TIPS TO CREATING A PROFESSIONAL RESUME

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1. LIMIT THE RESUME TO ONE OR TWO PAGES (MAXIMUM)

- Use specific descriptions and think relevance.
- Be concise and to the point. Make all the words count.
- Your resume should be a series of fragments – avoid using complete sentences.
- Your resume should NOT contain the words "I", "me", or "my".
- The phrases "etc." and "responsibilities include" are redundant and unnecessary.
- Your resume is not an autobiography – it's about the skills you have that the employer wants!

2. CONSISTENCY THROUGHOUT THE RESUME IS IMPORTANT. THIS APPLIES TO:

- Spacing before and after headings
- Bullet styles and indents
- Font size and style
- Formatting (bold, italics, underlining, all caps)
- Placement and format of dates

3. ACCURACY COUNTS

- Your resume should be completely error-free. Double/triple check information for accuracy.
- Have someone else review your resume to point out errors you may have overlooked.

4. DO NOT USE RESUME TEMPLATES OR WIZARDS

- They're inconsistent.
- They don't like change. So, it's difficult to make updates to your resume.
- They don't include headings that "work for you".
- Your resume will look like many others; it won't "stand out in a crowd".
- Some electronic or web-based application systems do not recognize templates, which makes the content of your resume unreadable.

5. FORMATTING YOUR RESUME

- **Margins:** Can range from ½ -1 inch. Give your resume an organized appearance.
- **Font size/style:** Between 10 – 12 points; Choose a professional font and be consistent.
- **Bullets:** Use bullets to describe responsibilities and accomplishments. They give your resume the illusion that information is concise and to the point. Action verbs should follow each bullet.
- **Paper:** Print your resume on high quality paper (not photocopy quality) in a professional color.

6. INFORMATION SHOULD APPEAR IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

- List most important headings first, followed by least important headings.
- Dates are less important – list them on the right side of the page; not the left.
- Within each section, list information in reverse chronological order (most current information first).

7. BE POLITICALLY CORRECT AND KNOW THE INDUSTRY WHERE YOU ARE APPLYING

- Avoid gender-specific terms such as "freshman", "salesman", "chairman."
- Avoid using slang terminology and clichés.

8. PERSONAL INFORMATION IS IRRELEVANT

- Do NOT include a photograph of yourself on your resume.
- Your hobbies, marital status, number of children, sexual orientation, religion, political affiliation, birth date, age, etc. is none of the employer's business. If it is not job-relevant, don't include it!

9. IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THE DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF YOUR RESUME:

- **Objective:** Short and concise; to the point. But don't limit yourself too much.

- **Education:** Include Degree, Major, Minor/Concentration, Anticipated Graduation Month/Year, Institution, City, State. Include most current experiences first, with most important information first. High school is ancient history; don't include it. Dates of attendance are not important (Dates of attendance are also a great way for employers to guess your age, which could be a basis for discrimination.) What's important is your expected date to obtain the degree.

  Bachelor of Science/Art in _____, Expected Month year
  Major: **Bold your major** / Minor: **Bold your minor/concentration if relevant**
  Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA 17257
  Accreditation Information (if your program has been accredited)

  Subheadings: Consider including relevant subheadings under "Education". (Examples: Honors, Related Coursework, Study Abroad)

- **Computer Skills:** Languages, Operating Systems, Applications (What sets you apart from others?)

- **Certifications:** Relevant certifications you have obtained or are in the process of obtaining (include dates completed or anticipated dates of completion)

- **Experience:** Separate into relevant categories that work for you. Experiences can be paid or unpaid. Potential headings include: Internships, Related Experience, Research Projects, Community Service, Campus Leadership, Professional Development, Study Abroad, Laboratory/Field Skills, Military History, Presentations/Publications, Conferences Attended, Professional Memberships, and Additional Experience.
  - Tailor your resume to the position and/or industry. Convince the reader this is your ideal job.
  - Be specific in your accomplishments/responsibilities. Begin each bullet with an action verb.

Poor Examples

- Data entry
- Utilize technology
- Operate cash register
- Provide customer service
- Read newspapers to residents
- Cleaned kennels
- Load and unload stock and equipment
- Assist supervisor and co-workers

Better Examples

- Utilize HTML and JavaScript to develop organizations' websites and update as needed
- Resolved software issues utilizing Unidata retrieval capabilities
- Assessed, treated and rehabilitated athletes on seven collegiate teams which accounted for 1,250 training hours
- Conducted confidential one on one interviews with children, parents and foster parents concerning behavior issues
- Provided technical assistance to farmers, ranchers and others concerned with conservation of soil, water and related natural resources
- Maintained kennel area, ensuring that environment remained clean and sterile
- Adhered to safety procedures during loading/transport of equipment to minimize risk of injury to self and others
- Demonstrate product knowledge and assist customers to ensure high quality shopping experience
- Read newspaper and dialogued with residents to work on social and cognition skills

10. ITEMS TO AVOID IN YOUR RESUME

- **Abbreviations:** The only exception is the use of the two-letter state abbreviation. Abbreviations are short cuts. If you're willing to take short cuts on your resume, are you going to take short cuts on the job?
- **Graphics:** They make your resume look "cluttered" and unprofessional.