Sharpening Your Résumé

Uncertain economic times have forced many seasoned professionals to brush off their resumes and begin a job search for the first time in ten, fifteen and even twenty years. As the job market is flooded and many companies are utilizing talent management services it's essential to have a stand out resume so you won't be overlooked. Aside from an error and typo free resume with key action words, how else can you rise above the rest?

1. *Use a conversational tone on your cover letter.*

    With the crowded job market and resumes flooding in, would you rather read a canned cover letter with the requirements or feel a personal connection to the applicant? This is the first opportunity to show you have a personality, a personal skill that will not be overlooked by hiring managers seeking applicants with not only the requirements but with transferable skills. You will be more memorable because you have created a connection.

2. *Tailor your resume for each position.*

    Include keywords from the job description and highlight your accomplishments around the requirements, in order of priority. A recruiter is not going to read your resume word for word. If three of the job's top requirements are not met by the third line, there's a possibility your resume will be tossed. Be sure to mention specific software and technology competencies based on requirements.

3. *Don't think you're limited to one page.*

    If you have been in the workforce for twenty years and have valuable skills to showcase, you are not limited to one page. Recent graduates or those with less employment history should stick to one page rather than "fluffing" their resumes. Recruiters will scan your resume, but if they catch valuable skills they won't mind scanning two pages instead of one.

4. *Keep formatting simple.*

    While an eye-catching resume made in a design program looks amazing printed, chances are the company will require you to electronically submit your resume in a Word document format. Double-check for errors when you are required to upload your resume into automated systems; a resume with an uncommon format will have more errors. Recruiters do not have the time to search for what they're looking for; use a standard format so they know where to look for each requirement. An uncommon format may irritate time-crunched recruiters. Use a common font, like Arial or Times New Roman in no less than size 10.

5. *Utilize social media to distribute your resume.*