

A THOUROGHY MODERN RESUME

By Matt Krumrie

If you think writing a resume is hard work, think about the recruiters and hiring managers on the other end who receive and review not only your resume, but sometimes, hundreds of others applying for the same job. Because of this, some job seekers think that creating a standout resume involves using the latest technology and software tools to create unique colors, funky graphics or links to an online video resume on YouTube. The reality is recruiters want substance — not style.

"It just needs to be clean, thorough and to the point," says Mary Emmen, president of Columbia Heights-based New HR, LLC (www.newhronline.com), a company that specializes in creating human resource solutions for small businesses.

Edit and Focus

"I hate those long cover letters and resumes that talk about every experience they have ever had that might apply to the position in question. I skip over those candidates every time because it takes too long to find the information," she adds.

Emmen says she prefers resumes submitted via email or through traditional postal mail, as long as the emailed resume is received within two to three days of when an ad is posted. Emmen works in multiple locations and likes to be able to open up her laptop and pull up a resume, or pull out a file with hard copies of resumes to read through.

That's why a simple one- or two-page resume formatted as a Word document or PDF that details your past experience and success is what recruiters really want, says Tony Nelson, president of Minneapolis-based TEN Consulting, LLC (tbnconsulting.biz), a search firm for marketing professionals.

An Audience of One

"If you are applying for a job, the resume should be written for that specific job opportunity," says Nelson. "That resume needs to scream I'm the person for this job. 'No reading between the lines.'"

So how do you get employers to scream in excitement that you are the person they want to interview for the job? By showing — not telling—the employer what you can and have done.

Kevin Donlin of Edina-based Guaranteed Resumes (gresumes.com) says the biggest resume mistake is focusing on job responsibilities, not results.

Don't say this: Responsibilities included (but were not limited to) implementation of policies and procedures, training of new employees, interfacing with subordinates and vendors, and light correspondence duties.

Instead, say this: Worked with staff and vendors to increase product turnover by 15 percent and sales by 23 percent in five months. Also trained 14 new employees, five of whom were rapidly promoted.

Wouldn't you rather hire someone who increased sales by 23 percent than someone who was responsible for light correspondence duties?

Make It Easy

Providing a profile of accomplishments at the top of your resume (below your objective/summary and before your experience) that shows your direct value to your employer can be a significant advantage, says Lissa Weimelt, Principal of The Hiring Experts (www.thehiringexperts.com), a Twin Cities-based retained executive search firm. These accomplishments highlight the value you personally contributed to better the company or its customers.

Other examples may include showing process improvement that led to cost reduction or manpower savings; increases in efficiency or output that led to increased sales or department performance; exceeding sales or performance goals that resulted in higher profits for the company.

"The key is to stress your achievements, placing a higher value on them than just providing a long list of your job duties," says Weimelt.

Technological Advancements?

As for video resumes? Most employers don't want to accept video resumes because there are uncharted legal waters — potential job candidates could claim discrimination based on age, gender, race or other factors if they submitted a video resume and an employer decided not to hire them, says Katie Carty Tierney, the Talent Acquisition Manager for Genera, a software company specializing in on-demand business innovation.

Adding a LinkedIn, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter or blog link on your resume is beneficial if those networking tools are professional only. A personal website also is only valuable if it pertains specifically to your career successes or aspirations. Most recruiters agreed the best online resource to use is LinkedIn — the others are mostly personal social networking tools.

I've heard horror stories about offers being withdrawn (or not extended) due to content on a MySpace page," says Nelson.

Technology has forever changed our ability to search and apply for jobs, but what employers want in a resume remains the same: They want to find the best candidate for the job the easiest way possible — through a crisp, clean and well-written resume that is to the point and packed with pertinent information related to the job. Nothing fancy, nothing fun — just the facts.

Matt Krumrie writes the "Ask Matt" column every Sunday in the Star Tribune Jobs section.