Writing a winning Resume

Are you clear on the objective of your Resume?

The role of the resume is simply to demonstrate a strong fit between the role that you are applying for, and your Professional Experience.
Its primary objective is simply to get you an interview, or a preliminary phone call.

Many people mistake it for a detailed, dry run down of their professional history, something you just add to as time goes on. This approach won't get you far because no one other than you is going to want to read it!

A winning resume will make someone want to meet you, in 30 seconds or less, because they think you might be a strong fit for their role. If nothing grabs their attention upfront research suggests they may not spend more than 8 seconds considering you.

So how do you grab their attention?

Design it to be scanned easily.
Agency Recruiters, Internal Talent Managers, HR Professionals and Hiring Managers are all very busy people. They often scan hundreds of resumes in an hour. Sometimes this is even done by computer software. They are looking for specific and relevant information connecting your skills to their vacancy.
That's why you need to keep it concise by carefully selecting your content, using keywords effectively and avoiding too much text on each page. All the recruiters tell us to make sure the first half page has all the most important info about you.

It needs to have a message
A good resume should also give the reader a clear message about who you are and what unique attributes you would bring to the role. Ideally this is achieved in a few well thought out sentences, which are supported by your recent relevant professional experience and achievements. Because cultural fit is such an important element of any job brief it's also useful to give a hint to your cultural style.

Remember the reader: it's all about what you can do for them.

Optimise for every application

It's important to have a strong base resume and to ensure that your resume effectively addresses the requirements of the individual job specifications. Carefully review the job ad and ensure that you are using the right keywords and examples to match the criteria they are looking for. However, ensure it is essentially still the same document. It's not good to have different versions in the market that all make you look like someone different.

Your Resume forms the first impression.

A resume is also used as an indicator of your professional style and standards. Inaccurate use of spelling and grammar, misused or misspelt technical terms and irrelevant or missing information don't make you appealing to a prospective employer. Long detailed documents show that you can't prioritise or tailor information for your audience. Many studies cite that poor spelling, grammar or content is the number one reason for a resume to be rejected.

Our Checklist for a Winning Resume

1. **Presentation** Is it presented in a professional way in 3-4 pages or less, and with <u>perfect</u> spelling and grammar? Is the key information easy to find?

2. **Messaging:** Do you have a clear message? Is it focused on what you can do for them? Does it set you apart from others with equivalent experience applying for the same role?

3. **Relevance:** Does it contain specific, tangible information about your professional experience vs lofty generic sentences (see example below) Is it optimised to the role you are applying for?

4. **Accurate and authentic?** Is it an honest portrayal of you and your career achievements? Would you be happy to show your colleagues?

5. **Does the first half page tell your best story?**
   - Your Profession.
   - -Your greatest career achievements?
   - -A concise, engaging personal statement that explains who you are, and what sets you apart?
   - -Contact Details, including an URL for your online profile? Include Visa information here if relevant.
   - -Career Summary & Relevant Qualifications.
   - -Useful information about how your last role relates to the one you are applying for?
   - -Essential keywords relating to your Profession
   - Some insight around your cultural working style or preferences?

How to ensure quality content.

1. It's essential to use fact based information only in your resume.

Many people commonly resort to "lofty statements" or "fluffy" corporate speak. This usually negates your impact and chance of interview. Here are some examples of how to structure information most effectively.

Lofty	Tangible
"Proven Results" "Drove Sales"	Lead initiative x which increased sales by x% over 3 years. Lead implementation of project X which generated savings of $xM . Supported team leader in Project X which delivered sales impact of $Xm over three years. Performance resulted in "Exceptional" rating in year end review. Nominated for "rookie of the year" 2012
"Experienced Professional" "Team Player"	10 years experience in the IT industry specialising in enterprise storage solutions (backup, disaster recovery, cloud) Demonstrated career progression from technical project management to team leadership and client relationship roles. Awarded "supplier of the year" whilst leading the account team for X

2. **Some thought starters for describing your achievements in a role**

- What 3-5 major things did you do in the role that made you successful?
- What specific results can you attribute to your efforts? What was the benefit of these to your company?
- What unique talent did you bring to the role and what was the tangible implication?
- Did you receive any recognition or awards?

3. **What can you leave out?**
- Long lists of responsibilities in each role: summarise the job purpose and focus on your key achievements.
- Detail about every role you have ever done. Beyond 5 years keep it very brief.
- Stick to essential education information only- , especially after 4-5 years Professional experience.
- Long generic lists of "skills" or self ranked skills (eg "Expert")
- Words like "references available on request" this is expected of any candidate.
- Hobbies- unless highly relevant to the role itself
- Family information (eg marital status) Employers can't legally ask you this information so you shouldn't provide it upfront.

Remember writing a resume is not just filling out a form. It's an art form to get your messaging and your content right. We can help to make you shine! Contact "Your Spark" for more information.