

Insight Sheet

Topic: Résumé Creation

Getting a job. That is what most of us hope will happen when we leave school. We hope we will get a good job, one with an understanding employer, interesting projects, good growth opportunities, job security, and a chance to learn new skills. But why should we expect such a job would come to us? Finding a unique job that fits your interests can only occur through a process of eliminating less satisfactory jobs from your search, and convincing employers at those you deem to be satisfactory that you are a good fit *for them*. Only you can make these determinations, and only you can do the convincing.

The most recognized tool for acquiring a job is the résumé. Everyone knows, generally, what it is, but few really use it for its purpose. A résumé should inform and attract an employer. The prior is easy, and so that is what most people do. And any slob can do that basic step of informing. But design firms are not interested in any old slob. They want a creative problem-solver. The problem is that most of us allow fear to rule our actions, and fear stifles creativity. Creativity, when stifled, dies a sad death, it does not merely become weak.

Almost every student who reads this will create a boring, lifeless résumé. Even after being admonished to be creative they will resort to what is safe. That is, they will inform about *facts*. They will fail, from fear, to *attract* a prospective employer by informing him or her about the less tangible aspects of the students' skills. This handout attempts to give those few willing students some clear ideas on how to accomplish both of these goals through ideas for résumé creation.

OK, get after it and ~~good luck~~ do what it takes to get the job you want!

NOTE: This handout attempts to provide insights not always covered in standard résumé sources, or to highlight some of the key points that are made but which can be overlooked or given inadequate emphasis (by the authors or the readers). It is not meant to serve as a substitute for studying books and other resources on résumé creation. In other words, creating an effective résumé means doing more than just the points provided herein. Be sure to look to other sources (e.g., electronic books, books on reserve, etc) to key into the basic ideas for résumés.

Do...

- Keep it to one page
- Assume your first, second and third idea have been done and are not that original---push yourself, and reeeeeeally get creative
- Overcome the temptation to NOT take risks
- Use high quality ("weight") paper
- Employ action words as you DO describe what you accomplished/learned/were responsible for in your jobs (i.e., show how you have been entrusted w/ tasks)
- Celebrate accomplishments, telling how you were given increasing responsibility, how you completed tasks, etc.
- Make your name obvious (even prominent) on your résumé

- Remember that 99% of all résumés arrive on 8.5x11” paper, portrait formatted (i.e., vertically), and ordered in the EXACT SAME STRUCTURE—consider this before automatically using the same
- Remember that what is meaningful to you (such as all you did at a job you list) could mean very little to the reader—how can you make sure they “get it”?
- Be direct

Don't...

- Use goofy patterned paper from Kinko's
- Have even a single spelling or grammatical mistake
- Think about the résumé's design separate from your cover letter, portfolio and job acquisition strategy
- Think that a font, color or subtle layout alone will make your résumé unique—it won't
- Blow off the Goal Statement, either by ignoring it OR by just putting something generic down (an employer wants to know who you are and what you want—get real)
- Think a killer résumé will overcome a lack of experience—you need to show you have been active in the profession through a record of being involved; have you been? If not, showing your potential as a designer/employee is critical.

Wild Ideas

So you are getting *really* creative w/ your résumé? Have you considered the following:

- Laser etching your text into thin sheets of aluminum?
- Inserting the résumé into a tube buried in a cheesecake sent to the employer?
- Hiring a quartet to serenade the company at their lunch hour while they are all handed your résumé?
- Having your résumé printed up as a full glossy 18x24” poster?
- Putting copies under the windshield wipers of all the employees' cars?
- Ordering in pizza for the office staff w/ your résumé printed on napkins?
- Latte coupons where turning in your résumé will earn them a free double tall?