

## Resume Do's and Don'ts

Peter Newfield



You know that a resume is your first step when searching for that fabulous new job, but how can you make sure that the resume you send out isn't going to get tossed into the blue recycling bin?

Many hardworking, educated professionals send out lackluster, hastily put-together resumes that don't merit the true value they can provide a potential employer. So, before you press the "send" button or lick the stamp, know that certain components of a strong, focused resume should not be overlooked. Here's a

little review of the most common Resume Do's and Don'ts.

**Don't Start with Education** Unless you've graduated from college in the past three years, the education part of your experience is not as important to prospective employers as your actual work experience.

**Do Include Scholarships and Awards** List these briefly under the Education section of your resume, along with any fraternal affiliations and elected positions.

**Don't Leave off Dates** You're wasting your time if you think your resume will be taken seriously without dates included next to each position listed. If you have gaps in employment for any reason, try to give a brief explanation in your cover letter, but do not eliminate dates from your resume.

**Do Blow your own Horn** What sets you apart from the thousands of other middle managers or sales reps submitting their resumes for the same jobs? A great resume has to include a few accomplishments or achievements under each job description. Did you open a new territory on Mars? Expand sales by 79% over last year's figures? Be factual, of course, but don't forget to include specific examples a job well done.

**Don't Misrepresent or Rephrase Your Title** Many companies have different titles that don't translate into the real world. But it isn't up to you to sugarcoat your corporate titles for mass consumption. If a background check reveals that you've changed your title, inflated your level of responsibility, or fudged on the dates that you were actually employed in each position, you will have no one else to blame but yourself.

**Do Choose the Right Resume Format** If you have been in the same industry for your entire career, then a modified functional format might be best. If you have jumped around and worked in various fields and in different capacities, then select a functional format which will highlight your skills and achievements.

**Don't List Jobs From 25 Years Ago** Most employers want to know, "what have you done lately?" While it's important to include relevant work experience, a strong resume

will focus on the past 10-12 years and summarize the previous five or so years. Don't list every job you've held since starting your newspaper route in sixth grade.

**Do Keep to Two Pages** With very few exceptions, a strong resume should be no more than one or two typed pages. Keep listings concise and to the point.

**Don't Include Personal Information** Wait until you're lucky enough to be called in for an interview before you tell prospective employers that you are six feet tall, non-smoker, enjoy scuba diving, have a lovely wife and three children, and volunteer at blood drives. Personal information doesn't belong in a professionally written resume.

**Don't Get Sloppy** No coffee stains, or white-out on your resume, please! Don't send out your resume on company letterhead; don't forget to include the correct postage on the envelope; and don't forget to proofread the document to make sure that your telephone number, address, and email address are all correct before sending it out.

**Do Bear In Mind** If your resume isn't a winner, it's a killer. Best of luck in your job search!