

Career TIPS... An understanding of resume and interviewing basics will enhance your chances of landing that next great career opportunity. Below are some suggestions to help you on your way to a better resume and a better interview.

Resume Basics

Be organized-

Make sure your resume is organized in a logical way, is neat, and error free. A reverse chronological format is very effective. It includes; contact information, education, a brief summary showing scope of experience and areas of proficiency, work history (most recent position first) detailing accomplishments and contributions.

Be objective-

Use objective (not subjective) quantifiers to describe accomplishments. For example, instead of saying "best salesperson in the region", say specifically "Achieved 125% of revenue goal".

Be up-to-date-

Update your resume as appropriate (including, when projects are completed and when noteworthy accomplishments are achieved). Most companies are using the behavior based interviewing techniques to qualify and quantify candidates.

Avoid graphics and special fonts-

Most resumes are managed electronically and often converted to formats different from the original. Graphics and special fonts don't convert easily.

Be Concise-

A resume is a form of business communication, so it should be concise and written in a telegraphic style. There should be no use of "I" or "me". For example: "I developed a new product that added \$2 million in sales;" should read, "Developed new product that added \$2 million in sales."

Use Key words-

Make use of keywords related to your area of expertise and industry. Many companies store and search resumes electronically.

Interview Basics

Be prepared -

In preparation for the interview, gather information about the opportunity, the company, and the interviewers. Anticipate questions and prepare answers. Role playing the interview will help

organize your thoughts and give you confidence. Have extra copies of your resume with you. Take a pad and pen for note taking.

Appearance -

Your appearance should be neat and clean. A suit may not always be appropriate, but even casual dress should support an air of self confidence.

Promptness -

Be on time (10 minutes arrival prior to your interview time). Do a practice drive to the interview location before your scheduled interview. Make allowances for traffic, weather and road construction. Make sure you have the appropriate telephone numbers in case you are unavoidably detained.

Effort -

If you have to complete an application, do so thoroughly and neatly.

Interest -

Show interest and enthusiasm through body language and active listening. Maintain eye contact with occasional breaks, lean forward slightly.

Be positive -

Never speak poorly of current or past employers or colleagues.

Yes and No -

Avoid "yes" and "no" answers. Give examples to support your answers. Companies utilize behavior based interview questions.

Ask questions -

Ask questions to make sure that you thoroughly understand the opportunity. Pursue a line of questioning that is focused on the job, the department and the company. Do not ask about salary, vacation, insurance or benefits.

Follow up - Consider the company culture/ protocol and decide if E-mail or regular mail is appropriate. The contents should include a thank you, a clarification and reinforcement of important issues, and a statement reaffirming your interest in the opportunity and why you are the best candidate for the position. Thank you letters or notes should be mailed within 24 hours of the interview.