The Do's and Don'ts of Writing a Resume

There are so many things to consider when writing a resume and that list seems to change continuously. The following is a list of the tried-and-true do's and don'ts of writing a resume.

Do's

1. **Do** focus your resume for the position you are applying for. You can change the specific skills to reflect the position, or if the position you are applying is similar in needed skills, then you can structure your resume for all jobs in that field.

   Example – You are applying for a Human Resources Generalist position, so you list your HR skills and certifications. Next you apply for an Office Management position, so you need to change your resume to include management skills and experience.

   Example – You are applying for multiple K-12 Physical Education Teacher positions. The real change is the schools are in different districts, but the job is the same. Then you would just have one resume focused on being a physical education teacher.

2. **Do** be aware of the Applicant Tracking System. This is a computerized system in which resumes are scanned looking for specific words. If you know the employer uses one of these systems, then use the same words from in the job description or job posting.

   Example – If you complete your resume and say you did administrative assisting, but the tracking system is looking for the word secretarial.

3. **Do** use numbers and data to show your accomplishments at previous positions.

   Example – Increased sales by $1,000,000.00 annually.

4. **Do** include volunteering, internships and other experience that have skills that qualify you for the position. Even if you were not paid to do it, you still learned and completed duties.

5. **Do** show changes and promotions at previous positions. Show how you moved up.

> *Example* – Show the changes as follows and bullet the duties for each separately:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | ABC Company | 12/5/21-7/20/23 |
> | **Office Manager** | |
> | ABC Company | 10/9/18-12/4/21 |
> | **Accounts Payable Clerk** | |
> | ABC Company | 11/3/15-10/8/18 |
> | **Receptionist** | |

6. **Do** use real English. No need for big words. It doesn't make you sound smarter.
7. **Do** keep it to one page and remember the first third of the page is the most important.
8. **Do** make sure to have important information stand out using text effects like Bold.
9. **Do** use digits instead of spelling out the word.
   > *Example* – "22" vs. Twenty-Two
10. **Do** make sure the same type of information is aligned.
    > *Example* – Names of companies, dates, city/state, and job title

Don'ts

1. **Don't** copy a paste a job description from the classified into your resume. The employer will recognize their own job description.
2. **Don't** include confidential information.
3. **Don't** oversell simple jobs. Babysitting should not be sold as Childcare Engineer developing cutting edge methods is daily care of budding minds.
4. **Don't** use cliches or jargon. The reader may not understand what it is.
5. **Don't** say negative things or use negative phrases.
6. **Don't** include anything that can be discriminated against.
7. **Don't** use more than two lines per bullet point.
8. **Don't** forget to spell and grammar check. Spelling and grammar errors are an immediate disqualifier.
9. **Don't** say exactly the same thing with each job description.
10. **Don't** assume it is just a resume. Your resume will paint a picture of you, and it is what qualifies you for a position. If you get a call for an interview, then the employer already believes you are qualified for the position.