

How Do I Make My Resume Stand Out?

No doubt about it, concocting a resume that will lead to a job interview is trickier than it used to be. On the one hand, most employers now use some form of an automated applicant tracking system (ATS) whose algorithms are designed to select only those CVs whose keywords match the ones in the formal job description. So if you don't include all of those, your resume is unlikely to pass muster. But on the other hand, a resume that is little more than a dry chronicle of relevant keywords won't inspire the humans who may (eventually) read it to want to meet you.

"Once you get past the ATS, the decision to hire you—or even to call you in for interview—usually depends 60% on qualifications and 40% on likeability," notes LT Ladino Bryson, who spent 20 years as an in-house headhunter for big record companies, including Columbia and Sony Music. She's now CEO of recruiting portal vCandidates.com. "People work with other people, after all, not with lists of keywords."

Bryson suggests these four ways to create a resume that stands out in 2018 and lets your true one-of-a-kind wonderfulness shine through:

1. Create a different resume for each job opening

The best way to keep your CV from reading as if C3PO wrote it is to include only those keywords that appear in the description of a particular job. Yet, to save time, many job hunters put together an all-purpose resume loaded with every conceivable keyword, and then send it everywhere. "Trying to put in everything you've ever done, and every single credential you have, is not only boring, but worse, it will make you seem confused about what you're looking for right now," says Bryson. "Targeted versions for specific jobs will take you some extra time up front, but they make it easier for the right recruiters to spot you quickly."

2. Start your resume with a sincere "mission statement"

The short paragraph at the top of a resume that tells what you're all about is important—but only if it's not so larded with cliches ("self-starter", "team player," "world-class innovator," and so on) that it sounds phony. "This is your first chance to infuse your CV with your real personality, so make it count," Bryson suggests. "Keep it brief, but make it convey who you are and what you love." If you're not sure what to include, try asking current or former colleagues (or bosses) for their honest perceptions of your strengths. You may be pleasantly surprised.

3. Amp up your online persona

Beyond the basics—like checking to make sure the dates and titles on your LinkedIn profile match the ones on your resume, and expunging goofy Facebook photos—Bryson recommends creating a personal website. Outfits like GoDaddy and WordPress have made this cheap (or free) and easy, and you might even have some fun with it. "Your site doesn't have to be elaborate," she says, "But it's often really useful to have a few pages at <http://www.JaneDoe.com> with examples of work you've done, favorite quotes, photos, and anything else you think would help to give prospective employers some insights into your career so far." Put the link on your resume along with your contact information.

4. Do mention hobbies and interests at the bottom of your resume

How you spend your spare time is a topic that has gone out of fashion among professional resume writers in the past few years, but Bryson is all for bringing it back. “Think of this as your ‘culture fit statement’,” she says. “The idea is to offer just two or three sentences that provide a little extra color—little clues into what you’re like and how you’ll fit in to the culture.” It needn’t be anything earthshaking. Recent examples she’s seen: “I love to work out,” “I’m a serious tennis buff,” “I’m partial to British humor,” “I coach my son’s soccer team three nights a week,” and even “I’m an avid Dallas Cowboys fan.”

Besides humanizing your keyword-laden resume, a few words about what you like to do when you leave work can be a handy ice breaker. “Instead of just the standard request to ‘tell me about yourself’,” she says, “knowing something about you gives the interviewer a way to start that conversation.”

Credit: <http://fortune.com>