

Resume Writing Tips:

1. **Ask yourself, "What is the objective of my job search?"**

The objective is the bull's-eye that you want to focus on hitting through the resume. Once you have determined your objective, you can structure the content of your resume around that objective. Take time to really mull over your objective then start on writing your resume. It is not necessary to include an objective statement on your resume, but if you choose to, be prepared to customize that statement for each job to which you apply.

2. **Use your resume to obtain an interview, not a job.**

Do not go into detail about every accomplishment. Instead, be clear and concise. The purpose of your resume is to generate enough interest in you to have an employer contact you for an interview. Use the interview to provide a more detailed explanation of your accomplishments and to land a job offer.

3. **Accent the positive.**

Leave off negative and irrelevant points. If you feel that certain dates subject you to age discrimination, leave the date off your resume. If you have descriptions in your current job that don't support your job search objective, leave them off your resume. Focus on the descriptions that do support your objective.

4. **Construct your resume to read easily.**

- Leave spaces in between descriptions.
- Use a font size no smaller than 10 point.
- Limit the length of your resume to 1-2 pages.
- Use bulleted sentences in the body of your resume; use bullets with short sentences rather than lengthy paragraphs. Put strong points about yourself first.
- Use buzzwords. If there are terms that show your competence in a particular field, use them in your resume.
- Use #'s, \$'s and %'s. Numbers, dollars, and percentages stand out in the body of a resume

5. **Your resume is a marketing tool.**

Your resume is a brochure about you, so market yourself through your resume. Just like a company's brochure, convey the features and benefits that you possess.

6. **Have someone else review your resume.**

Have someone review your job search objective, resume, and listings of positions that interest you. Encourage them to ask questions. Their questions can help you to discover items you left off your resume. If substantial, revise your resume to include these items. Their questions can also point to items on your resume that are confusing to the reader. Clarify your resume based on this input.

You want to get a job offer...

...You can, by following these Proven Techniques:

Preparation - "Skill set Summary."

- Prior preparation will enable you to be confident, to overcome interviewing inexperience, and to sell yourself and your qualifications. Begin by preparing your employment, educational and miscellaneous inventory sheets which will outline your qualifications. On these 8-1/2 x 11 sheets, which are for your eyes only, state the facts. Don't be modest, don't minimize your strengths, and be specific when describing results.
- Never go on an interview without first researching the company. One hour on the 'Web' or in the library utilizing Standard & Poor's, Dun & Bradstreet and Moody's reference material will enable you to know the company's products/services, markets, sales volume, locations and subsidiaries.

Prepare to answer all questions you do not want to hear. If you can sensibly answer the toughest questions, the others are easy. All questions potentially have follow-ups. Prepare to answer the logical who, what, why, when and how questions.

How to Conduct Yourself During the Interview.

- Prior planning requires you to inventory all responsibilities performed and to state how well you carried them out.
- Prove your competency by stating how well you performed in the past by using the 1-2-3 mini-story technique.- i.e., state the problem, describe your solution and emphasize the positive results.
Strive to project eagerness and interest; be a conversationalist by being yourself.
- Conclude the interview by getting a "what-will-happen-next?" summary. Accept the offer on the spot if it is what you want. Write a brief follow-up letter. Report your progress to your Account Executive.
- Be punctual. Professional manners and courtesy are fundamentally important. Show enthusiasm for the job.

How to Answer Questions

The question - answering rule says, "Answer every question in terms of your background and qualifications or in terms of the job to be filled."

- "Tell me about yourself" means, "Tell me about your qualifications." Pre-plan a three-to-five-minute answer describing your education and then mention each job in terms of accomplishment or performance indicators.
- Personality questions attempt to determine if you have the qualities being sought. "What kind of manager are you? Are you creative?" Answer these questions in terms of the obvious answer supported by past or present experiences as proof of your claim.
- Motive questions are asked to determine if you would enjoy the job. "Describe your ideal job. Would you prefer to work for a large or small company? What did you like most/least about your last job?" Answer these questions as they relate to the job for which you are interviewing, following the question-answering rule. Be specific and emphatic.
- Salary questions: When asked what you desire, say, "I'm presently earning \$_____, and I am prepared to accept a fair offer based upon my skills and experience." If possible, avoid answering the question until an offer is made.
- Prepare for tough questions. Anticipate what they will be. They will focus on: reason for leaving, quality of performance. Be brief but factual. Write out your answers, refine and memorize.
- "What are your weaknesses?" Use a positive-negative. For instance "sometimes my projects take a little bit longer than most, but they are always done correctly the first time and nobody has to go back and fix my work!"

