

Resume Tips: Five Ways to Grab Employers' Attention

With today's level of competition for good jobs your resume has got only one chance to make a great first impression. To be considered for interviews your resume must have that special something that grabs the reader's attention and motivates them to call you. Here are five strategies for transforming a blah document into a WOW resume that will get employers calling you.

1. Keep your focus clear and to the point.

The first thing potential employers need to know is what you do and the position you are interested in. In the past job seekers have used an objective statement at the top of their resume to indicate their employment interest. With the lightning speed scanning approach that recruiters take in viewing resumes, a wordy, vague objective statement taking up three or more lines of text just doesn't get the job done. In most cases they don't get read.

Instead, write a short, direct professional summary that clearly illustrates your career focus. Your statement should include your profession, how long you've done it and your particular areas of expertise. Something to the effect of: Senior purchasing professional with 10 years' procurement expertise in: strategic sourcing, contract negotiation, financial analysis, strategic planning, leadership, contract law and process improvement.

Remember, your resume is not an historical tell-all. To keep your focus clear make sure that everything following in your resume relates to your focus. Leave off extraneous details.

2. Stuff your resume with key words.

The more key words you use the more frequently your resume will show up in online searches like LinkedIn, TheLadders and CareerBuilder, etc.. Additionally, employer resume data bases also use key words to query for qualifying candidates. Without appropriate key words your resume will be electronically ignored. Without key words, your resume is being shot off into a black void each time you submit it.

A good way to make sure your resume is full of key words is to check it against job postings. Use as many of the key words found in the responsibilities and qualifications sections of job postings. As much as you can, match up your terminology with what you find in job postings.

3. Keep your resume reader-friendly.

Nothing gets ignored like a resume full of lengthy blocks of text. No one has time to read through that much information. Resume screeners need to be able to absorb your information quickly. Leave out extraneous details so that key facts show up easily. Separate blocks of text into smaller easy-to-digest snippets of information. Use white space to separate bullet points so that each stand out. Be sure that your font size is readable: nothing smaller than 11 point.

4. Include plenty of accomplishments.

If you want to stand out from the crowd you must include accomplishments throughout your resume. Write accomplishments that show how you solve universal problems such as saving time, cutting costs, improving performance and increasing customer satisfaction. Your accomplishments should stand out on your resume in bullets separate from your responsibilities. Don't make the common mistake of combining responsibilities and accomplishments in a long list of bullets. List your responsibilities in a small block of text and your accomplishments in bullet form following.

5. Get your best information on page one.

It's true, if you can't grab their attention on page one they won't stick it out to find out the wonderful things you've got on page two or three. This presents a problem for those who experienced their most productive work five or more years back. The solution is to use the hybrid resume format that allows you to create a highlight of accomplishments section at the top of page one of your resume. This area of your resume is reserved for the best

examples of your work. The accomplishments you include should illustrate the key transferable skills needed for the position you are interested in.

Don't delay in implementing these resume changes. Employers are waiting for you with opportunities for a better career and a better life.

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