Crafting an Effective Resume

Search consultants and employers have a vision of exactly the type of person they're looking for to fill a position.

When they receive a stack of resumes, they need to be able to quickly weed through them to find the candidates who best match that vision. A clear, succinct snapshot of your skills and experience quickly gives the reader the best chance to determine if you are a fit. How do you create the perfect picture of yourself? Here are some tips:

Summarize yourself.

In four or five phrases, provide the reader with a snapshot of who you are and what you (can) do. Include years of experience, industries, key roles and competencies and other relevant terms that will show up in online and database searches. Avoid "work objectives" — they can quickly eliminate you if they don't match what the employer is looking for.

Provide a snapshot.

For each company at which you've worked, include a brief phrase or one-sentence description of the company. It helps the reader determine if you have served in roles that match the industry, company size, and function of the opportunity.

Focus on accomplishments and key results.

Don't be shy about listing your achievements using tangible numbers, percentages and statistics when possible. Employers want to see how effective you've been in your roles. Illustrating these metrics can help you stand out from other candidates.

Some questions you might answer in five bullets or less...

- To demonstrate commitment:

  What did you do to help the organization advance?

- To demonstrate initiative:

  What did you create/design/enhance on your own?

- To demonstrate strategic thinking:

  What did you do outside the realm of what you were asked to do that benefitted the company?

- To demonstrate competency and motivation:

  What did you do well and how was it perceived? Did it exceed expectations? Did it win an award?

- To demonstrate leadership:

  How did you help your direct reports be more effective in their roles?

Format your resume wisely.

- Even if you're a seasoned professional, try to keep your resume to two pages. Only include what's relevant to positions for which you apply.
- Chronological is still best, regardless of your work history.
- A functional resume is a type of resume format that showcases skills over experience. These types of resumes make it harder to decipher whether someone is a good fit for the position.

Proofread! Then proofread again.

Your resume is a mirror reflection of you. Make it shine! Spelling and other grammatical errors are never overlooked. Having errors in your resume can give the impression that you're careless and rush through your work. Make sure to proofread by reading your resume aloud to yourself. Hearing the content will help you catch mistakes. Once you've done that, proofread again.

Don't forget social media.

If you don't have a LinkedIn account, now is the time to create one. Pick a headshot that is professional and approachable. Apply the tips here to your personal profile. LinkedIn is normally the first stop for a potential employer to check out your skills and get a feel for your personal brand.

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