

Get the Job

E M P L O Y M E N T G U I D E



Writing the Perfect Resume

Resumes are a lot like clothes. A specific style or design may be the hot new trend one day and completely outdated the next.

With such a rapid ascent into irrelevance it's no wonder career seekers are having a hard time leveraging their resumes into landing that dream job.

So dust off your career documents and spruce them up if you're hitting the job market any time soon. It's time to look your best.

DITCH THE OBJECTIVE

One of the most recent trends in resume writing is to swap out that stale objective for a glowing personal statement that highlights your key skills and accomplishments.

Still recommended to be between three and five sentences, this opening summary will be your first — and possibly last — chance to capture and retain the attention of recruiters and hiring managers.

Phrases like “results-oriented” or “dynamic” are a thing of the past, too. Liven things up with key descriptor that sells your most valuable attributes.

GET TO THE POINT

In some cases, recruiters are spending less than two minutes looking over your



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resume.

That doesn't sound fair, especially considering the hours you poured into perfecting your career documents. But it is the cold, hard truth.

Depending on the vacant position, employers can field upwards of 100 resumes and cover letters per day. That's a lot of reading!

Your best chance to land in the keeper pile is to get to the point, and get there fast. Spend the most time focusing on the top third of your resume. This is where you can market yourself as a must-have commodity by integrating big-win accomplishments and specific keywords aligned with what the employer is seeking.

BEAT THE SYSTEM

Speaking of keywords, they are your best friend when it comes to beating the Applicant Tracking Systems that so many employers are using to screen prospective employees.

With the explosion of online job boards and social networking career sites like LinkedIn, hiring departments

use these systems to stem the tide of the countless resumes hitting their inboxes.

The systems act as barriers against irrelevant submissions by matching the wording of incoming applications with that of the job description. Resumes heavy in industry keywords pass the test. Ones with bland, generic language do not.

Don't Forget the Cover Letter

As important as a strong resume is to your career trajectory, a well-crafted cover letter can open just as many doors.

The cover letter is generally the first thing read by recruiters and can help set you apart — either positively or negatively. Treated by many job seekers as a generic, mundane part of their search, the cover letter can serve as a vital marketing tool if done correctly.

SELL YOURSELF

You never get the second chance to make a first impression. As cliché as that sounds, it is true when it comes to catching the attention of hiring managers.

If nine out of 10 cover letters start with the line, “I am writing in response to your vacant position,” then why not be the one to go against the grain with a strong, unique opening statement?

A memorable cover letter can be just as important as a keyword-laden resume.

BREAK UP THE PARAGRAPHS

Nothing puts recruiters to sleep more quickly than a full page of paragraphs.

Accentuate your key accomplishments or job responsibilities by breaking them out into bullet form. By just separating three or four of your shining qualities, you



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can greatly help the flow of your cover letter.

But do not just list a set of skills. For each attribute, explain how you have utilized it to make a difference for past employers.

Hiring managers want to

see not only what you can do, but also what you have done.

CUSTOMIZE IT

Not all cover letters are created equal. Experts urge job seekers to customize their cover letters to match

descriptions of jobs for which they are applying.

Much like the keyword strategy in resumes, cover letters are more effective if they are similar in tone and language to your prospective employer's needs.

Avoid copying text from a job description and pasting it into your cover letter.

Instead, select specific skills and experience that is required for the job, and strategically integrate similar language.

Time to Edit, Edit, Edit

We've all made them. Big, bold, impossible-to-ignore typos. While a written mistake within a company email or personal correspondence can be embarrassing, leaving one on your career documentation can downright cost you your dream job.

Spellcheck tools can only catch so much, so this burden comes down to you, your eyes and your ability to spot glaring errors.

Take the extra time to read over your documents one more time before dropping them off at the post office or hitting that "send" button. You'll be glad you did.

SHOW THEM OFF

The more eyes the better when it comes to editing your resume and cover letter. Listing yourself as a "quick learner" in your opening summary is a gaffe you can easily avoid with the help of some fresh eyes.

Don't be embarrassed if your friends find mistakes. After putting so much time into your project, your eyes almost become acclimated to the text, making it hard to spot typos.

TAKE A BREAK

You just spent hours on your project. Every word is spelled correctly and every comma is painstakingly placed within both your resume and cover letter.

Now step away from the computer. Taking a brief



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break will help clear your mind and make you focus on other activities for a few minutes.

When you get back to your desk you will be refreshed, rejuvenated and ready to continue proofreading your work.

HIRE A PRO

There are a slew of resume-writing services available online, all waiting to help advance you along your career path. Many of these companies offer phone consultations and comprehensive questionnaires to help assess

your career past and objectives.

Find one that employs Certified Professional Resume Writers. The designation is recognized throughout the industry as the benchmark for resume writing. CPRWs undergo a demanding, four-

part testing process and possess specialized skills in crafting career documentation across multiple industries.

They are also meticulous editors focused on delivering accurate, powerful documents in line with high-quality standards.

Social Media Overhaul

We all love tweeting, liking and sharing. But for job seekers it is important to realize that friends and family members aren't the only ones with access to our online lives.

Checking a prospective employee's social media activity is one of the first things that many hiring managers do before even reading his or her resume.

Posts and pictures are public information and can be used to either bolster or bust your chances of getting called for an interview.

CLEAN IT UP

Vulgar language and lewd pictures aren't exactly what you want your potential employers seeing when they conduct an internet search of your name.

This doesn't mean you have to post only job-related information and career goals onto your Facebook wall or Twitter feed. Prospective employers actually like to read about your home life and opinions.

