

Resume ABCs

26 ideas to help you create a strong resume



Accomplishments: Although it's important to sum up your experiences, you should do more than list your achievements. Instead, describe how you met deadlines, exceeded sales expectations and cut expenses.

Benefit: Research the company you're applying for and tailor your resume to indicate the skills you can use to benefit its bottom line. In other words, tell them what you can do for them.

Coordination: Decide on a format and stick with it. Group your experiences in chronological order or based on certain job skills. Just be sure everything makes sense in relation to the rest of the document.

Decorations: Refrain from using clip art, borders, photos and other images on your resume. What you think may separate your resume from the rest of the pack may only add unnecessary clutter.

Everything: Create a resume that includes only the most essential information. According to Ed Oswald, recruiting director for Onancock-based recruitment firm United Search, a resume should include details of past accomplishments — not just past job duties. "The resume should outline job description and length of service," Oswald says. "The most important thing is to outline what you've done and what accomplishments you've had in your tenure."

Facts: Tell the truth. Make something up — even the smallest detail — and it could come back to haunt you.

Growth: Show how accomplishments from one job led to a promotion or a new job with a different company.

Hubris: The good old Greek word for pride. Boast about relevant accomplishments only. You may be proud of your title of co-captain on your high school basketball team, but you're 38 years old. Move on.

Individualized: Don't be afraid to change your resume for each job you're applying for. If you have access to a computer and a printer, there's no excuse for using a boilerplate resume for all the jobs to which you're applying. State the accomplishments that are relevant to each job.

Justify: There's no need to explain gaps in employment on a resume. If questions come up during an interview, there will be ample time to address any concerns about your situation.

Knack: If you have a special skill or talent, like the ability to repair a copy machine, mention it on your resume. Companies are always looking for employees who can help out in more ways than one.



Letter: Keep your resume limited to one to three fonts, and keep the various sizes to a minimum.

Money: Avoid mentioning your salary history or expectations on your resume. If a want ad requests salary history, include it in your cover letter.

Name: always go with the formal. No nicknames, no Johnny or Chuck. There will be plenty of time to make informal connections with new co-workers

One-page vs. two: If you've just graduated from college or have little experience, don't try to stretch out your accomplishments to two pages. But for experienced workers, it's more important to have a resume that goes beyond one page than to exclude important information.

Paper: "People go to a lot of trouble to select different shades of paper, but a resume on heavy white paper is as formal as you can get," says Jonathon Adler, a career consultant in Jackson, Miss.



Quick: Makes sure your resume is a fast read. You're not writing an epic novel about your life. Bullet points tell the story of your career in a reasonable amount of time.

Readability: Use margins and spacing to keep the resume clean and distinctive. A resume should be pleasant to look at and easy to read.

Stains: Accidents happen, so if you don't want to hand over a coffee-stained resume to the vice president of human resources, keep

Words that score on a resume

By Marshall Loeb | Knight Ridder Tribune

When you are searching for a new job, a successful resume is your first hurdle to employment. The way you present yourself and your skills via your resume can open the doors to a better variety of interviews.

No matter the industry, every employer is looking for candidates with a specific set of abilities and experiences, which are most often described in the job listing. Listings in management, for example, usually include the words "manage," "leadership," "teamwork" and "motivate." Writing or editing positions might include words such as "creativity," "accuracy" and "deadline." And anything in the technology field, such as Web or graphic design or database management, will absolutely have the specific names of software required on the job.

Your resume should include these same words, which can keep you on top of the pile of applications.

To customize your resume for a particular job, examine the job listing for key words and phrases. Then insert those words where applicable in your resume. But don't overdo it, and never pad your resume with experience you don't have.

If you're making a major career switch or lack some of the employer's preferred experience, insert a statement of your career objective at the top of your resume. This statement should be a brief description of your primary career goal. Include some key words here, and tell the employer how you want to use your experience and skills to benefit your new career path. ■

your resumes in a protective sleeve or folder.

Tacky: Stay away from jargon and shoptalk, unless it's universal in the industry. Buzzwords like "synergy" and hackneyed phrases like "think outside the box" are overused and lack real meaning.

Unsolicited: Think twice before sending unsolicited resumes — recruiters and hiring managers usually ignore resumes that are not tailored to the company and its needs. Seek a contact within the company who can direct you to the right person to send your resume to. "Target your resume to someone who will look at it and not just log the date and time into a computer," Oswald says. "Target someone who will read it and think of you for a future opportunity."

Voice: List your accomplishments with confidence.

When: Timing is everything when sending out your resume.

Don't spend too long creating the perfect document. You still may be agonizing over Times Roman or Helvetica while the company you want to work for is scheduling second interviews.

Xerox: Make a few copies to bring to your interview. There's a good chance your interviewer will need a copy to look at while she's discussing the job with you.

You: While a company's accomplishments may be impressive, keep your resume focused on how you helped achieve those accomplishments. Employers are less interested in the fact that you worked for a Fortune 500 company than they are in what you did to help make it one.

Zenith: Highlight the pinnacle of your professional career. Don't feel obliged to list your jobs in chronological order. If you had a great deal of success at one job in particular, lead with it. ◆