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Resumé Tips

First impressions count – you might only get one chance to "make the cut" when your resume is reviewed by recruiters and hiring managers, people who look at dozens of resumes each day.   When opportunity knocks, your resume is both your calling card and your foot in the door, so it needs to be top notch on all fronts.

Here are some pointers to keep in mind when creating your resume:

- Start with a brief summary, which highlights your skills and experience, formatted either as a short paragraph or as a bulleted list. Be specific about your strong suits, including your knowledge of relevant software applications. Mention the industries in which you've worked.

If your summary mentions what the recruiter or hiring manager is looking for in a candidate, you'll entice them to read through your complete resume. If they don't see what they want to see right up front, they may just move on to another resume.

- List your experience starting with your most recently held position. Include the name of the company and their location, your job title, and the exact dates of your employment. Remember that honesty is always the way to go – don't include anything in your resume which can't be substantiated during an interview or reference check.

Describe your job responsibilities in detail, and be specific about our actual day-to-day job functions. In other words, your resume should tell the reader exactly what you did on an average day at work. Don't forget to indicate where and when you've been given increased responsibilities due to strong performance – and definitely mention ways in which your contributions had a direct positive impact on your employer's business (increased productivity, sales, visibility).

- Layout counts, so after you've decided what to say, make sure you present your material in a well-ordered and eye-pleasing

fashion. Check your resume for proper alignment of margins and indented paragraphs. Use bold or italicized fonts to highlight each position you've held.

When a resume "looks" professional, it's more likely to be read, and you're more likely to be considered for the job. If your resume looks sloppy or the work of an amateur, it's a direct reflection on you, and even the strongest background and skill set might not overcome a negative impression.

- Proofread, proofread, proofread! Take advantage of the many user-friendly tools on your computer, which will show you errors in grammar, spelling, syntax and punctuation.

Showing your attention to details by checking your own work makes you a desirable candidate to prospective employers. There's never a good excuse for a mistake on your resume.

- Revise your resume after each position, and include any significant freelance or contract assignments. If you learn a new technology, update your resume to reflect this.

Always send a "fresh" resume, which reflects your current status and presents an up-to-date showcase for your talents. Remember that you need to sell yourself by resume first, before you can sell yourself in-person on an interview.

A few things to avoid:

- *Don't* provide salary information on your resume. This belongs in your cover letter, or can be discussed during your interview.
- *Don't* list your references on your resume. This part of the application process will be handled separately.
- *Don't* include personal information such as your social security number. You never know where your resume will be sent, particularly via the Internet.
- *Don't* misrepresent your employment history. This can be grounds for termination, and background/employment checks are commonplace.