Asking Questions-Employers Like to be Interviewed, Too!

Have a list, don't cross-examine, make them job related, ask questions that require an explanation.

- Interest questions pertain to the job opportunity, the company, its people, its products/services.
- Job-satisfaction questions relate to the importance of job, responsibility and authority, recognition and career potential.
- Past-performance questions concentrate on people who previously held the position, their performance and where they are today.
- Sales Questions help you determine the kind of person the employer wants to hire in terms of education, experience, future performance and personality: When you understand the kind of person the employer wants to hire, you can then say, "I can do the job you want done because I did it before and did it well."
- Ask for the job: "I can do what you want done and I want the job!"
- Avoid questions relating to salary, fringes, vacations and retirement until the job is offered and you accept.

Dress Properly

- For men: conservative suit, white shirt, contrasting tie, shoes shined, socks over calf.
- For women: skirted suit or dress with matching jacket, neutral-colored hose, simple pumps, minimum makeup.

After the Interview

- Contact your Recruiter immediately and discuss what transpired. If you're interested in the position, your Recruiter will help you get it.
- You're in the final stretch. The interviews have gone well, success seems well in hand. Here are some tips on putting the final touches on your job search:

Follow-up letters are noticed more by their omission. While no one ever got hired because of a thank-you note, lots of candidates have lost ground because they didn't write one, or the letter was poorly written. Try this format: Paragraph No. 1: State your enjoyment at meeting the recruiter and your interest in the company. Paragraph No. 2: Three sentences on some specific aspect about the conversation you had and that you feel qualified for the position. Paragraph No. 3: Reiteration of the first paragraph. Should it be handwritten or typed? Basically it depends on your handwriting and how formal the culture of the company is.

Sample Thank You Letter:

DEAR (MANAGER),

It has been a pleasure meeting you to discuss opportunities with (COMPANY NAME). I enjoyed learning more about the projects your company has underway and hearing about your ambitious plans for continued growth.

I came away from our meeting with a strong vision of how I might be part of that growth. My skills and background dovetail closely with your company's growing need for experienced (POSITION), and I believe I possess the talent, commitment, and energy you are looking for in perspective members of the ("COMPANY'S NAME team"). I feel confident my experience combined with my education in information systems will complement the strong growth potential of your company and create a mutually rewarding relationship.

To solidify your hiring decision, I encourage you to contact all my references and strengthen your belief in my capabilities and attributes. I look forward to joining your staff and contributing fresh ideas coupled with my self-motivated drive to provide the productivity your desire from a (POSITION TITLE).

Thank you for meeting with me again today.

Sincerely,

It's time for a Change...

You are considering a change because your present position or company doesn't offer the potential for growth you seek. You have looked at your decision to change both logically and emotionally, and it is the emotional decision that is the hardest. That old axiom "don't let your heart rule your mind" is much easier to say than do. But the fact remains, your needs are not being satisfied! Sure, the company has helped you progress professionally; sure, you've made many new friends; sure, you even feel comfortable because you can handle the job well. However, as certain as you're reading this, your objectives and goals are secondary to those of the company, and it will always remain that way. As soon as you thought about changing jobs, subconsciously you knew this was true.

Top executives agree that the days of the gold watch for 30 years of faithful service are gone. In fact, experience at several good companies is considered an asset because your horizons are expanded. Today, changing jobs is a necessity if you expect your career to grow.

▶ CAVEAT: Your changes shouldn't be too frequent, and you must be able to demonstrate that by making the change, your background was enhanced.

