Resume Quiz to See If Employers Will Respond To Your Resume

Writing a persuasive resume is challenging for most people. Yet, a top-quality resume that effectively sells your skills and accomplishments to an employer is essential to your success. Is yours good enough to grab a recruiter's attention? As a result of the COVID-19 recession, many employers are being flooded with resumes that will likely never get through the Applicant Tracking System so no HR person or recruiter will ever physically see it. I have created this quiz, based on dozens of hiring surveys, hundreds of employer interviews, and nearly 30 years of resume writing experience. It doesn't matter what generation you are from, I've worked with Baby Boomers, Gen Z every age in between to create eye-catching resumes that landed jobs.

Take out your resume as we put it under a "hiring microscope." Looking over your current resume, take the following quiz to see if your resume would be selected from today's competition.

Place a checkmark by each question that you answered correctly.

1. __How long is your resume?

ANSWER: Two pages is the current maximum that employers want to see or are willing to read. Whether you are a 60-year old executive or a professional who recently graduated, being brief and concise works best. Employers glance at your resume giving it a 15-20 second glance. Be a skillful editor, deleting the portions which are not relevant or are least helpful to supporting the particular job title you currently seek. Emphasize your more recent experience in the last 7-10 years.

2. ___Do you list a career objective?

ANSWER: A generalized resume won't resonate with employers. They are hiring a specialist. Emphasize what your specific skill set is geared towards and the targeted job you're looking for. Therefore, list the appropriate job title you are seeking even if it's the next level, i.e., Project Manager or VP Sales or Marketing Manager. If you have varying and different job titles that you can do, i.e., Trainer versus Program Administrator, create two resumes, one for each of these positions. Be specific and target each resume to the different job title.

3. ___Did you use keywords?

ANSWER: An uploaded resume goes through scanning software called the applicant tracking system or ATS. To be found by a human recruiter or hiring manager, you need to add appropriate keywords. This does not mean copying every word from the job opening and putting them into your resume. Most employers are seeking your hard skills as determined by the work tasks you have done in the past. Try making a list of your job functions. If you review several job openings, you will see a pattern that the employers all want certain skills. For example, a software engineer needs to list the technical programming languages they use but also the other similar skills that employers desire. If words such as project management or process improvements show up as responsibilities in the ads, you'll want to include those in your resume.

4. ___Does your resume use lengthy job descriptions?

ANSWER: Long paragraphs with wordy job descriptions often are too generic to work. Results and accomplishments are what recruiters and hiring managers want to know about. Employers want proof that you can do the job. Specifics that demonstrate your achievements are crucial. Using bulleted statements are easier to read and more effective. Outline what you have increased or decreased, how you saved money or time, made the organization money, created something new that solved a problem, and contributed to employee productivity and the bottomline whenever possible.

5. ___Is your resume visually appealing?

ANSWER: The appearance of the resume cannot be overemphasized! Don't get creative with your resume. Fancy fonts, tables, columns, text boxes, color inked, graphics, charts, headers, and footers are often not able to be read by some of the ATS bots employers use. Instead, you get blanks or garbled, unreadable text. Use a standard format. Make use of italicizing, CAPITALS, underlining, bolding, indentations, and bullets to emphasize your essential points. Keep your font readable, size 12 is best and only use common fonts like Arial or Times Roman. PROOFREAD carefully to make your resume a perfect example of you!

6. ___Does your resume include a Summary of Qualifications section?

ANSWER: This 4-6 sentence section includes your experience and top-selling points to do the job. It has a high impact on employers, but most candidates neglect to include it. This part of the resume has an incredible impact since employers reported that this was one of the very first areas they read. And, if the briefly stated summary demonstrates solid ability to fill the advertised job, it then causes them to slow down and give that candidate more careful consideration. (Read more on this section in the Forbes article Time To Update Your Résumé—Here's One Secret To Use)

7. ___ How do you start each sentence under professional experience?

ANSWER: Begin sentences with descriptive action verbs, such as established, analyzed, implemented, designed, or researched. They add power to your sentences by demonstrating actions. Never use the word "I" in your resume. Action verbs help you create powerful statements by listing the step you took and the results the action created.

8. ___ Have you used acronyms and abbreviations?

ANSWER: Spell out names of schools, cities, work acronyms and abbreviations completely. It is better to give complete information, as employers may not recognize abbreviations or acronyms. They often glance quickly over the resume, and you don't want them to get tripped up or annoyed when you don't state the entire phrase.

9. ___Does your resume result in interviews?

ANSWER: This is the ultimate test to determine if you have written an effective resume. If you are not getting appropriate interviews, you may need some professional intervention to learn why it is not working. Typically, it's not getting through the ATS, or it may be too generic without specific accomplishments. Then again, you may be applying for jobs you aren't qualified for. No interviews mean you need to overhaul and edit it to stress your crucial work tasks, your past actions, and the results achieved.

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