Find the right balance and post consistently to maintain a strong presence.

CHECK POLICIES

If you opt to ditch social media altogether, deleting your personal page from many sites can take up to a few months.

To expedite the process, email the sites' customer support team to find out how long of a period, if any, there is to wait out after you decide to scrap your account.

Most companies will respect your urgency and work hard to resolve your issues.



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TELL ALL YOUR FRIENDS

Let your friends know that you are on the job market. Tell them that you are toning down all social media action and to not list anything offensive on your home pages.

Recruiters can read messages from

you and your friends alike, so covering all of your bases can serve you well when trying to polish your image.

BRANCH OUT

Many social media sites are venturing into the job-posting market. LinkedIn serves as a one-stop shop for recruiters and job seekers alike to

find new job listings and to connect with other professionals.

If you're only active on Facebook, why not add Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts?

A well-rounded social media approach shows your familiarity with emerging technology and your comfort level with computers.

Effective Networking

In 2010, 41 percent of job seekers said they landed a job through good, old-fashioned networking.

Effective job searchers can be enhanced by hitting the phones, sending emails and meeting face-to-face with influential business leaders – even if they are not hiring at the time.

In fact, many vacant job opportunities are never even advertised. So while the majority of job seekers are monotonously searching internet job boards and newspaper ads, it is important for you to mix networking strategies into your approach.

USE CURRENT RELATIONSHIPS

Networking is based on utilizing the people you know to uncover other relationships that could benefit you in the long run.

Start with your friends and family members, and ask them if they have heard of any job openings. They will be happy to ask around, as well, and pretty soon you could have an army of job hunters on your side.

Extend your networking efforts online, as well, with the help of sites like LinkedIn. These networking tools can help you easily identify company's hiring managers and all of the people connected to them.

Make some cold calls or send your resume through email with an introductory message. Proactive beats reactive for any job search.

BE RELENTLESS

Especially if you are job-

less and are actively seeking employment, it is important to wake up every day ready to make connections.

Having a goal to make 100 new connections per month through phone calls, emails or face-to-face interactions can help keep you build an impressive network.

Put on your best outfit and head downtown. Local businesses are more likely to fill their professional openings with local talent,

while larger corporations usually hire internally or bring in workers from other franchises.

Walk into businesses casually but with purpose and ask for the hiring manager. Let him and her know a little bit about yourself and leave your business card.

Be sure to select non-peak times of the day, as you want managers to fully focus on you and what you can bring to the table.





Dress for Success

It sounds obvious, but hiring managers will tell you about many applicants who walk in for their interviews not looking the part.

There goes all that hard work you put into your resume and cover letter to land an interview. Although there are exceptions to the rule, most companies expect men and women alike to wear professional attire during the interview process.

Crisp suits, sharp accessories and a well-groomed appearance will make that first impression count.

WOMEN

A pair of black dress slacks are a versatile tool in any woman's interview wardrobe.

It is easy to dress them up or down depending on what type of job you are pursuing. Matching them with a button down shirt and a blazer can help land that formal office job, while pairing them with a sweater can give you more of a business casual approach perfect for sales jobs.

And don't forget the shoes. Moderate heel heights and muted colors are fashion-forward options that can help accentuate that perfect interview outfit.

MEN

Men's fashion is pretty straightfor-

ward, as good style can be attained with a slick suit and tie. But some companies have loosed their dress codes over the years.

And for startup companies or non-professional jobs, you can get away with ditching the tie and opting for a more business casual look.

Of course, a white button down and colorful tie covered with a well-fitting blazer or sports coat is probably your best, safest option when choosing your wardrobe strategy.

GROOMING

It should go without saying, but you would be surprised at what hiring managers have seen during their years of experience interviewing candidates.

Combing your hair and splashing on some cologne or perfume are good places to start.

Guys, don't forget to shave or trim your facial hair. Ladies, choose a hair style that won't require you to be flipping hair out of your eyes during the entire interview.

Keep the attention on your skills, not the way you look.

Nail the Interview

Landing an interview is a rewarding feeling for any job seeker. It means you were successful in marketing yourself as a difference-maker.

It's OK to celebrate – but not for too long. There is still much work to be done if you want to go from candidate to hired employee.

Depending on your personal demeanor and comfort level in social situations, interviews can either be pleasant or awkward. There are specific steps you can take to make sure your experience is anything but the latter.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Try to think like a recruiter. What will he or she ask you during the interview process? Write down as many questions you can think of and practice answering them in front of a mirror.

Recording yourself with a voice recorder or even your webcam can help you pick up on any language habits or physical mannerisms that might be holding you back.

Practice looking at your targets instead of glaring toward the floor. Your goal is to engage your interviewer and enhance your reputation as a great communicator.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

One question you can bet



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on fielding during your interview is “What do you know about our company?”

Having a detailed description ready to rattle off will impress your interviewer and help you stand apart from competitors who failed to prepare for such a question.

Conduct online research

on the company and search for any articles that have been written about them in your local newspapers. Showing that you are interested in their objectives and efforts goes a long way toward impressing and impacting your interviewer.

THANK-YOU NOTES

Sending a genuine post-interview note of thanks shows initiative on your part and may help tip the scales in your direction while managers are making their final decision.

A thank-you note is a brief,

complimentary document that reiterates your interest in the job while also reminding your recruiters of your most pertinent skills.

The heavy lifting is over so keep the language conversational and light. Thank-you notes serve as the perfect finishing touch on a successful job hunt.