



Resume Critique...

There is no such thing as the 'perfect resume'. True, some are better than others, however, your goal should be to make yours the best it can be without falling into the common traps that people in my industry commonly see repeated over and over again by job seekers.

Fundamentals

Like everything else in the business world there are fundamentals assigned to good solid resume writing which deserve a mention here. First of all the resume is a fingerprint of who you are and should be written in the 3rd person (past tense). Carefully review the adjectives you use to describe yourself and your skills. Be conservative, understated is better than grandiose. Drop the ridiculous email address if you have one. Make sure your last name appears somewhere in your email address and keep it professional. Be sure to have your email address, home phone number and cell phone number on your resume. Don't worry about privacy, people may want to get in touch with you so make it easy for them. Finally, avoid bold, italics, and underlining inside your resume. If you feel you must stylize, do so sparingly. Finally, list all employment dates as accurately as possible, using month and year format and don't forget to list the city and state of the employers.

A quick note on bullets: I personally like bullets for ease of reading, however, bullets are supposed to be used to draw attention to your most important and notable accomplishments. Theoretically, if you put your entire job description into bullets, you've negated their purpose. Be prudent in your use of bullets and make sure your resume flows well.

Content

Be careful not to undersell yourself! Airing the right message throughout your resume is key. Avoid task-based descriptions and try for results-based, achievement oriented descriptions. Employers are looking for results. They want to know you have solved problems similar to theirs and that you achieved the results for which they are looking. Remember the ultimate point of an impressive resume: to highlight the talent and drive only YOU can bring to the table. Submitting your resume in poor condition is like saying 'I can do what some other people in your pile can do, but I think you should hire me over them anyway'. What it needs to convey is 'I have done what other people have done, but I've done it better and yielded more impressive results. I am an asset. Hire me and I'll bring my talents to your company'.

Language

If you aren't communicating your job descriptions, accomplishments, and other aspects of your work experience well in your resume, hiring managers will assume you are not a good communicator in person. Don't be fooled by this. Don't let your use of language hold you back. Try to avoid 'worked with' or 'managed' these terms are over used and not powerful verbs phrases and they are too task oriented, procedural, and boring.



Look for action verbs that are going to create excitement and make sure you follow them up with details. Communication ability ultimately has the largest impact on your overall on-the-job performance, and therefore, your odds of retention and your promotion potential once hired. That being said, your resume is the only and most crucial tool you have with potential employers. The person reading your resume should be able to understand 'what you do', 'how you do it' and what makes you 'more proficient' than someone else.

Format & Design

Honestly, a compelling design will get you noticed. Good formatting and design is crucial. Recruiters and hiring managers will look for any reason to put your resume in the 'NO' pile. We highly recommend that you use a Summary or Professional Profile rather than an Objective and that you follow it with a Core Competencies or Areas of Expertise section then go right to your Experience section. Again, make certain all titles are legitimate, employer addresses and dates of employment are complete. Education, certificates etc., should appear at the end of the resume.

Length

Your resume should be as long as it needs to be to adequately describe your responsibilities. Forget the notion of a one page resume. It's a myth and not a professional approach to resume preparation.

Hobbies & Interests

Personally I find the listing of Hobbies & Interests on the resume completely distracting and a waste of time, if, however, you feel compelled to list them be conservative.

References

References and third party endorsements should not appear directly on your resume. They can be attached as an addendum, however, it is better to wait for the prospective employer to ask for your references. Speaking of references, your reference list should include previous supervisors, NOT co-workers, neighbors and friends. When an employment professional conducts a reference check it will delve into the specifics of your ability to handle pressure, specific knowledge and technical skills, your delivery and performance, your ability to handle politics, your demeanor, strengths and weaknesses.