

## Résumé Rules: Do's and Don'ts for Success

One of the biggest challenges for most administrative professionals searching for a job is creating a compelling résumé. It doesn't help that the rules for crafting this document change frequently. (e.g., Should you keep your résumé to one page? Is it wise to include your hobbies?)

That's why it's important to know the current dos and don'ts of résumé writing. The following tips will help you persuade a potential employer that you're the best candidate for the job:

### **Do target the content.**

Take the time to tailor your résumé to the requirements of each position you're applying for by highlighting your relevant skills and experience. For instance, if you are applying for an entry-level data entry opportunity, you might devote more space to the data entry work you performed during a summer internship than your accomplishments as a receptionist while with the company.

### **Don't forget to start with a bang.**

To capture your readers' attention right away, begin your résumé with a brief summary of your qualifications. Here's an example: "Dedicated administrative professional with thorough knowledge of Office programs and excellent written and oral skills. Possess Certified Administrative Professional rating and four years of professional experience." By clearly describing your professional background, as well as any designations you possess, at the top of your résumé, you'll stand out as a hiring manager plows through dozens of documents.

### **Do emphasize ROI (return on investment).**

It's a common résumé trap to highlight a "laundry list" of skills you possess instead of showing how you used those abilities to impact the company's bottom line. For example, rather than saying, "trained employees on new timesheet process," you might write, "developed a PowerPoint presentation and gave hands-on instruction to 25 staff members, cutting timesheet-related tasks in half."

### **Don't think you must keep your résumé to one page.**

While the traditional advice has been to limit résumés to one page, most managers today are willing to read past the first page. Nearly half (44 percent) of executives polled by our company said they prefer résumés that are two pages long. Employers are willing to spend more time reviewing application materials in an effort to determine who is most qualified for a certain role. Just don't go overboard: Hiring managers want to see that applicants can prioritize information and concisely convey the depth of their experience.

### **Do choose your words wisely.**

Many organizations electronically scan résumés and search keywords, so, if your experience matches what the company is looking for, try to include the exact phrases and specific applications listed in the job description. If the description asks for an individual who possesses three or more years of administrative experience and a Certified Administrative Professional designation, and you have this background, be sure you include these points in your résumé. This will increase the number of hits your résumé generates during the initial screening process and improve your chances of being invited for an interview.

**Do sweat the small stuff.**

Eighty-four percent of executives polled by our company said it takes just one or two typographical errors in a résumé to remove a candidate from consideration for a job opening; 47 percent said a single typo could be the deciding factor. So in addition to proofreading your document several times, ask a few close friends to review your résumé before sending it out. They may spot problems your spell-check function didn't catch.

**And some final don'ts:**

- Don't list a quirky e-mail address on your résumé. Employers generally don't want to ask "lvtohunt@xyx.com" or "partygrl000@abc.com" in for an interview. Instead, create a separate account for professional purposes.
- Don't include irrelevant personal information, such as your favorite food or hobbies. If you volunteer at an organization or speak a second language that relates to the job, it's OK to mention that information.
- Don't use complete sentences; hiring managers prefer short, bulleted statements.

While there is no magic formula for creating the perfect résumé, there are certain things to do and not do that will increase your chances of success. By following these, you'll create a standout document.