

Write A Great Resume: 10 Strategies That Work

Learning to write an effective resume is a life skill most people cannot afford to ignore.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median tenure for most professionals is about 4 years. For employees between the ages of 25 and 34, the median tenure is only 2.9 years.

Since most of us will change jobs a number of times in our career, we need to become proficient at selling ourselves and writing an effective resume.

Consider this: According to Career Builders' Resume 2007 survey, on average, hiring managers receive 50 resumes for each and every job opening. Due to the sheer number of applicants, many managers skim and sort the resumes into "no go," "maybe," and "looks promising" piles.

Only resumes that are well-organized, easy-to-read, and specifically targeted to the position survive the cut.

Assuming a candidate has the relevant job experience, professional resume writers know what it takes to keep resumes in the "maybe" or "looks promising" piles. Here are the ten strategies resume professionals use – and you can too.

1. Resumes that make a good first impression emphasize specific accomplishments. Did you increase sales by 40%? Manage a team that introduced a profitable new product? Create and implement a money or time-saving process? Use specific examples to highlight your accomplishments.

2. Just as you would highlight your strongest points in an interview, do so in your resume. To catch the hiring manager's attention, put your strongest achievements and qualifications at the top of your resume in a special highlights section.

3. Translate skills and prior job experience into benefits for the prospective employer. Example:

Job Description:

Responsible for buying ladies' accessories and jewelry.

Better Job Description:

Introduced line of ladies' accessories that increased department sales by 31%.

Negotiated exclusive contact with sought-after ladies' jewelry vendor that increased department sales by 28%.

4. Include only relevant job experience. If your resume is padded, most hiring managers will assume you aren't qualified for the job.

5. Don't try to be all things to all people. What are your top 3 skills? Focus on those.

6. Read the job description carefully. Note the keywords and use them to focus your resume. Example: If the job title is A/R, A/P Manager, don't describe yourself as a bookkeeper.

7. Use an eye-catching, easy-to-read format. Include headings, bold print and bullets. Search online for free, downloadable, user-friendly resume templates.

8. Write a different resume for each job skill/position. Resumes are definitely not one-size-fits-all. Make sure both your cover letter and resume focus on the skill set highlighted in the job description.

9. To paraphrase JFK – tell not what the company can do for you; tell what you can do for the company.

10. Finally, proof and double-proof your resume. Given the competition, just one or two typos may eliminate a candidate from consideration.

We've all heard it before: "You only get one chance to make a first impression." If you use the ten strategies outlined above, one chance is all you'll need. Write a great resume and feel confident in your job search. Good luck!

About the Author

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