Perfecting Your Résumé

Your résumé is the first chance you get to make an impression on an employer. They will decide within the first few lines if you are worth their time and interest. This makes it important to be able to write one that's eye catching and memorable. Below is a list of tips to help you write a résumé that you will be proud to hand out:

1) **Intimidation is for the naïve.** Those seeking interns don't expect your résumé to run off the page or reference by how much you increased sales performance by X% for a former employer. It simply needs to communicate relevance and interest, be it about your skills, personal characteristics and any accomplishments.

2) **Get to the point.** Begin with a summary, objective or "profile" to immediately capture an employer's attention with what you can do for them. It should be a specific, highly condensed summary of your background, skills, and attributes. Paint a picture clear for someone to gain a good sense of what you want to do with a quick glance.

3) **Remember your foundation.** List the college(s) you attend[ed], majors and minors, GPA, date of graduation, awards, memberships, activities. Once you gain more work experience, this education information can move to the end or even off of the résumé. It may also be relevant to list your coursework. This will invite more dialogue.

4) **Use language that pops.** Use action verbs and lively words, but not "I" or "me." Steer clear of buzzwords, acronyms, and industry-specific jargon. Avoid the use of phrases such as "responsibilities included" or "duties included." Employers want to hear about your accomplishments [even if course specific], not how well you carried out your assigned duties.

5) **Unrelated jobs are still relevant**. Many students have part-time, seasonal or temporary work experience that is unrelated to future career goals. It's not the setting that matters as much as how any given experience developed transferrable skills. It may be as simple as referencing an aspect that involved leadership, drive and determination as indicators of your dependability and a strong work ethic.

6) **Put yourself in their shoes**. What about the job posting or company profile requests or suggests certain needs. If an ad says that communication skills are important, then consider when your skills came into play and find ways to weave in that relevance in your résumé and cover letter.

7) **Formatting counts.** Research suggests that your resume has less than 20 seconds to make the right impression, so it must be eye-catching and easy to read. The visual your résumé creates determines if it is looked at or immediately tossed aside by an employer. Keep sections lined up and a consistent font throughout. Your name should be larger and bold at the top. Make it look full, but keep it to one page (unless you've had three or more internships that is.

8) **Don't skip the small stuff.** Include all your contact information (name, address, phone number, and e-mail address) on the first page of your résumé. Should your résumé happen to get separated from your cover letter, a potential employer will have no way of getting in touch with you.

9) **Set Yourself Apart.** It could be a subtle design element or even a photo. It shouldn't be over the top or misaligned with your style. If you've got it, do it. If not, there's no crime in being normal. Then again, we're all individuals.

10) **Proofread, proofread, and then proofread.** Employers may use typos as an elimination factor, especially if they have many applications to evaluate. Ask friends and family to act as a fresh set of eyes. It would be ideal if they happen to be professional writers or editors. Even small mistakes can lead a potential employer to believe that a candidate might not make a very careful or conscientious employee.

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