

Resume Magic to Hide Resume Flaws

Jennifer Anthony - 10/3/2007

If you're job hunting, the last thing you need is weakness in your resume. Any bit of negative information can keep you from landing your dream job. Issues such as lack of a college degree or little or no job experience don't have to hinder your efforts. All you need to do is work a little resume magic. What follows are some tips to help you create a winning resume.

Format is Everything

So, you've been unemployed for the past seven months. The last thing you want to do is draw attention to those dates. Instead, focus your resume to highlight your abilities. By listing your skills over your experience, you're highlighting those areas that are most important.

Types of Resumes

There are basically three types of resume formats: chronological, functional, and combination. When trying to hide your flaws, avoid the traditionally used chronological format that is organized by your employment history. This format will draw attention to negative aspects such as employment gaps or limited work history.

There are two formats that will conceal resume weaknesses well: functional and combination.

A functional resume lists skills categories and accomplishments over dates. Instead of listing past job experience, the resume would present categories relating to skills. For instance, if you are a medical transcriptionist, you could list "Transcription" as one of the categories and detail your words per minute and your accuracy record. You might also list your computer skills, and which programs you're especially proficient in. While this style works well to hide weaknesses, employers typically get frustrated while reading them because they can't figure out where or how you gained your experience and abilities.

The best alternative is the combination resume, which is a resume style I use quite often. It merges the chronological and functional resume styles by presenting your knowledge and abilities gained from work experience in reverse chronological order. The benefit to this style is that it still looks familiar to the chronological style that most employers are accustomed to reading while emphasizing your applicable skills.

How to Stand Out from the Crowd

What makes you unique? If you're talented in unexpected areas, bring these to light on your resume. Whether you spent years as a file clerk, or flipped burgers, you still have skills. Highlight these. How did you contribute at past places of employment? Detail your achievements and honors.

Do you speak another language? Can you troubleshoot a faulty computer? Do you have the ability to soothe ruffled feathers? These are all assets and should be listed as such. If you love to spend hours surfing the 'Net, detail your research skills. If you enjoy a good conversation, talk up your people skills. Surely, there are plenty of ways to set you apart from the competition.

If you just graduated from school or don't have much in the way of employment experience, fear not. You still have skills. At which courses did you excel? What papers received high marks? Did you win the high school science fair? These are all worthwhile resume contributions.

If you want to be called in for an interview, your resume has to stand out. Even if you don't have as much experience as your peers, or a mottled work history, you can still make this happen!

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