25 Tips For A Better Resume

Are you suffering from resume-writer's block? Does everyone else's resume seem more professional and better worded than yours? The following are some guidelines to help you create a better electronic resume:

1.   Be neat and error free. Catch all typo's and grammar errors. Make sure to have someone proofread your resume, preferably someone attentive to details. Even the smallest error could land your resume in the electronic recycle bin.

2.   State specific objectives.. Form a solid, clear objective that will help you carry a focused message throughout the resume. The objective summarizes your skills and emphasizes your strengths.

3.   Why does the employer need you? Focus on highlighting accomplishments that will arouse the interest of employers who read resumes asking themselves: "What can this candidate do for me?" Remember that the goal is to get the interview.

Dictionary is the only place that success comes before work.

- Vince Lombardi

4.   Make a good first impression. On average, employers spend less than 30 seconds scanning each resume. Most employers are more concerned about career achievements than education. Place the most interesting and compelling facts about yourself at the beginning, such as a list of accomplishments in order of relevance.

5.   Emphasize your skills. Use a skill-based resume format that is organized around the main talents you have to offer. Prioritize everything.

6.   Use keywords. Include specific key words and phrases that describe your skills and experience, such as Product Launch, Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Sales, Account Management, C++, Visual Basic, Word Processing, MS Excel, Adobe Illustrator, Graphic Design, and Advertising.

7.   Use buzzwords. Use industry jargon and acronyms to reflect your familiarity with the employer's business, but not to the point where it makes your resume hard to read or understand. Spell out acronyms in parentheses if they are not obvious, such as TQM (Total Quality Management).

8.   Use action verbs. Portray yourself as active, accomplished, intelligent, and capable of making a contribution. Examples: Managed, Launched, Created, Directed, Established, Organized, and Supervised.

9.   Avoid Personal Pronouns. Never use personal pronouns such as 'I' or 'me' in your resume. Instead of complete sentences, use short action-oriented phrases: "Coordinated and published a weekly newsletter concerning local community events."

10.   Highlight key points. Although most formatting such as bold, italics and underlining is lost in an electronic resume, you may use capital letters, quotation marks, even asterisks, to emphasize important words or section titles.

11.   Summarize information. While electronic resumes may exceed the traditional one to two page limit of paper resumes, in most cases, it should not exceed three pages.

12.   List only recent information. The general rule of thumb is to show your work experience only for the last 10 to 15 years.

13.   Quantify your experience. Numbers are a powerful tool. Instead of saying "Responsible for increasing sales in my territory," use "Increased sales in my territory 150% in 6 months. Managed 30 accounts for annual revenues of $2M."

14.   Be organized, logical and concise. In addition to reviewing your experience, employers also use the resume to get a sense of whether you are orga-

nized, logical and concise.

15.	Just communicate. Abandon the utilization of exorbitant, exquisite vocabulary. In other words, don't try to impress employers with the depth of your vocabulary. Use words everyone can understand.

16.	Omit salary information. Never make reference to salary in your resume.

17.	Avoid questionable subjects. Never make references to personal information such as race, religion, marital status, age, political party, or even personal views. In all but a few instances, it would be illegal for the employer to consider such issues. Also, avoid the use of humor and cliches in most resumes.

18.	Be honest. Lying or exaggerating your abilities will always come back to haunt you. Since employers usually check into serious candidates, you will want every detail to check out.

19.	Sell yourself. Do not under-emphasize your strengths and experience. Portray yourself in the best possible light. Skills that come naturally to you, others may never grasp.

20.	Write your own resume. Be personal, yet professional. Create a resume that is personalized to reflect you.

21.	Personal traits. If you decide to include personal traits, such as "Dependable, Highly-Organized, Self-Motivated, and Responsible," make sure they are applicable to the position desired. Will the employer consider them valuable?

22.	Show consistency. To de-emphasize glaring gaps in your work history, consider using a Functional resume, which focuses on your skills and accomplishments rather than a Chronological format, which emphasizes the progression of your experience.

23.	Be balanced and neat. The effective resume is balanced, neat, visually appealing and flows consistently. Clearly separate sections and emphasize section titles. Leave sufficient blank space between sections for easy reading.

24.	Stick with common section headings. Use common section headings. Examples: Objective, Experience, Employment, Work History, Skills, Summary, Summary of Qualifications, Accomplishments, Strengths, Education, Professional Affiliations, Publications, Licenses and Certifications, Honors, Personal, Additional, and References.

25.	Be positive. Remove any negative comments or feelings conveyed in your resume, especially when it comes to previous employment experiences. Emphasize a positive, can-do attitude.