long. Don't be tempted to make your resume longer than 3 pages, even if you have a lot to tell. Remember, a resume is supposed to be a summary. A resume that is too long simply will bore the reader. There will be so much material that nothing will stand out and be remembered.

RESUME APPEARANCE

The overall appearance of your resume is also important. A sloppy looking resume will greatly lessen your chance of getting a job interview. The first thing that an employer, or personnel manager, evaluating your resume will notice is its appearance. There are several different things that can be easily done to increase the overall appearance of your resume.

The first of these appearance factors is the paper that your resume is printed on. There are many different kinds of paper other than regular typing paper. You could make an improvement by using a colored paper. I suggest a subdued color like brown, off-white, or gray.

Next, you could use a better grade of paper. Go to a local office supply store and examine the different types of writing paper. You'll notice some big differences. Pick out a nice looking, more expensive grade of paper for your resume.

The next thing to consider is the quality of the material that is typed onto the resume. Never use a low quality typewriter to type your resume. If necessary, rent a

good quality

typewriter. Then make certain that it has a fresh ribbon in it. It's very important that you make sure the writing on your resume looks good. This means clean, crisp, and sharp looking letters.

Another good way to produce a top looking resume is by having it typeset. If your resume was produced using a computer and saved on a disk, you can hire a commercial typesetter who can use this file. Or, you can locate another computer user who owns a laser printer. Laser printers can produce a good grade of typeset documents. The other alternative is to find a local word processing service that can typeset your resume for you.

You can use the typeset master copy of your resume to make more copies. But be certain that you use a top notch copying machine. Otherwise, you'll still end up with poor looking resumes. Another alternative is to have the typesetter produce as many original copies as you need to ensure that they all look good.

A third aspect of your resume's appearance is more subjective. It takes into account such things as the letter spacing, how each section is arranged, and it's overall appearance. Some resumes simply look better because of the way they have been designed. At the end of this report, you'll see an example of a properly prepared resume.

Never overcrowd the resume. Leave some "white space" so that important points can appear to pop out. Never submit a resume with handwritten corrections. You can highlight sections of a resume by using a different typeface or size or by using "bullets." If possible, use larger letters for the headings used in the separate sections of the resume.

Never try to be too fancy by using wild colors, cute graphics, and so forth. Don't be overly creative. A simple, straightforward, factual resume will do nicely. Make it stand out, but stay conservative.

Another phase of your resume's appearance is its accuracy. Make sure there are no misspelled words! Mistakes will create the wrong image.

Make sure that the punctuation is correct. And make sure that all of your columns line up. See that all of your facts are correct. Don't say you attended 3 years of college, but only show two years worth of grades. Potential employers will note all inaccuracies and wonder why they appear in your resume.

OPTIONAL DATA

There is a variety of personal data that may be somewhat controversial if included in your resume. In the past it was acceptable to include all kinds of personal data, but times and laws have changed. Affirmative Action laws have made it

illegal to discriminate based on such things as age, sex, marital status, race, religion, and so forth. Therefore, most experts recommend against placing this kind of personal data into your resume.

Your salary requirements should not be listed in the resume, if you can avoid it. The reason is that if you put too low of a salary, you might be paid less than the real value of the job. If you put down a figure that's too high, you may not get considered for the job. If an employer likes you, it may be possible to negotiate a higher salary during the interview stage.

Another thing that your resume doesn't need is your photograph. Potential employers can decide if they are interested in you after reading your resume. They can see what you look like during the interview.

RESUME STYLES

There are several styles of resumes along with numerous variations. Your experience and the kind of job you are applying for will help to determine the style of resume you use. The two basic styles are: Chronological Resumes and Functional Skills Resumes. Some of the variations include the main themes of business, academic, general, student, standard, professional, or engineering.

A Chronological Resume lists work experience in reverse chronological order (the most recent experience first). It includes some descriptive text about each position, usually described in about one paragraph.

This type of resume offers several advantages: it is widely accepted, they are easy to read, and they show a clear pattern of your development. The disadvantages include: it does not highlight your major accomplishment(s), nor do they effectively show your other skills.

Functional Skills Resumes highlight your skills and accomplishments rather than providing a chronological record of your job history. Your accomplishments and skills are listed at the beginning. Your job history is listed at the end of the resume.

This type of resume allows you to call attention to your achievements. The major disadvantage is that employers may find it difficult to follow your work experience.

Many people discover that a combination of these two kinds of resumes is the best way to go. You may want to try several different types of combinations before settling upon a final design.

WRITING YOUR RESUME

Some specific topics that your resume should cover are:

(1) Job Objective -- lets the employer know that you are interested in a specific type of work. This can be done in 2 or 3 sentences.

Example: work in an analytical chemistry laboratory that focuses on environmental samples. Oversee and coordinate the activities of other lab technicians.

(2) Summary of Qualifications -- is a short paragraph that summarizes your experience and skills.

Example: I have 8 years experience working on all p samples for metals C. Used CLIP and SW846 methods phases of analytical chemistry. Including work with a wide variety of instruments and computers. Was second-in-command of a lab with 8 technicians.

(3) Professional Skills -- is the section where you give specific details about your qualifications.

Example:

INSTRUMENTS OPERATED

- A. Atomic Absorption Spectrometer
- B. Microwave Digestion System
- C. Polarograph
- D. Laser Fluorimeter
- E. IBM Computers

ADMINISTRATION

- A. Supervised 8 technicians when the Department head was absent.

