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Some Tips on Resume Writing and how to Conduct an Effective Job Interview

There is no denying that in the search for employment, that a practical and effectively written resume is the first major step in the recruitment and selection process. However, for a resume to stand out impressively, the job seeker must psychologically understand and recognize that his or her resume must be a “masterpiece” or “work of art” from a sales, marketing, advertising, and public relations perspective.

To put it mildly, consumers are usually drawn to products and services that offers attractive, in comparison, impressive, and convincing in appearance, can stand up to public scrutiny in terms of good quality, integrity, and ultimately good value for money in all respects. Interestingly, a job seeker’s resume will

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usually find itself among vast numbers of other resumes as per competition, quality, sales, market appeal and advertising outlay so to speak.

This understanding will naturally push a resume into merchandising status, meaning that no consumer would even pick up an item in the supermarket if such an item is not impressively displayed with a distinct appearance and appeal that suggests that the consumer should “come take me,” “come and buy me” “don’t leave me here on the supermarket shelf to suffer!”

My point may seem hilarious, but the concept cannot be denied. Therefore, a job seeker’s resume should “jump” in the face of an employer like a frightened or scared baby cat. In this case, your resume should be for better, and not for worse.

Now that your resume has caught the eyes of the employer its now a question of scrutiny and detailed examination of your qualifications, your related experiences and other positive attributes.

The employer would do a scan or a preliminary audit of your resume. What is the employer looking for in your resume? This a question that job seekers must provide for a specific job opening or job vacancy.

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In summary, the employer is desirous of a candidate who has specific qualifications, work experiences, and attributes at the “right” price, just like a consumer in the market for goods and services in market economy that relies on demand and supply among other factors.

In this scenario, the job seeker has the advantage because he or she can customize the resume (marketing brochure) to make it be appealing on paper to the employer. This is to ensure that the candidate is the ideal “match” on paper.

The job seeker must be cautioned, however, not to customize his or her resume consisting or reflective of exaggerations, misrepresentation, or fraudulent claims in their qualifications, work history, work experience, and other minor and major material facts. This would amount to fabrication of material facts.

With this being said, let us get down to the actual structure of the resume and what should be included or excluded so far as resume-writing is concerned.

A. What should be included in a Job Seeker’s Resume?

1. Customize the resume to match the specific job vacancy.
2. If the vacancy is focused on work experience, then describe your work experience first and vice versa, and if your qualifications are the major

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3. work factors of interest Be sure to accurately state your mailing address and additional contact details.
4. Your job objective must summarize qualifications and professional background and how relevant your experience is to the job vacancy and company's vision and mission.
5. List in date or chronological order, your work experiences, including dates of employment, names and addresses of recent and past employers. Please state months and years.
6. List your academic qualifications of various schools or colleges attended. Please state months and years.
7. List any relevant certifications and civic accomplishments.
8. Close the resume with the statement "References available upon request."
9. Before using the name and contact details, be sure to inform or advise persons in advance whom you chose to attest to your work and/or character reference.

B. What should not be included in a Resume?

By knowing what to include in a resume is only one part of the equation. The next critical step is to know what not to include in the resume which

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1. Misrepresentation and fabrication of your work history is unacceptable and is also fraudulent
2. To state someone is reference without their knowledge is unacceptable.
3. To be vague and not specify material facts related to a resume, is suicide, so to speak.
4. Do not create an e-mail address that is unprofessional, suggestive, vulgar or outrageous.
5. Your recorded voicemail should be professional and business-like.
6. Use social media wisely. It is unwise to post negative information on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc., employers do read your postings, especially if they wish to hire you.
7. Never use a Font size that is small or as this is very hard to read. The ideal Font size should be around 12-pitch, and easy to read.
8. Never say anything negative about your present or previous employers.
9. Do not state your present or expected salary, unless it's required in relation to the job. You will be offered a reasonable salary if you are the right candidate.
10. Do not state your religious and personal family background or history.

11. Never state your marital status or child-bearing status, unless it's required in relation to the job.
12. Never give the impression that you are desperate and in dire need of work.
13. Never state your disabilities, health condition or other challenges that exists, unless these things are asked about in the company's application.
14. Never state your military service or experience unless it is absolutely necessary
15. Do not use colored ink or paper to do your resume.
16. Do not send any photographs of yourself unless it is required.
17. Do not state any extra-curricular activities that is not true or of which you are not familiar.
18. Do not state or include a high-risk sport as a hobby or past-time.
19. Be sure to have an honest and reasonable explanation for any negative aspects or factors in your resume that may prevent or preclude you from employment.
20. Be sure to fully familiarize yourself with your resume and try to make it a one-page document.
21. Be sure to make frequent changes or amendments to your existing resume to ensure its up-to-date status.

