

Design a Winning Resume and Job Portfolio

You've completed your resume, and you are now sitting beside the phone wondering why you aren't getting calls from potential employers. Your education is good, you have work experience, and everything is in order, so that should be enough, right? Wrong! The majority of resumes will end up in the trash can unless they are written in an "eye-friendly" manner. Employers are busy and they don't have time to read every word on a resume. There have been outstanding candidates that have slipped through the cracks due to poorly crafted resumes.

The first piece of information a potential employee will look for is your objective statement. This is typically at the top of the resume directly before your job experience. Your objective statement must be interesting, intriguing, enthusiastic, and confident. It must be written in a manner that is clear, concise, and brief. Attention span and patience runs short when there are hundreds of resumes coming across an employer's desk daily.

Following are key components for writing a resume that will get the attention of employers:

- Do not have gaps in your work history. If there are gaps, be sure and explain it in your cover letter.
- Be brief with your job descriptions. Use action words as much as possible (managed, created, designed, etc).
- Make bullet points
- Ensure your resume is written in a manner which highlights your accomplishments as a result of a particular job. If you were an administrative assistant, briefly bulletize the achievements and results of your work. Did you save the company money? Did you increase employee morale or customer satisfaction? If you can include numbers, stats, and percentages, this is an additional plus. A "results-based" resume will get much more attention than a resume that simply offers bland statements of your job responsibilities.
- Include a section of awards & recognition you received.
- Include a brief section of community work and how your contributions made a difference.
- The most current education should be listed first with the name of the college, degree you received and date.
- If your GPA was above 3.5, by all means, list it on the resume. GPA's below 3.5 should not be listed. It may work against you.

In addition to a resume, it is critical that you understand how to design a job portfolio. According to statistics, a job portfolio is used by less than 4% of job candidates. This one document alone would place you head and shoulders above the competition once the economy rebounds. As you are preparing for your post-recession comeback, begin outlining a job portfolio which shows proof of your accomplishments. If you mention an award in your resume, include a copy of the award in your job portfolio. A job portfolio works similar to an artist, model, or photographer's portfolio. When going in for a potential job, they show samples of their work. Job seekers should do the same. When I was in management roles in corporate America, the few candidates that came in with a job portfolio always got the job. A well-written resume may get you an interview, but the majority of the time, a well crafted job portfolio will get you the job!

Following are items to include in your job portfolio:

- Recommendation letters
- Letters from Professors or Teachers (if you don't have work experience)
- Copies of awards and/or recognition
- Copies of evaluations (do not include the entire evaluation – just a few pages will do)
- Critiques you may have received from classes you taught
- Samples of projects that had a significantly positive outcome
- Newspaper clippings of articles written about you
- Committee nominations

A job portfolio should strongly highlight your character and accomplishments. Your documents could be in a hard cover binder, or you could create a paper document to leave behind. When you leave a copy behind, this gives the potential employer a constant reminder that you stood out from the other candidates.

And by all means, at the end of an outstanding interview, **ASK FOR THE JOB!**