

## Beginning your Job Search - The Resume Package

In order to get optimum response to your resume, you need to prepare and present a professional, well-thought out package. This should include a succinct, well-written cover letter, one page resume, reference letters from previous employers (if possible) an updated reference list and transcripts, if applicable.

THE COVER LETTER should not be generic, but should be specific to the position and/or organization that you're targeting. This extra effort will prove well worth your time.

THE RESUME should be direct, neat, and easy to read. Your goal is to get a call for an interview. Make sure you present your positions and job descriptions to their fullest without over-inflating them. You want to look very qualified for the ads you're responding to, but if you look overqualified, you probably won't get a call. A Staff Assistant who presents him/herself as an Associate Director looks foolish.

"Objectives/goals" are not necessary, except in rare cases (specialized searches, career switches, etc.) Sometimes, they actually serve as disqualifiers, rather than qualifiers.

For the body of the resume, begin with the areas in which your background is strongest. For example:

- Fresh college graduates should begin with the education section. Include your GPA only if yours is a 3.0 or higher. Highlight any special honors/activities, as well as if all or part of your education was self-financed.
- If you were fortunate enough to get good experience through internships, by all means, include it; but, don't hesitate to also include the "less glamorous" summer jobs that most of us had. One of my favorite candidates helped finance his Georgetown education by scrubbing desks and doing maintenance work in the Baltimore city schools every summer. Every hiring authority who saw his resume was clamoring to interview this academically successful young man who clearly wasn't afraid of hard work. He was hired within days!
- The more specialized skills (languages, computers, etc.) you have acquired, the better. List them in detail in a separate "skills" section. Make sure all the software packages are spelled and formatted correctly (QuattroPro and PowerPoint are examples).
- If you've had one or more years of experience since completing your education, begin with your "experience" section, followed by technical and other special skills and education (again, in order of strength).
- At this point in your life, you don't need to "pad" your resume with every activity and honor from school. Include only those of special interest and importance, but begin with current professional associations and community service, etc.

Proofread for both typographical errors and format. If your dates of employment are on the right margin, make sure your dates of graduation are on the right margin. If your school name is in bold, make sure all the company names are in bold.

Finally, proofread all your materials again, then ask your sharpest friends to do the same. This is your potential employer's first impression of you - make sure it's impeccable.