Want An Unbeatable Resume? Read These Tips From A Top Recruiter

Kerry Hannon, *Forbes Magazine*

What makes an unbeatable résumé?

It has to be simple. No more than two pages. The average résumé gets read in 10 seconds. Be sure the content is on a level any high school senior could understand. In other words, the person looking at your résumé should be able to easily understand exactly who you have worked for and what that company does.

- Avoid the fancy-schmancy layout, font, and other special effects. Stick to traditional font of Times New Roman, 9 to 12 point size, and black type against a white paper. You might try a different type size for your name and the companies you have worked for, perhaps your title. But try to be consistent. Go easy on boldface type, italics, and underlining.

- Prepare it in a simple Word format that can easily be viewed on most computers. Not a table format or template.

- Use a reverse chronological order. List your present, or most recent job, first, and then work backwards. You state the complete name of the company you work for, or have worked for, and what they do, how long you were there— month and year. Then list the position you held and your accomplishments. You don't have to use full sentences. Begin with verbs. "Managed company tax reporting, finance, invoicing, purchasing," for example.

- Skip personal information such as married with three kids. Sounds stable to you. But to a hiring authority looking for someone to travel, it may keep you from being interviewed.

- Stories sell. Numbers, statistics, percentages get attention if you put in bold type. Increased profit by this 28%. Came under budget by 30%. If you were born and raised on chicken farm, note it on your résumé.

- Fuzzy key words and phrases should be avoided. These include customer-oriented, excellent communications skills, and creative. These words lack meaning and do absolutely nothing to help you get an interview.

- Use words that refer to titles- customer service, controller, manager, accountant,

- Get the photos off your résumé. You are looking for a job, not a date.

Replace your Objective" with a "Career Summary"

A Career Summary is designed to give a brief overview of who you are and what you do. Most Objectives sound similar: Seeking a challenging, interesting position in X where I can use my skills of X, Y, and Z to contribute to the bottom line. Not telling at all. Grab a hiring manager's attention right from the beginning, remembering you have only 25 few seconds to make a good impression. Spend time developing a summary that immediately gets their attention, and accurately and powerfully describes you as a solution to their problems

Network. Network. Network!

For unemployed candidates, handing out resumes should be a full-time job. The majority of mid- to senior-level positions are filled through networking, so contact absolutely everyone you know in addition to recruiters who are in a position to hire you or share insights. Networking can include:

- Personal business contacts, people you've worked for or who worked for you
- Vendors and sales representatives you've dealt with in the past five years
- People listed in the alumni directory of your alma mater
- With a solid resume in hand you'll greatly increase your odds of earning a closer look and getting that interview.