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The Interviewer or Human Resources Manager Should Take the following Into Consideration:

The virtual stack of resumes in your inbox is narrowed and certain candidates have passed the phone screen. What are the next step?

1. An in-person interview.
2. How should you use the relatively brief time to get to know and assess a stranger?
3. How many people at your firm should be involved?
4. How can you tell if a candidate will be a good fit?
5. And finally, should you really ask questions like: “What’s your greatest weakness?”

What the Experts Say

As the employment market improves and candidates have more options, hiring the right person for the job has become increasingly difficult and more companies are competing for top talent. Applicants also have more information about each company’s selection process than ever before. Your job is not only to assess candidates, but also to convince the best ones to stay. Here’s how to make the interview process work for you the interviewer and interviewee.

Prepare your questions in advance

Before you meet candidates face-to-face, you need to figure out exactly what you’re looking for in a new hire so that you’re asking the right questions during

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the interview. Begin this process by “compiling a list of required attributes” for the position. What do they have in common? How are they resourceful? What did they accomplish prior to working at your organization? What roles did they hold? Those answers will help you create criteria and enable you to construct relevant questions.

Seek to reduce stress for the interviewer and interviewee

Candidates find job interviews stressful because of the many unknowns. What will my interviewer be like? What kinds of questions will he ask? How can I squeeze this meeting into my workday? And of course: What should I wear? But “when people are stressed out, they do not perform as well. Tell people in advance the topics you’d like to discuss so they can prepare. Be willing to meet the person at a time that’s convenient to him or her. And explain your organization’s dress code. Your goal is to “make them comfortable” so that you have a productive, professional conversation.

Involve (only a few) others

When making any big decision, it’s important to seek counsel from others, so invite a few trusted colleagues to help you interview. Monarchy doesn’t work. You want to have multiple checks to ensure you hire the right person. But on the other hand, extreme democracy is also ineffective and can result in a long, drawn-out process. It’s best to have three people interview the candidate: “the boss, the boss’ boss, and a senior HR person or recruiter.” Peer interviewers can also be important, because they give your team members a say in who gets the job. They will take more ownership of the hire and have reasons to help that person succeed.

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Assess potential and flexibility

Budget two hours for the first interview. That amount of time enables you to assess the person's competency and potential. Look for signs of the candidate's curiosity, insight, engagement, and determination. Assume that the person will be promoted and that they will be a manager someday. The question then becomes not only can this person do the job today, but can he or she do the job a year from now when the world has changed? Ask the candidate how he learns and for his thoughts on where your industry is going. No one can predict the future, but you want someone who is thinking about it every day.

Ask for real solutions from the interviewee

Don't waste your breath with absurd questions like: What are your weaknesses? Instead, try to discern how the candidate would handle real situations related to the job. Explain a problem your team struggles with and ask the interviewee to walk you through how he/she would solve it. Or, describe a process your company uses and ask him/her to identify inefficiencies. Then go back to your list of desired attributes. If you're looking for an executive who will need to influence a large number of people over whom he won't have formal power, ask: "Have you ever been in a situation where you had to persuade other people who were not your direct reports to do something? How did you do it? And what were the consequences?"

Consider "cultural fit," but don't become preoccupied

Much has been made about the importance of "cultural fit" in successful hiring. And you should look for signs that "the candidate will be comfortable" at your organization. Think about your company's work environment and

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compare it to the candidate's orientation. Is he a long-term planner or a short-term thinker? Is he collaborative or does he prefer working independently? But, your perception of a candidate's disposition isn't necessarily indicative of whether he can acclimate to a new culture. What you really want to know is: can the candidate adjust?"

Sell the job to the interviewee

If the meeting is going well and you believe that the candidate is worth wooing, spend time during the second half of the interview selling the role and the organization. If you focus too much on selling at the beginning, it's hard to be objective. But once you're confident in the candidate, tell the person why you think he or she is a good fit. Bear in mind that the interview is a mutual screening process. Ask the candidate if there's anyone on the team they'd like to meet. The best people to sell the job are those who "live it." Peers give an honest picture of what the organization is like."

Principles to remember as a human resources manager (interviewer)

Do:

- Lower your candidates' stress levels by telling them in advance the kinds of questions you plan to ask
- Ask behavioral and situational questions
- Sell the role and the organization once you're confident in your candidate

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Don't:

- Forget to do pre-interview prep — list the attributes of an ideal candidate and use it to construct relevant questions
- Involve too many other colleagues in the interviews — multiple checks are good, but too many people can complicate the process
- Put too much emphasis on “cultural fit” — remember, people adapt.

Finally, there other factors to consider when writing a resume or doing an effective interview. But, the intent of this document, is to provide a basic approach to this subject matter.

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