**Resume and Cover Letter Tips**

The objective of a resume gives potential employers an overview of your skills and qualifications to show you are a strong candidate for the job opening.

**Hard and Fast Rules**

* Resumes should disclose your accomplishments and unique qualifications to a potential employer and give them enough to determine whether they want to further contact you.
* Resumes should be one or two pages, except if you are applying for education, scientific or research positions.
* Employers typically take 60 seconds to look for key points – approximately 60 seconds.
* Resumes should be printed on white or ivory paper with a font size of 10 or 12.
* Information should be easy to locate and be free of errors or corrections.
* Use bullet points to highlight your accomplishments instead of long paragraphs.
* Instead of vague statements, use concrete and accurate data. For example, “Provided oversight to thirty store locations.” instead of “Provided oversight to store locations.”
* Never list personal information such as age, weight, height, gender, marital status, health. Likewise, do not list information such as hobbies nor affiliations with religious or community organizations unless they are relevant to the job.
* Do not ignore areas of your work history that seem unimportant or assume everyone has that skill because it might be just what the employer is looking for on the resume.
* Never lie or exaggerate your accomplishments or qualifications.
* Use industry terminology whenever possible, but avoid acronyms, jargon and abbreviations.
* If you have gaps in your employment history, address them in a cover letter or at the interview, not on resume.
* Include volunteer experience, languages, internships, and certifications that relate to the position.
* Do not list specific references. Instead, state “Available upon request” and list three or four professional references on a separate sheet of paper and provide them when requested by the employer.

**Types of Resumes**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Chronological | Lists work history in order, starting with the most recent employer. |
| Functional | Focuses on your skills and experience. |
| Combination | Lists your skills and experience first, followed by your work history. |
| Industry Targeted | Customized for a specific job opening and highlights information relevant to the job. |

**Sections of Resume**

**Heading**: This section should list your name, current address, phone number(s) and email address. *Be sure any email address(s) are appropriate for work setting and that you check them regularly.*

**Skills/Qualifications**: This section should include the skills and/or qualifications that you have.

**Education**: Unless you are a recent graduate, list this near the end of the resume. List basic details including school name, location, degree/certificate obtained, date or projected date of graduation, major, related coursework and possibly GPA (if high). List only what is significant to the job.

**Employment History**: Brief summary of principal employment. If using a functional style resume, do not repeat job duties. If using chronological, list the main activities for each job.

* List the past 10-15 years with the most recent job first.
* Provide employer name, location, job title, and employment dates.
* If there are gaps of several months in your work experience, list your experience by years (2005-2007) but be sure to address this at the interview or in the cover letter.
* Military history may be listed here, or in a separate section.
* Accurate work history and education dates are critical. If an employer is doing a background check and uses dates from your resume, they may not match up and you may be screened out.

**References**

Do not list on your resume. Instead, state “available upon request” and compile on a separate sheet.

**Cover Letter**

Cover letters are used to support or complement the information located in your resume. The cover letter should consist of a couple paragraphs and address the following:

* The first paragraph should list what position you are applying for and how you found out about the job opening.
* The next paragraph should reinforce the specific qualifications you have that pertain to the job.
* The closing paragraph should summarize your interest in the position and let the employer know how you can be reached for an interview.

For more information on resumes and cover letters, contact your WorkForce West Virginia local office or visit [www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org) or [www.usnlx.com](http://www.usnlx.com)