

## Resume Writing Tips for Information Technology Professionals

The reality of today's employment market is that there are too many resumes submitted for most job openings. This means that in order for your resume to have a chance of being reviewed by the hiring authority it must first pass through a "Resume Gatekeeper". The gatekeeper can be as simple as resume scanning software or a member of Human Resources.

How do you improve your chances of making it through a Resume Gatekeeper? The quick answer is "Know Your Audience". The Resume Gatekeeper will look for keywords and job criteria (such as certain technical expertise, industry experience, revenue/size of your previous employers, certifications); career progression and proper formatting and grammar.

### *Helpful Tips*

Writing or updating your resume requires significant planning and research. There are many resources available on the Internet to help you format and write an outstanding resume. A well-written and formatted resume will help you to get past the gatekeeper and move to an interview with the ultimate hiring authority. The following are some specific tips for IT professionals as you look to write or update your resume

- Keep in mind that your resume will have to make an impact within the first 15-20 seconds. This means your resume needs to make an impact quickly.
- Start your resume with a brief summary of your experience - 3 or 4 lines to explain your expertise.
- **Do not** include an objective – these do more harm than good.
- After your brief summary, include a section outlining your skills including: Languages, Operating Systems, Software, Hardware, Networking, etc. Make sure to be specific and include all that you have experience with including which versions, etc. Example of how it should look:

**Operating Systems:** Windows, Unix, Linux

**Languages:** Java, Visual Basic, C/C++, C#, Perl

**Database:** Oracle, MS SQL Server

**Networking:** TCP/IP, LAN/WAN

- Make your resume easy to read by adhering to one font and punctuate your accomplishment-filled resume with **bolded** section headings.
- Use bullets and limit the use of paragraphs. Bullets are easier to read and are visually effective but be sure to be precise and get to the point using as few words as possible.
- The chronological resume is still the resume format preferred by hiring authorities. It is ideal for candidates who have a substantial employment history and relevant work experience with no large gaps between jobs.

- Try to keep your resume to a manageable length. Expand on your most recent projects and limit the amount of information on past positions.
- Keywords are important. Tailor your resume to reflect your experience with keywords that a Resume Gatekeeper and hiring authority will be looking for.
- Work history for the last 10 years must include the month employment changed. Leaving out dates or month started and ended leads to questions about possible gaps in employment.
- When listing your employment history, be sure to note the industry, size and whether the companies you worked for were public or private. For example:

ABC, Company, Any City, USA (\$250M, private software company)

This makes it easier for the reader to compare your work history with their needs.
- **Do not** include a Personal Interests section at the end of your resume.
- In the Education section, do not include year of graduation. Be sure to include your major and GPA, if beneficial. If you have a Computer Science Degree, for example, but minored in electrical engineering, list your minor as well.

### ***Common Resume Blunders***

- Too focused on job duties – Prospective employers want to see accomplishments, what makes you an A-level candidate and specific examples of how previous employers benefited from your performance.
- An Objective statement that is too general and should not be included on an IT resume - An example of a poor Objective statement is “A challenging position that will enable me to contribute to organizational goals while offering an opportunity for growth and advancement”. If you are on a career track, consider replacing the objective with a tag line, which is a statement of what you do or what your area of specialty is. Again, it is recommended you do not include an objective statement on an IT resume.
- Too short or too long a resume – Too many candidates try to squeeze their experience onto one page, because they have heard that a resume should never be longer than one page. When formatting a resume on one page, many job seekers delete their most impressive achievements. The reverse is also true. Take the candidate who rambles on and on for pages about irrelevant or redundant experiences – the reader will easily be bored. The key when writing your resume is to ask yourself, “Will this statement help me land an interview?” Only include information that elicits the answer “Yes” to that question.
- Misuse of personal pronouns (“I” and “me”) and articles (“an” and “the”) - A resume is a form of business communication and should be concise and written in a telegraphic style. There should not be any mention of “I” or “me” and only minimal use of articles. Here is an example:

The statement: I developed a new IT auditing procedure that reduced the auditing expenses by 10%.

Should be changed to: Developed new IT auditing procedure that reduced auditing expenses by 10%.

Most people write a resume because everyone knows that you have to have one to get a job. Often times, resumes are written out of obligation. In reality, a resume is an advertisement, a tool with one specific purpose – to win an interview.