

How to Write a Powerful Resume

by Carol Dunitz, Ph.D.

Your resume is an opportunity to meaningfully differentiate yourself from the competition. Speak with your own voice, sharing what you do along with the associated benefits. Let the reader know you're special and why. Avoid corporate jargon. And don't use over-worked meaningless phrases like 'results-oriented.' Develop several resumes that are job-specific if you are applying for different kinds of positions,

State Your Objective at the Onset. Modify it when applying for different jobs to increase your chances of being considered. Each company needs to know there is a good fit.

Use Original Creative Language. Let your voice shine through. This is a positive way to differentiate yourself from other applicants. Use strong verbs and powerful descriptions when describing what you have accomplished. If you have great communication skills, make sure they shine throughout your cover letter and resume.

Be Specific. Vague general language is meaningless and wastes the reader's time. It also makes you sound like every other applicant. That is not a good strategy for getting an interview or landing the job.

Be Concise. State your ideas succinctly. If you are relatively new in the workforce, you should have no trouble keeping your resume to one page. If your experience and credentials are more extensive you will need more space but should still make a concerted effort to edit appropriately so your resume does not become unwieldy. Shoot for two pages.

Share Your Accomplishments. If you deliver 110 per cent on the job, say so and let the reader know the impact. Provide work history, education, and training. Then highlight relevant skills and achievements. Now is not the time to be modest. Make sure your prospective employer knows the value you bring and why you will be an asset to the company.

Create a Visually Attractive Design. Your resume should be clean and simple with significant white space. Choose one font and stay with it. Use variations of that font for different purposes. Use bullet points when appropriate. And print your resume and cover letter on high quality paper. It helps make a positive first impression.

Include a Cover Letter. This is your opportunity to offer compelling reasons for why the reader should consider you. Focus on your most outstanding attributes. Be original and use a conversational tone. Close with a request for an interview. Nothing beats face-to-face communication for establishing rapport and advancing your cause.

Be Sure to Proofread. Bad grammar, typos, and misspelled words are very telling. If you can't manage to get these things right with your resume what can the reader expect when you are on the job?

Carol Dunitz, Ph.D. is president of The Last Word LLC, a communication and creative services company. She is a professional speaker and author of 'Louder Than Thunder,' a parable about listening and interpersonal communication. Dunitz is the playwright, lyricist and composer of 'Bernhardt on Broadway,' a musical about Sarah Bernhardt. She can be reached at 312.523.4774, cdunitz@lastword.com or www.DrCarolDunitz.com.