

Top Resume Tactics for Executives



By now, you've seen plenty of resumes float across your desk. The occasional stellar one. The one that's plenty qualified but that's about it. And, of course, plenty of resumes filled with misspellings and typos that aren't worth the paper they were printed on... It's been a while since you sent out a resume of your own. Heck, maybe you haven't even updated it in the last decade. That's ok. The likelihood is that you're going to want to send it out at some point. Yes, your accomplishments speak for themselves. But guess what? So do those of everyone else that's interested in the coveted position you're applying for. And a mistake I see all the time is focusing your resume on what your responsibilities and duties were and forgetting to list what you accomplished while carrying out those responsibilities and duties.

No one is saying you have to jump ship right away. But, in the event that an opportunity comes up, you'd be wise to stand out amongst the crowd of other qualified applicants.

It All Starts with the Headline

As you've probably already noticed, we're in the era of instant gratification. As consumers, we don't want to spend a lot of time reading endless paragraphs about a product's features. That's exactly what a hiring manager is. A consumer. And, you guessed it, your headline needs to stand out. Not sure how to craft that perfect headline that grabs attention? There are plenty of credible resources out there to help with this one aspect of your resume. When your headline grabs attention, your resume is going to get a hard look.

Document by Numbers

Too many resumes are full of the right words but lack any substance. In the position you're applying for, you're expected to get results. That's why you need to highlight them on your resume. Sure, it's great that you lead a team of chemists and engineers. But, what did you achieve? Metrics. Use your resume to give specific numbers and timeframes to your accomplishments. I recommend updating your resume every year when you get your performance review. Add any significant achievements, special awards, or new skills learned. And, as mentioned before, use the specific numbers while they're still fresh in your memory instead of trying to remember what you accomplished 5 or more years ago. As great as soft leadership skills are, your next employer wants to know that you can deliver results.

What About Your Hires?

You've made more than one hire in your time. Out of that bunch, there's bound to be someone that's achieved results beyond expectation. As much as your next employer wants to hire you for your talent, they're hiring you to find other exceptional talent too. To stand out, you need to be able to show that you're capable of hiring capable people and that they follow your lead. Don't save these folks for your references. Incorporate them in your resume. If you've mentored someone that went on to be promoted or became a team leader themselves, put that on your resume.

Focus on the Present

You should be proud of the fact that you lead the way in bringing a product to market in 2004. Unfortunately, that was a long time ago. In order for your resume to stand out, you need to highlight your achievements post pleated khakis era.

What have you done for me lately? That's the question any competent hiring manager wants to know. While you shouldn't fully discount your accomplishments from yesteryear, you need to make your most recent successes stand out as much as possible.

Audience

Before you fire off your resume, give some thought to who will be reading it. Yes, the basic dynamic is clear. You're selling yourself to someone else with the hope they'll call you for an interview.

A common mistake executives make on their resume is, only trying to write down what the hiring manager wants to hear. If you're applying for an important position within a company, the language you use in your resume should reflect that role. Your verbiage should mirror that of a decision maker and trusted business partner. The trick is to find a blend of being bold and audacious, but humble enough to consider the opinions of others as well.

Maybe it's been a while since you polished up your resume. You've been a tremendous asset in your current position but, perhaps you're eager for another challenge. There's nothing wrong with exploring other options and new opportunities. If you're going to take that step, you need to do it in the right way. The reality is your first introduction is most likely going to be your resume. If you take the knowledge you already have and, consider some of the advice above, you just might surprise yourself with the doors that open.

Common Mistakes to Avoid During a Job Interview



You're out of practice. You were in your most recent role as a manager or team lead for a number of years. You conducted plenty of interviews and saw a wide spectrum of performances. Now, for whatever reason, you're sitting on the opposite side of the desk as the interviewee. You're probably thinking that you've got it down based on all your experience. Did it ever occur to you that it might be a good idea to brush up a little just in case? It's true. Even the most seasoned job applicants make mistakes.

If you're on the hunt for a new job, keep in mind some of the common interview mistakes below.

Not Starting on Time

This one seems obvious. You always give yourself plenty of time when showing up to an interview. Finding your way through an unfamiliar building, getting through security, filling out paperwork - there's a lot to get done before the interview even starts.

But, being on time mentally is just as important as showing up physically. You're going to be nervous in the first moments of the interview. Your mind will be racing and your palms a little sweaty.

That's only natural. The key is to be sharp from the second the interview starts. Make it a point to actively listen to the questions being asked and wait until the interviewer has finished asking the question before jumping in with your answer. Take your time giving thoughtful answers and speak slowly. Even though most interviewees settle down eventually, it's to your advantage to be fully present from the start.

Talking Too Much About Yourself

It seems a little counterintuitive but, talking about yourself too much in an interview is a mistake. Sure, the interview is your chance to prove you're the right candidate for the job. But put yourself in the shoes of the interviewer. They're focused on finding the person that's going to benefit their company the most. In your answers, talk about projects you worked on as part of a team, and what your contribution to the team was. This shows what you can do as an individual, and

that you can act as part of a team.

Instead of solely highlighting your previous experience and making it known that you're gritty and up for the challenge, ask about the company. What are their priorities, goals and objectives? What about their culture do people love? Are there any gaps that need to be filled? When you ask poignant questions, you convey to the interviewer that your primary concern is adding as much value as you can.

Body Language

This one seems obvious but, it's a mistake that too many interviewees make. Most communication is non-verbal. The interviewer is going to be watching how you comport yourself. Do you shake hands firmly when you walk in the door? Do you make eye contact? Or are your eyes darting every which way? Do you slouch in your chair? Or does your posture let the person across the desk know that you're fully engaged? Do you tend to fidget or have happy feet? And what about your tone of voice? Is it low and lethargic? Or is it upbeat and excited? Even though these nuances seem trivial, they go a long way in creating a first impression and in letting the interviewer know who you are.

Not Being Specific Enough

When you're in the process of trying to find a new job, it's easy to fall into the mindset that you'll take any job over your last position. When this happens, there's a tendency to get into the habit of talking about your qualifications. That's not enough in an interview. You need to highlight how your qualifications are fit specifically for the job you're applying for, and what you were able to accomplish for your employers. When you do this successfully, you convey that you really want this job, what you might be able to accomplish for them, and set yourself apart from the competition.

Not Preparing for a Phone Interview

You might think that a phone interview is easier than a live interview. It's actually the opposite. In a live setting, you're able to read and give off non-verbal cues. All of that communication is lost when you talk on the phone. As a result, what you

say becomes all the more important. If you have a phone interview scheduled, take the extra time to practice with a colleague or someone with phone interview experience. Also make sure your phone is fully charged and you are in a location that gets good reception. You'll be glad you did.

Being on the job hunt can be stressful. Between the unknowns, customizing resumes, and waiting to see if you landed a job or even an interview, there's a lot to juggle. Not to mention the stress of interviewing itself. The good news is, if you take the time to prepare, and are aware of some common mistakes to avoid, your chances of being successful increase exponentially.