



Resume Preparation Basics

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The resume preparation advice in this article is designed for people who are new to job searching (e.g. recent graduates) and for people who have been out of the job hunting market for some time (e.g. you've recently been laid off after being with the same company for many years.)

Before you tackle your job search, make sure you are in the right frame of mind. Look at job hunting as an opportunity to move closer to the goals you've set for your life. Start to feel good about the process, even before you start. Listen to or sing your favorite song, look at pictures that make you smile or read a quote that inspires you. If you're starting to feel positive and confident, let's get going on your resume.

The resume is the gateway to getting to the next stage of the hiring process — the interview. Remember that companies receive hundreds of resumes for every job opening they advertise. Human Resource departments can't possibly interview all the people that submit resumes, so they employ resume screening. Today, many companies use software programs that review and select the resumes that contain the most keywords found in the job posting. If your resume doesn't contain these keywords it will unfortunately be deleted before a human eye has even had a chance to see it! To help keep your resume out of the trash bin make sure you read the job application very carefully and that you use as many of the "exact" words and phrases found in the job posting in your resume.

But don't get carried away with mimicking the ad. What you include in your resume has to be true! Never ever put false information in your resume. Don't exaggerate your skills either. If you can barely speak another language, don't write that you speak it fluently. It may look impressive at first, but it's bound to get you into trouble sooner or later. The truth has a habit of revealing itself at the most inconvenient times.

Ensure that ALL the information contained in your resume and cover letter is relevant. This is particularly important when you've reused content from previous documents. Also, make sure that you have the correct name of the person and the company you are writing to.

Lastly, remember to check and recheck your resume and cover letter before sending them out. They should represent the very best you, that means no spelling or grammatical errors. Sending them out with typing mistakes will prompt employers to assume that you'll also be careless on the job. It's a good idea to walk away for awhile and then return to proofread your cover letter and resume later. The short break will greatly increase your chances of finding errors. Better yet, after you have proof read them have someone else carefully read them. You'll be amazed at what they might find.



YES, THE JOB IS YOURS!!!



Thankfully these days if you need help with your resume, there are many organizations that offer assistance, often at no cost. Do an online search for “free resume help”. These companies will give you guidance with the type of resume to use, e.g., chronological or functional, how to deal with gaps in your employment history if you have been in career transition for some time, and much more. Most will, at the very least, get your resume through the new online screening processes.

Job searching doesn't have to be frightening. Adopt a right attitude, get the right information and then apply what you've learned. As I like to say, "Keep moving forward and looking upwards!"

Colin A. McClean is the author and illustrator of [A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To... My Career!](#) He is a long-time cartoonist whose works have appeared in local, national and international publications. His most recent career move was into the field of employment services. Prior to and during this latest global economic downturn, Colin has led classes on job search options and other career change opportunities. He's heard and seen the many challenges that face job seekers today. Learn more at afunnything.net