

Cover Letters And Resumes A Must For Jobs These Days

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I've been employed at Tiloben Publishing Company for quite sometime, and hundreds of people from all across the country have tried to get jobs here. Since I don't know anything about them, my initial response is to ask for a resume, which can tell me almost everything I want to know. Like most employers, if I'm impressed, and if funds are available, a request is made for an interview.

Surprisingly, many job-seekers obviously do not know what a resume (or vita) is or how to prepare one. Some don't know how important it is, and others just don't care.

Following are some pointers on what a resume is and how to prepare one, and on writing the cover letter. A lot of the information was taken from a very good book you may want to purchase. It's called, "Your Resume: Key To A Better Job," by Leonard Corwen.

A resume is a brief summary or history of your life accomplishments. It is a condensed autobiographical advertisement that "sells" you to a prospective employer for a good job, appointment or the like. It tells what kinds of jobs you've had, awards, experience, education, background and the kind of job or position you are seeking.

Simply put, the resume sells and tells who you are and what you want.

Usually, a resume is the first thing an employer learns about you, and if you're not careful, it could be the last. This is why it is very important to prepare a resume very carefully and accurately.

All personal pronouns such as I, we and us should be omitted in preparing the resume. Use an outline form to start sentences with active verbs in the past tense (directed, supervised, worked, performed, etc.).

A resume should always be neat and typed on regular white typing paper. Nothing is tackier than a resume full of typing errors, erasure marks, penciled or inked corrections, white-out blotches, type-overs and misspelled words. It paints the picture of a sloppy, careless person too risky to hire. That kind of resume has no problem getting into File 13, and for good reason.

If you can't type, hire a typist. Or, if you find it difficult to organize your materials in a professional way, there are many people skilled in resume preparations who can help you. They can be found in the classified sections of many newspapers. There's a small fee involved, but it may well be worth it.

THREE BASIC KINDS OF RESUMES

There are three basic kinds of professional resumes. They are chronological, functional and resumes for beginners. They all contain the same basic information, just arranged differently to cater to specific personal needs. This information falls into six categories: identification, title of position desired or objective, experience,

education, miscellaneous information, and references.

The **chronological resume**, which is the most popular, is written in this order: identification, position or objective, experience in chronological order with the last job first, education, miscellaneous information and references.

However, this kind of resume may not work if you have had several jobs in short periods of time. The **functional resume** is your best bet. It is written in this order: identification, position, summary of employment without the dates, experience with the dates of employment, followed by education, miscellaneous data and reference.

Explaining or summarizing your employment gives an employer a chance to see what you have accomplished without drawing hasty conclusions of job-hopping and instability. You may have left a job for reasons beyond your control such as phase-outs, relocations, bankruptcies or mergers. The functional method is really a PLUS in this case.

If you have just finished college, your experience is usually very limited. In this case, you should rely on the **resume for beginners** by selling your education as much and as casual as possible. The objective should be listed immediately after identification, followed by education including scholastic achievements and college activities, job experience (if any), personal data and references.

Where experience falls or doesn't fall, is the only major difference in the three types of resumes.

THINGS IN THE RESUME

Identification includes the name, address and telephone number. It should appear at the top of the page.

The **title of position desired** or **objective** is the headline of the resume

and should be matched against a specific opening in the company. It should appear by itself, directly below the identification, centered and in capital letters or underlined. For an employer to give a fair evaluation of the work you can do, many titles should be made more specific for such vague positions as personnel, advertising and administrative assistants.

Education. List the name of the college, dates you attended and degree earned. If the job you are applying for does not match your degree, simply list the kind of degree (BS, master's). Emphasize the area of your degree only if relevant.

The longer you have been away from college, the less important the details. On the other hand, if you are a recent graduate, elaborate a little on information pertinent to the position, being careful not to get long-winded. Too much information may do more harm than good.

List all supplementary education you may have received in other schools, including night, correspondence and business-related courses.

Experience tells employers what you have done for others and what you can do for them. It entails dates of employment, name and address of company, what the company does, title of your position and description of your duties.

Miscellaneous information includes age, marital status (both are optional), professional organizations and associations.

References are optional, or can be furnished upon request. If used, however, they should be very carefully selected. Try to use three good professionals. Avoid shaky references.

WRITING COVER LETTERS

Another important aspect of the resume is the cover letter, which is a very short letter explaining or keying

your resume to a particular job, by elaborating briefly on qualifications that may be buried in the resume. Such items as temporary phone numbers, where messages can be left, and present and desired salary can also be included in the cover letter. Be cautious, however, and mention salary only if it is requested, and be realistic.

The cover letter should be individually typed, not duplicated, and hand-signed over typed signature. It should contain your name, address and date 13 spaces from the top of the page, flush right. Type the name and address of the company and the person to whom you are sending the letter (if known) five spaces down and flush left. Double space and type the title of the position you are seeking, which can also be contained in the first paragraph. Double space again and type the salutation. Double space between the salutation and body of the letter.

Sentences within paragraphs should be single-spaced. Paragraphs should be double-spaced. There should be two spaces between the last paragraph and the closing, and four spaces between closing and your name. This should be aligned with the return address at the very top of the page.

Also in writing your cover letter, avoid overusing the word "I". Do not be arrogant or showy in language or phrasing, and never boast about your ability to work hard or how reliable you are. Do not give the company the impression that you will be doing them a great favor by "considering" a position. What you want, of course, is to be considered.

The cover letter, like the resume, should be spelled, punctuated and paragraphed correctly. It must be neat, clean, brief, concise and to-the-point, never more than one page.

The cover letter usually ends with some type of direct action, usually a request for an interview.