▶ CAVEAT: Don't resign until you have another position. Experience has shown it to be easier to find a job if you are presently employed.

Let's face it, it is natural to resist change and avoid disruption, and your present employment is no exception. If you're doing a good job your employer will not want to lose you, and you can expect a counter-offer even though you have accepted a job elsewhere. So long as you haven't started your new position, the company and your boss are going to woo you. You'll be enticed with more money; you may get, or at least be promised, a promotion. The appeal will be emotional in nature. There will be an apology made in the form of not knowing of your dissatisfaction. Your boss may even enlist a senior vice president or the president to help convince you that you're making a mistake. It is guaranteed that you will hear the following in some form or another:

1. "We have plans for you that will come to fruition the first of next month-it is my fault for not telling you."
2. "I shouldn't do this, but I'm going to let you in on some confidential information. We're in the process of reorganizing and it will mean a significant promotion for you within six months."
3. "We will match your new offer and even better it by "x" percent. This raise was supposed to go into effect the first of next quarter anyway, but because of your fine record, we will start it immediately."
4. "When I told our president of your decision, he told me he wants to have dinner with you and your wife as soon as possible. You just tell me when, and he will drop everything to discuss this situation with you."

Counter-Offer Implications:

A counter-offer can be a very flattering experience: your emotions may be swayed; you may lose your objectivity; you are going to be tempted to stay; "buyer's remorse" will set in - that apprehension of change will urge you to reconsider your decision.

▶ CAVEAT: Accept the counter offer only if you can answer "no" to all the following:

1. Did I make the decision to seek other employment because I felt a new environment would provide me with the opportunity to enhance my career?
 2. If I decided to stay after giving notice, will my loyalty be suspect and affect my chance for advancement in the future?
 3. The raise they're offering me to stay, is it just my annual review coming early?
 4. The raise I was offered is above the guidelines for my job. Does this mean they are "buying time" until a replacement can be found within the acceptable compensation guidelines for my job?
 5. I got the counter-offer because I resigned. Will I always have to threaten to quit each time I want to advance?
- Logic Must Prevail.

As a professional, your career decisions must be made objectively, free of the emotional pressures you are likely to experience. Others will try to influence you, but sometimes only you know things are not right and will not get better. How do you explain a "gut feeling"? Are you expecting your company to be sorry to see you leave and to make some attempt to keep you? Their response should be considered flattering, but it is beset with pitfalls too numerous to risk.

It is up to you to end your relationship as professionally as you began it. Write a letter that expresses your thanks for the opportunity they've extended and tell them you enjoyed your relationship, but that your decision is irrevocable. Put it in your own words and either mail it personally or hand it to your immediate supervisor. Be pleasant but firm. Your new employer is anxious to have you start, so remember, two weeks notice is almost always sufficient.

A counter-offer is really a belated confirmation of the contributions you've made. Move ahead to your new job knowing you've made the right decision. After all, if you don't look after your future, who will?

Giving Notice: Sample Letter

Giving notice should always start by requesting a meeting with your boss, or, in more casual environments, by walking into your boss's office with a resignation letter in hand, which you ask them to read. This meeting should be set up late in the afternoon if possible. Ideally, you would give notice at 4pm by walking into your boss's office and handing them a very simple letter of resignation. If your boss asks what the letter is, ask them to read it first, please. Most managers know that this means you are giving notice, and that is okay, let the letter be the ice breaker.

The letter itself:

The letter should be a very simple, very short letter. Typically, it should be 2 paragraphs and 4 total sentences. There is NO need to provide lots of information to your former employer. In fact that is considered unprofessional.

Sample Letter

Dear Boss,

Please accept this letter as my official notice of resignation. I appreciate the work we have been able to accomplish together at (company name), but I have now made a commitment to another organization, and plan to begin with them in two weeks.

Know that it is my intention to work diligently with you to wrap up as much as possible in the next two weeks to make my resignation as smooth as possible. If you have any suggestions on how we can best accomplish that goal, I hope you will share your thoughts with me as I am eager to leave on most positive note possible.

Sincerely,