

## **RESUMES--A Marketing Tool Aimed at Winning Interviews**

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The amount of materials on resume writing is overwhelming and preachy; Do this, don't do that, if you have years of progressive experience, use a chronological format; if you have a varied history, try a functional approach. If you have no experience, write a letter. Make it one page only. Two pages are better. Even six pages are acceptable in some cases.

The barrage of advice is enough to keep, all but the most willful among us, tied to a secure, but unsatisfying job or we just throw employment history in a document, put in on a job board, and hope for the best. Anyone who has done even cursory research on resume preparation has likely discovered that the material is riddled with contradictions. Actually, career development experts tend to agree on the most major points. These areas of difference are worth examining because of the options they suggest.

In general, the experts say a resume is essentially a two-dimensional presentation of a candidate and a marketing tool that highlights the candidate's knowledge and background. Because its sole purpose is to win the candidate an interview, there are no hard and fast rules for specific style, format or content. Design your resume so that you're every bit as good in print as you are in person.

Keep in mind that your resume is a supplement, not a substitute for the time-honored techniques necessary to land a job. At best, it is a key to a prospective employer's door.

Despite the stockpot of opinions, working with a resume doesn't have to be a confusing or unrewarding experience. In fact, the final document attesting to your personal accomplishments and areas of proficiency can be quite an ego booster. Most advisors agree that a resume is a must in a career campaigner's arsenal. It's only in how to use it that opinions differ. A resume is a useful document for potential employers to review before deciding on an interview. To expedite the process, it should be available at first contact. Resumes are necessary, but all too often overestimated documents.

### **ONE STRONG LINK**

No matter which format, style or length your resume eventually takes, it's important to count it as only one link in the chain of events leading to a new position. A strong resume with a well-written cover letter remains a highly respectable campaign tactic. It's also helpful to step back and put yourself in your prospective employer's position. Ask yourself what you want to know about the company before signing on. Also, consider the kinds of qualities the company most likely will desire in its future employees. The reversal process may prove a useful barometer in formulating a resume.

Ever wonder what will make your resume stand out among the hundreds that are vying for attention? Much depends upon the resume-reader's mood, the company's culture and personalities involved. Unless a paid resume expert, benevolent mentor or professional recruiter is willing to supply you with candid reactions to your resume, you may never know the real reason for your lack of success. TCI's Professional Recruiters will give you helpful, candid feedback, on your resume, when working with you on any of our opportunities.

Like it or not, until business and industry change selection techniques, we are stuck with resumes. However you design and format it, the resume should be well organized and concise, arranged logically and attractively, a reflection of your competencies and background. It should make an employer want to meet you in person.

## CONTENT

The most common complaint of those who read resumes is the candidate's failure to substantiate the accomplishments they've listed. Without giving specifics, the resume offers no proof of proficiency or competence.

A resume that does not include accomplishments carries little credibility to a prospective employer. But, overstating the case can be just as dangerous. Strike a balance in the resume between the content of your jobs and the accomplishment completed in them. Some jobseekers skip lightly over titles and even the companies they've worked for and put all their emphasis on accomplishments. The resulting resume bulges with numbers, goals met and Herculean task accomplished. The reader is unable to draw clean conclusions. There is little disagreement as to the basic contents of a resume. The order and format, in which these elements are presented are up to the job candidate. The arrangement depends on the individual's background, experience and type of position desired.

## THINGS TO INCLUDE

Personal data: Name, address, phone number, email.

Career history: Listed chronologically or by function. In the chronological format, the description should include dates employed (most recent position first), name of company, title or position held, scope of responsibility and accomplishments. In a functional format, the emphasis is placed on the type of position and degree or expertise required, rather than the name of company and dates of employment. Note: Most of clients prefer chronological resumes because some candidates use functional format to hide employment gaps. It is also a good idea to keep several versions of your resume targeted towards different positions.

Education: Education follows the principle about present information in the order of importance to the reader; thus the preferred order for listing your education is: Name of degree (spelled out: Bachelor of \_\_\_\_\_), name of major, name of college or university.

Activities: Professional associations, civic involvement, credentials and awards, unusual hobbies. Mention anything that will enhance your profile as a job candidate and well-rounded personal. Use good judgment and caution when including hobbies, organizations, etc. This information could be perceived as controversial, such as political affiliations or as fluff or filler.

Military experience if appropriate. TCI works with several large Government Contractors and military experience is always a plus.

## HELPFUL RESUME TIPS

- List most recent (10 years) positions or areas of expertise first and work backwards.
- Include a brief description of the companies where you worked: size, sales, volume, products, etc. Ex. "A \$300 million international company with 15,000 employees specializing in recreational products".
- Accomplishments are so much more meaningful to prospective employers than run of the mill litany of job responsibilities. Include, where appropriate examples and figures to substantiate claims.
- Present yourself accurately. If you lie or fudge dates, titles or education on your resume, this will be uncovered during a back ground check and you will not receive a job offer.
- Include only enough information to encourage the employer to find out more. This statement does not suggest you try to squeeze your resume on one page. If you are several years into your career, you will have more than enough information to spill over to a second or third page. An acceptable length for a resume is three pages.
- It is never recommended to include salary requirements. It limits your potential. Have an acceptable range in mind to discuss during the interview.

- References belong in the later stage of the job search not on your resume. Keep references on a separate sheet and provide them when they are specifically requested.
- Be careful not to include irrelevant information that doesn't really apply to the position sought.
- Give your resume as sharp a focus as possible. Since employers screen resumes in a few seconds, you need a way to show the employer at a glance what you want to do and what you're good at.
- Include key words in your resume defining your tangible skills.
- Avoid over using personal pronouns (I, my, me) in a resume.
- Always proofread carefully. Misspellings and typos are detrimental on a resume.
- Always be truthful and honest.