***Your Custom Resume is Your Sales Document!***

Before looking into how to prepare a resume for practical use in the job search, let’s define, “what is a resume really?”

* A resume is a sales document, a piece of sales literature that is critical to identifying your product.
* A resume does not get you the job, the purpose is to illicit interest from a potential “buyer”…employer
* A resume is used to get you in front of the initial decision maker, get a face-to-face interview. It will not get you the job.
* It is the central point of your “self-marketing” campaign, so the basic principles of marketing 101 apply. Your resume should position, your product (YOU) in such a way that it distinguishes you from other products in the market.
* Your resume must give the reader as clear and concise a picture of your product. If your resume does, then you have an effective “initial” sales document.
* A resume must give the reader a reason to want to find out more.
* Your resume must hint at very least that there is a strong ROI for the employer if they choose to invest in your product…YOU.
* 75% of the buy decisions are made with the first review, for your resume, the “buy decision” you want is to get the interview.

**Critical Sales Point**:

As a successful transition coach says…”People don’t read” and the chances are the reader of your resume has a number of demands on their time and a number of resumes to review.

 ***You have 8 seconds to catch someone’s attention and 30 seconds to keep it…***

 ***use it wisely!***

 Your resume may not be reviewed carefully; it may only be skimmed at best. Initially it will not receive the in-depth review you may feel it deserves, but if you make the cut, it will be examined more thoroughly… so still very critical stage of the sales cycle in employment.

**Rules for a Resume**:

Really there are more opinions than rules with regard to preparing an effective resume, but the following characteristics are part of any effective resume.

* A Resume must balance both qualitative and where possible quantitative or measurable attributes.
* Where ever possible demonstrate the ROI you will bring through an objective presentation of your “ value”
* A Resume is a communications test, so a well written concise resume is an initial indication of your ability to communicate effectively.
* Avoid using the first person in your statements
* Use present tense for current or most recent postion especially if your date of employment reflects #/##/## to Present.
* Use a direct and active style in preparing the resume; passive style may not convey a strong enough message.
* Use positive language in describing results and wherever possible include supporting metrics that answer **“why or how”** the results were important. Be prepared to discuss every accomplishment stated in your resume as to **the value is brought to the business**.
* Two to three pages is better than four, it may require a well thought out addendum specific to consulting work, projects, etc. to be added or not , depending on your “message”.
* The resume effectively uses style, underlines, and bolding as appropriate to facilitate an easy skim of the document by the very busy or less patient reviewer.
* The resume is helpful to the reader; it provides enough to deliver a subtle message. It is direct and to the point and eliminates the irrelevant.
* There is a message in your resume, it has focus. The resume should provide the reviewer with a clear introduction to your product (YOU).
* The resume is not a job description or job specification so do not write it that way… it communicates your quality.
* Selectively highlight your career history but leave no gaps. Do not include statements that are not correct or may cause you to be screened out for any reasons
* The resume will give an indication of your writing style, use of grammar, spelling and presentation all of which may lead the reviewer to draw strong first impressions or conclusions… often unchangeable.
* Get your resume reviewed by someone who knows you well and will give you objective, unfettered feedback. Spouse or significant other often a tough read!
* The resume should deliver the highlights of your “product”. It is an **overview**, part of your product marketing and cannot present your full story.
* Omissions from your resume lead to questions and conjecture that you cannot influence, because you may not get the opportunity.

**Resume as part of your Communication Strategy**:

Our resume is like all communication, it presents a reason why you should receive consideration or are a potentially strong candidate for presentation. A sound strategic approach ensures that the key elements, assets and qualifications you bring are reflected in your resume.

* Carefully consider the results of your self assessment and personal talent inventory process results when determining format and content of your resume.
* Understand your professional objective and ensure presentation of your product to support that objective.
* Revisit your short and long term priorities as you structure your “sales document” as it will only bring credibility to your presentation.
* Although secondary to your resume but also critical to your communication, as you prepare your resume, also prepare your “exit” statement which explains very concisely and professionally why you are ready for a change or are in transition.
* Always try to deliver a consistent message as it must support your presentation.
* Be prepared to recite your **Objective** (also part of your “Elevator Speech”) and decide if you want it to be part of your resume. There are different schools of thought on whether to include it in your resume as your objective or to create a broader positioning statement for your resume. Your positioning statement is often the same or similar to your elevator speech. One approach is to use a broad **Summary** (maybe bullet points) of skills that matches your objective and use the positioning statement as an entrée to networking and interviewing; thereby, eliminating redundancy and demonstrating some versatility in communication. Regardless of choice, be concise and to the point!

As with any communication, the test of your resume is whether it helps you reach your desired audience or results. If it does, you are well on your way!