Quick Tips for Making a Great Resume

You may have to do your best self-selling at an interview, but first, you have to score that interview. And your resume is the key. Employers use resumes as a convenient way to wade through a pool of job applicants, narrowing down the possibilities to a reasonable number of candidates to contact for an interview. That's why following these tips for making a great resume is so important.

Without sticking to some basic best practices and avoiding some all-too-common mistakes, your chances of getting called in are slim. Here are some simple, effective ways to stand out, look like a professional, and increase your odds of making it past the paper stage when looking for a job.

Important Resume Writing Advice

- Tailor your resume to the specific job you're applying for every time, putting emphasis on experience, skills, and goals relevant to the position.

- Put your name, contact info, and a brief title reflecting what you do at the top of the page.

- Open with a personal statement that gets attention and helps you stand out in a positive way; most hiring managers form an impression within seconds of looking at a resume.

- In general, keep a resume to one page or two at the most.

- There's no need to go back more than 10 years in your job history, but include any post-high school education, even if it was further back.

- You can omit completely irrelevant or especially short past jobs, but always be ready to discuss them if asked about gaps in your employment history.

- If you're short on relevant experience - or any professional experience, for that matter-focus, instead on your strengths and skills.

- Keep your resume easy to scan, with logical bold subheadings and bullet lists.

- Use a standard 12-point font like Times New Roman, Arial, or Courier New, and stick to just one font.

- Avoid using color, but you can try a small amount of one color for something like your subheadings-but keep it tasteful.

- List your employment history in reverse chronological order, starting with your current or most recent position.

- Include one or two sentences describing each of your previous and/or current jobs.

- Then, emphasize your accomplishments rather than simply listing job duties.

- Avoid empty words and phrases like "hard worker" and "team player."

- Don't start multiple bullet points in a row with the same word.

- Definitely include any volunteer experience you have.

- Also include some interests or extracurricular activities that are relevant to the job as a strategy for showing some personality.

- Put a few professional references down.

- Have a few people proofread your resume; it's easy to miss your own mistakes, and typos and spelling, grammar, or punctuation mistakes make you look unprofessional.

- Always email your resume as a PDF file to ensure the formatting remains intact.