

DON'T SEND A RESUME...

But DO Send a Competitive Marketing Document

By Beverley Neil, CRW, CERW

Viewing your résumé as more than just lists of what you have done and where you did it is vital to not only the mechanics of your job search, but to your attitude towards your job search. Viewing your résumé and cover letter as **Competitive Marketing Documents** automatically imparts a feeling of purpose, of professionalism and confidence.

Your résumé and cover letter is very often your first impression. As such your résumé and cover letter needs to be impeccably laid out and to impart only the essential information in a strong easy to read format spanning no more than two to three pages – maximum – unless you have some *extremely* solid and relevant information that necessitates four pages. Put briefly – cold, hard facts concisely and powerfully presented.

Key Words are Not Just for Web Sites

The first third to two thirds of your résumé is where the reader gleans the information necessary to know if you are a valid candidate for the position. As such you need to include Key Words relevant to the industry and the position in this strategic area.

Key words are the words that your industry knows and identifies with. A job seeker applying for a gardening position stating within this strategic space that he is skilled in negotiation or closure and had a degree in economics would leave the reader cold.

Even if in a past position he did utilise these skills it is irrelevant to the position he is applying for. Under the relevant position in his résumé he may

briefly include those skills or qualifications but for the cover letter and the first section of the résumé words like trenching, bedding out, horticultural degree and expert knowledge of indigenous gardening principals are more likely to get the reader's blood pumping.

Key words may also be gleaned from the position description of a specific advertisement. Then it is simply a matter of mirroring back to the reader what he or she wants to hear. Not in one long list as specifically taken from the advertisement, but strategically placed within this section and throughout the document. Be careful to only mirror back the skills you truly have and not just use the list verbatim whether you have the skills or not.

Take time to think about the skills you have acquired that are relevant to the position and the industry. Not all of these will be included in the job advertisement but will still be of vital importance to your application – then include them in the introductory portions of your résumé and under the relevant employment or work experience history.

Sell It – Don't Tell It

One of the biggest hurdles that individuals face when compiling their own résumés is their natural modesty and inability to sell themselves. This very often results in the compiling of lists of what you DID instead of documenting what you ACHIEVED.

For example, an administration assistant may write:

- Reorganised filing system.

Yes, this is what he/she DID but says nothing of the full picture of what was ACHIEVED by that reorganisation. This second bullet point gives a much more concise and powerful description:

- **Increased efficiency** and enabled rapid, accurate responses to customer enquiries through detailed reorganisation and streamlining of filing system.

Think about the Words you Use

Use every tool at your disposal to make yourself stand out from the crowd. Never exaggerate or make claims about what you have not done, but do use strong selling words.

If you have only brief experience of one of the job's criteria state that you are familiar with, or knowledgeable in, or have experience of, but if you really excel in a particular area then say so using words such as '*expert knowledge in*' or '*acknowledged expertise*' etc then go on to 'prove' that statement through a concisely written example.

Always write using powerful, action statements to sell yourself and your achievements. But do not over indulge. Keep it brief, brief, brief, keep it accurate and keep it strong.

About The Author:

Beverley Neil, owner of *d'Scriptive Words*, has dual international résumé writing accreditation, is a multiple award-winning résumé writer and is known for her ability to craft interview-winning resumes for job seekers. Recognising the need, she has authored and runs the [Online Resume Writer's Course](#) teaching professional resume writing, and the [DIY Resume Writing Course for Job Seekers](#). For more information visit www.d-descriptivewords.com