Resumes

There are three main reasons for a resume:

- To introduce yourself to the employer
- To promote your knowledge, skills, abilities, and accomplishments
- To obtain an interview

A well-written resume will produce results. Individuals often spend a considerable amount of time focusing on what needs to be in the resume rather than how it is written. Both are equally important.

Writing Tips

When preparing your resume, make sure it's SHARP:

Succinct: The writing in your resume should be concise, succinct, and to the point. Use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation in your writing.

Honest: You resume needs to be factually accurate, including dates of employment, education completed, job titles, and skills possessed.

Attractive: Your resume should be visually appealing to the eye. Make sure it is neat, organized, and consistent. Ensure you use enough "white space" by setting your margins at .5" or greater and providing ample space between sections.

Right: A resume should reflect who you are and your professional experiences. This does not mean it should be laden with unnecessary graphics or inappropriate personal information; it means you should feel comfortable using it to represent yourself as a candidate.

Pertinent: Your resume and the way it is organized should be relevant to the position. For example, you may need to make adjustments to your resume when applying for a position as an accountant versus a position as a project manager.

Components of a Resume

NAME AND ADDRESS

- Include home address; do not list work
- Include email address
- Include home and cellular phone number

CAREER OBJECTIVE

- This is an optional component to your resume
- One or two sentences
- Target your desired job or field of employment
- Be careful—this statement can be limiting
- Make sure you do not over generalize
- Avoid phrases such as "challenging, rewarding career." All employers would hope that someone wants a challenging and rewarding career!
- Example: "A position in the advertising field utilizing my communication skills."

EDUCATION

- List degree, institution, location, and date of completion
- Include minor, certificates, certifications, skill-based training, etc.
- Do not include high school

RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

- Cite position title, organization, dates, location
- Give a brief description of primary responsibilities
- Use action verbs in your description; quantify where possible
- Stress accomplishments and related skills
- If professional experiences are more than 15 years old, just list title, organization, dates, location; do not include description

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES/ASSOCIATIONS

- College- or community-related activities
- Include positions held
- Describe your accomplishments and honors
- List presentations, publications, papers, etc.

Preparing Electronic Versions of Your Resume

More and more employers are using online applications and tracking systems for employment. This means that it is not enough to just prepare your resume and make sure it's SHARP. You need to make sure it is easy to upload onto a web-based system and easy to download for the employer.

In preparing your resume for electronic use, keep the following in mind:

- If you use an editing function such as "track changes" in preparing your resume, make sure the function is turned off when you send your final copy. You do not want a potential employer to open up your resume and see that you just edited out someone else's name to put in yours.

- If you are able, convert your resume to a PDF format. A PDF is a "snapshot" of your resume and will secure the layout and formatting you used. In addition, a vast majority of individuals can download and open up PDF documents

- If you are unable to prepare your resume in a PDF format, make sure you limit special formatting, use universally accepted fonts (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Palatino), and do not include any special characters or graphics. When sending an electronic document, you have little control of who will receive it on the other end.

Cover Letters

When you submit your resume for a position, you will want to have a cover letter accompany it. A well-crafted cover letter may make the difference between getting a job interview and having your application ignored, so it makes sense to take the time to write a thoughtful cover letter for each application.

There are three main purposes of a cover letter:

- Inquire about position openings

- Answer a job advertisement

- Request a personal interview

A cover letter should complement, not duplicate, your resume. The goal of the cover letter is to clarify and interpret the facts of the resume and to highlight experiences and competencies that relate to the position for which you are applying. A cover letter is often your initial written contact with a potential employer, creating a critical first impression.

There are some important things to keep in mind:

- Neatness counts
- Use the same style font and paper as your resume
- Address the letter to a specific person
- State the position and how you qualify
- Be clear and brief