

RESUMES AND THE JOB SEARCH....THE TRUTH REVEALED

By Bree Gurin

There is a plethora of articles on the web about how to write your resume to ensure that it's read and noticed above all others, the ideal number of pages a resume should consist of, etc., etc, etc. As a recruiter and resume writer myself, I find some of this information to be, at the very least, somewhat misleading and at the very worst, absolutely incorrect.

Agency recruiters, Human Resource professionals and hiring managers all find themselves inundated with resumes when recruiting for open positions. In a perfect world, we would all read each and every resume and do our level best to help each individual. However, in the *real* world, there are many responsibilities competing for our time and so we try to find clever ways to quickly weed out only the most viable candidates.

Here are some facts, myth busters and suggestions to help job seekers succeed in their quest for employment:

The One Page Resume Myth

The length of your resume is essentially immaterial... unless it is excessively long... 8 or more pages?? Anyone in a hiring capacity needs to see quantifiable, detailed information and eliminating that information to stay within a 1 page resume format will only hinder your job search and possibly remove you from the pool of candidates under consideration.

Who's Reading Your Resume Anyway?

Unless you have emailed or faxed your resume directly to a hiring manger or delivered it in person, a computer or a computerized resume scanning program is usually reading the document first, searching by "key words" that are most relevant to the open position at hand. This allows the hiring authority to quickly locate the most suitable candidates that possess the required skill set. One caveat to this statement....even when a resume is emailed, the recipient may still choose to use the "Find" feature in Word to search on the specifications of the open position rather than read the entire resume. Therefore, key words are....key!

Ornate Fonts and Formatting

Fonts, formatting and internet posting all come into play as essential tools to ensure that your resume is reviewed. If a resume is difficult to read, you run the risk of it being discarded. What makes a resume too challenging to peruse? Miniscule fonts for one....anything under 12 point hurts my eyes but perhaps those with better vision are comfortable with a 10 point font. Anything less than 10 point is potentially a straight path to the recycle bin. The font should also be crisp and easy to read. This is not the place to experiment with unusual or embellished fonts. Graphics are also out of place in a resume unless you are a graphic artist. However, even a graphic artist would be better served by providing on line samples of their work. Not only would this be

viewed as a far more professional approach but these samples furnish a much clearer insight as to the level of expertise the applicant possesses. It is also important to remember that the very attractive, bulleted version of your resume will not convert properly when posted on line. For this purpose, one should use a Plain Text version of the resume.

What Goes Where?

With regard to organizing the resume, the arrangement of information depends on the industry you are in, i.e. anyone in the IT arena should put all of their computer knowledge first since those skills are the most essential criteria in the recruitment process in this industry. Anyone else, with the exception of recent college graduates and possibly a few others, should put their work history right after their contact information and profile, followed by their skills and abilities, any certifications, special training or licenses and then education. While some employers will only consider candidates with a college degree, others view higher education as a plus, not an essential.

The Good Old Fashioned Dictionary – Online or Printed

As I'm sure even the most novice job seeker is aware, correct spelling and grammar are essential to being considered for any position and while Spell-check is a lovely feature available on most computer programs, nothing can substitute for reading the document over carefully and researching any word that is questionable.

Following instructions

Another possible reason for disqualification during the hiring process is not following instructions. If asked to paste your resume in the body of the email, do so! Many people are afraid of opening infected attachments. If asked for your salary requirement, provide it. This information allows the recruiter or hiring manager to know if you are a viable candidate based on your expectations and the company's budget.

Functional Format vs. Chronological Format...and the winner is...

Chronological, hands down! The functional format, while promoted by many, in my opinion does not provide the information needed to select the proper candidate. With this format it is impossible to tell how recently the candidate managed assigned projects, tasks and responsibilities. Unless the candidate is very inexperienced, I suggest using the chronological version which clearly indicates what was done as well as when and where.

Bree Gurin has been in the staffing industry for more than 28 years and is currently recruiting and placing candidates in the New York City area. She also has successfully been writing concise and informational resumes for candidates all across the country for the past 8 years. Bree can be reached at abgurin@snet.net or by visiting her website, www.gurinonline.com