ANALYSIS

- A. Waste oils for metals
- B. Water and soil

(4) Work Experience -- in this section you give a one paragraph summary for each of your previous jobs. This should include starting and ending date, reason for

leaving, job title
and duties, and any special accomplishments for each of the jobs.

(5) Education -- gives a summary of all schools attended, degrees earned, and special seminars or training courses that you have attended.

(6) Honors and Awards -- it's a good idea to list any special awards you have received.

(7) Personal -- information about your hobbies and activities should be included.

(8) Others -- professional organizations that you belong to, computer or programming skills, articles or books published.

(9) References -- you can state something like, "references available upon request," or list at least 3 on your resume. It's important to include all of the basic information on your resume. But, what is also important, is the way you say it. Don't use dull, lifeless statements. Instead use action words.

Here are some typical action words:

Accelerated, achieved, advised, approved, assisted, built, calculated, completed, conceived, controlled, coordinated, created, decreased, defined, designed, developed, directed, earned, edited, engineered, evaluated, found, generated, implemented, improved, invented, managed, operated, organized, planned, proved, revised, scheduled, tested, trained, verified, wrote.

These words give the correct impression that you have been responsible for do different kinds of jobs tasks. In other words, you weren't just a follower. Of course, you should always be truthful. Don't try to oversell yourself by claiming you did things that you didn't do.

As you can see, a resume is really a very simple document. It is not that difficult to produce a good resume, if you follow the simple steps outlined in this report. By dividing it into sections it becomes a much easier job. These different sections also help you to stay organized. If you have worked on a special project or had a lofty responsibility on a previous job, you may want to include that in a section all by itself.

Example: "I organized a training department for AMCO Scientific and was responsible for overseeing the production of training lessons."

Another good way to get familiar with proper resume writing techniques is to review a good resume. There's an example included in this report. You can use it as a model. Then produce several different resumes for yourself until you find the best possible combinations for your specific skills. You may also want to have a friend to read your resume and point out any problems.

UNCOVERING JOBS

Many people do not have good job hunting skills. They are not experts at locating job openings for which they may be qualified. Here are some ideas to help you uncover those jobs.

NEWSPAPER ADS -- usually draw the greatest number of applicants, so you'll end up with a lot of competition. If you have no geographic restrictions, you may want to check out of state newspapers.

Find a way to make your resume stand out so that it isn't lost among the many applicants. Here are a couple of ideas:

(1) Send a customized cover letter with your resume.

(2) Call before you send the resume in. If possible, talk to the person who will be doing the interview or who you'll be working for. If this isn't possible, talk to the personnel director about the job and let them know that your resume is coming. This will help them to remember your name and may help you get through the resume screening process.

PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES -- these are agencies that try to match employees and employers. These agencies vary in the way they work. Some can be very helpful. Others are somewhat unscrupulous.

Your best chance is to go with an agency that specializes in your field. Beware of agencies that continually run the same ad because, often, they are just trying to build a list of candidates. I recommend that you only use agencies that don't require you to pay a fee.

TRADE JOURNALS AND PERIODICALS -- Are often the best places to look. This is one of the primary means of job advertisement for some types of professions.

Example: The magazine Environmental Science continually carries ads for environmental professionals.

Other good places to look include: trade shows and professional conventions, personnel offices, college placement offices, friends you have that are in the same profession as you.

Another method is to simply go through the yellow pages and look for companies which may need a person with your skills. Then contact these companies by phone and follow-up by sending in your resume.

Job seeking is a skill that requires persistence. You must not become discouraged. Keep making plenty of contacts. Sooner or later, you'll find the job that's right for you.

SAMPLE RESUME

Jerry Jobseeker

12345 Main St.

Anytown, U.S.A.

555-5555

SKILLS

Professional Skills: Experienced in operating a wide variety of analytical instruments including, Flame and Furnace AA, Microwave digestion, Laser flourimeter, and more.

Familiar with the full range of EPA and CLIP methods and protocols for inorganic analysis

Expert with IBM-PC computers and have over ten years of computer experience.

BUSINESS

EXPERIENCE

1971 to 1977

Austin Powder Company, McAuthur, Ohio

Chemistry

Chemist:

Performed a wide range of chemical analysis on raw materials, finished products and competitor's samples. Used classical wet chemistry methods.

1977 to 1982

Mead Paper Company, Chillicothe, Ohio

Mead Research

Paper Technologist:

Worked to improve paper formulations, solve problems, and improve quality using pilot plant and mill studies. Performed a wide range of paper tests, wrote reports, and evaluated results.

1982 to Present

Martin Marietta, Piketon, Ohio

Senior Chemist:

Performed a full range of analytical methods for metals on all types of samples (soil, water, air, waste samples). Responsible for quality control and in charge of department supervising 14 technicians when supervisor was absent.

EDUCATION

Ohio University, Athens, Ohio

BS in Chemistry, 1971

Minor: History, Math

GPA: 2.4 Concentrated in inorganic chemistry

PROFESSIONAL

SOCIETIES

1975 to Present American Chemical Society

PERSONAL DATA

I am very active with a number of hobbies including: golf, gardening, baseball, computers, and writing. I have authored a number of books about computers and various chemical related subjects.

REFERENCES

Available upon request.