

Resume Tips in a Down Economy STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD!

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Not that long ago, the national unemployment rate was over 9% and experts were saying that it could take 3-5 years before jobs stabilize. So with all the doom and gloom, how does one find employment in a down economy? One of the keys is to focus your resume on the BENEFITS of hiring you, as well as on the key specialized tasks you are capable of performing.

Focus on Past Achievements, not just Past Tasks—Employers want to know about HOW you can help their business. A lot of this has to do with measurable accomplishments versus strictly talking about WHAT functional skills you possess. A good resume should have a mixture of both, strong functional skills sets as well as past accomplishments that show you can bring VALUE to a company. This can sometimes be tricky when starting out, but think about any quantifiable accomplishments you've made in the past. Even dig back to your education and think of your time in college *as a career*. The rule of thumb is this: if you have less than 3 years experience in a relevant career (those that are in line with your career path or degree), then you should focus a good deal of attention on what you did in college. Talk about any projects, awards, research, papers, etc. that really show you are an intelligent person who will bring some notable benefit to an employer.

What is meant specifically by “past achievements?” You must learn to differentiate what you *did*...with what you *accomplished or achieved* in the past. What you did would be past responsibilities, i.e., the actions you took or the primary job description whereas *accomplishments* would include *quantitative* as opposed to *qualitative* information. This might include statistical information or measurements of some type that show how you significantly impacted a company. In other words, what real benefit did you bring to the table in the past and is it transferrable now to a new company? This is the real information prospective employers want to know. Focus on benefits (what you accomplished) as well as features (what you did.) *Note: If you can't think of any accomplishments, then you should focus on very specialized knowledge you possess....or research you've done. Remember, the point of any marketing material whether it be a resume, CV, or cover letter should be to capture the attention of a prospective employer. This should lead to an interview. Employers have hundreds of resumes to go through at any given time, so do them a favor by keeping it succinct, relevant and above all, laden with measurable accomplishments.*

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