Writing - It's My Thing

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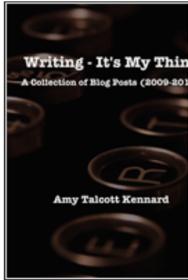
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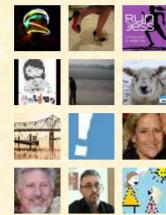
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MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2009

Resumes That Work... So You Can, Too!

Over the years, I've written a number of resumes for a variety of people searching for a array of positions. In most cases, they come to me in a panic because they want to apply for a job "immediately" and need their resume updated, or don't have one at all.

For those who don't have one at all, realize that it does take time to sit down and hammer out everywhere you've worked, what you did, and all the other fabulous things you've accomplished that should be listed on a resume. For those who say they need a resume update, in more cases than not it ends up turning into a complete overhaul for many of the reasons listed below.

That said, here are some basic tips for creating or updating your resume:

1. A resume is your first impression, your foot in the door, and the reason that employer is going to call you for an interview. Keep that in mind when writing it. While some resumes may benefit from a specific objective, others don't need it if the work history is cohesive enough to speak for itself. I find that objectives seem to be not only subjective, but limiting as well.

2. Use "power" words, and quantify where possible. What sounds better to you? "Gave work assignments to staff of entry level accounting clerks." OR "Directed workflow, supervised and trained accounting staff performing posting to general ledger, accounts receivable and payable accounts." If you know that your department's productivity increased by a certain percentage while you were there, say so. If you were promoted while at that position, tell about it.

3. Tailor your resume to the job for which you are applying. Yes, it is OK to have several versions of your basic resume. I have one version for any writing jobs I apply for which highlight that experience. Another focuses on my media buying, special event planning and trade show skills.

4. List the important stuff first. If you just graduated with a double major in Business Administration and Computer Technology but have little practical work experience, list that education first. On the other hand, if you didn't complete your degree but work as the IT Manager for a major organization, that should be your headliner.

5. Don't overlook the basics. Have someone else proofread your work, for both grammar and punctuation. Make sure it's in a readable typeface no smaller than 10 point. Avoid listing the obvious like "Available for interview" or "References available". And know when to say when. Your work history may go back to your days as a paperboy, but if you're in your 40's, that's a bit far back to go.

What I have found in my experience is whether I'm updating a resume or creating one from scratch, I am amazed at the information I can pry out of someone just by digging deep into their job experience past and asking a few specific questions that they may not have thought were pertinent. So if your resume needs a face lift, or if you don't have one at all, give me a call and let's discuss how I can make your resume work, so you can, too.

Posted by Amy Kennard   at 4:50 PM   ✉

Labels: interview , jobs , media buying , objective , proofread , resume , special event planning , trade shows , writing

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