What To Include

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Most Effective Resumes

The most effective resumes when applying for federal jobs are those that clearly articulate how an applicant's skills and experiences align to the selection criteria defined by the job opportunity announcement. Applicants should always tailor their resume to the job opportunity to which they are applying. Consider these additional tips in ensuring you've created and are using the most effective resume.

Pay Attention to Keywords Whether you're writing your first resume or updating an existing one, stop and think about which keywords you need to add based on the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities required for the position. You could be the most qualified person for the position, but you could be lost in a sea of applicants without the right keywords.

A Single Keyword Communicates Multiple Skills and Qualifications When a recruiter reads the keyword "analyst," he or she might assume you have experience in collecting data, evaluating effectiveness, and researching and developing new processes. Just one keyword can have tremendous power and deliver a huge message.

Study Job Opportunity Announcements This is the best way to determine important keywords. Review several job opportunity announcements, similar to your ideal position – even those in other geographic areas. You're looking to find skills, experience, education and other credentials important in that occupation. Focus on the "requirements," "skills" or "qualifications" sections of job ads, and look for "buzzwords" and desirable credentials for your ideal job.

Be Concise Recruiters often receive dozens or even hundreds of applications for certain positions. The first step involves quickly skimming through submissions and eliminating candidates who clearly are not qualified. Look at your resume and ask:

- Can a hiring manager see my main credentials within 10 to 15 seconds?
- Does critical information jump off the page?
- Do I effectively sell myself on the top quarter of the first page?

The Sales Pitch It is crucial that your resume effectively sells your credentials. Key selling points need to be prominently displayed at the top of the first page of the resume and directly address each question asked in the KSA section. For example, if an advanced degree is an important qualification, it shouldn't be buried at the end of a four-page resume. If a KSA question asks about your writing ability, immediately detail that applicable experience.

Use an Editor's Eye A resume doesn't have to contain every detail of your work experience. So be judicious. If your college days are far behind you, does it really matter that you pledged a fraternity or delivered pizza? The editing step will be difficult if you are holding on to your past for emotional reasons.

Use Numbers to Highlight Your Accomplishments If you were a recruiter looking at a resume, which of the following entries would impress you more?

- Wrote news releases.
- Wrote 25 news releases in a three-week period under daily deadlines.

Clearly the second statement carries more weight, because it uses numbers to quantify the writer's accomplishment. It provides context that helps the reader understand the degree of difficulty involved in the task. Numbers are powerful resume tools that will help your accomplishments draw the attention they deserve from prospective employers. With just a little thought, you can find effective ways to quantify your successes on your resume.

Think Money All organizations are concerned about money. So think about and articulate ways you've saved money, earned money, or managed money in your internships, part-time jobs and extracurricular activities. A few possibilities may include:

- Identified, researched and recommended a new Internet Service Provider, cutting the company's online costs by 15 percent.
- Wrote prospect letter that has brought in more than $25,000 in donations to date.
- Managed a student organization budget of more than $7,000.

Think Time "Time is money." Organizations are constantly looking for ways to save time, perform work more efficiently, and meet internal and external deadlines. So, whatever you can do on your resume to show that you can save time, make time or manage time will grab the recruiter's immediate attention. Here are some time-oriented examples:

- Assisted with twice-monthly payroll activities, ensuring employees were paid as expected and on time.
- Attended high school basketball games, interviewed players and coaches afterward, and composed 750-word articles by an 11 p.m. deadline.
- Suggested procedures that decreased average order-processing time from 10 minutes to five minutes.

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