

The Five Constants in Writing an Accounting Resume

By Ron Proul, CEO – Century Group

As recruiting professionals we are often asked to review resumes and provide feedback. Our feedback is from a frame of reference developed over years in the recruiting profession answering questions from employers as to whether a candidate's resume accurately reflects what the candidate has to offer. To keep questions focused on you as a candidate rather than about your resume, follow the five Cs.

Consider your Audience

Resumes may pass through a number of handlers prior to getting to the ultimate hiring authority. Your primary audience is what you are gearing for; ensure that it gets there with the right format and content. Your resume is an advertisement for your individual career brand developed by skills, accomplishments, associations, and career progression. Make it straight forward and easy to digest.

Consistent Chronological Format

This is without a doubt the best format. When resumes come through that are developed in other formats, it often speaks of a resume prepared by a service or one that is hiding some weakness. Whether you write it or not, most reviewers see a resume as the first sample of your work product. A chronological resume says, "I prepared this." It also allows an interviewer to associate when and where you used the skills in your resume. Your interviewers will see skills that are fresh and applies to this job or see skills developed to a higher level of expertise later in your career based on the foundation earlier.

When starting with a certain format, stick with it. I prefer a combination of paragraph job descriptions with bullets for accomplishments, but that is personal taste. Paragraph form and bullet form are fine by themselves but whichever it is stick with a format. Make sure and review for grammatical, spelling or other simple errors. In accounting nothings speaks to your attention to detail, consistency and self review than a simple formatting problem. This holds true with dates of employment, sub dates, titling, education and anything that repeats in your resume.

Capitalize on Accomplishments to Highlight Strengths

Titles promotions, additional responsibilities and broader span of control, speak of accomplishments in themselves, but don't forget the day-to-day triumphs.

Review some of your accomplishments and provide them in your resume in addition to your duties. If you are like most professionals you often think of your successes as all in a days work, so if you are having trouble coming up with some, pull out your old reviews and see if any come to mind. Reviews can be a great place to find strengths you may not even realize you have. Incorporate those items into your resume through your accomplishments or a description of your duties.

Comprehensive in Description yet Concise

Although these terms can seem contradictory they really work together. Use key words, you want to get details and yet not bore the reader with too many. The first handler of your resume (could be a computer or a person) may not have any technical experience in your area and is merely looking for key words. Action words, the correct tenses and easily comprehensible terms accomplish this. Stay away from acronyms only used in your own company and only use industry specific acronyms if you want to stay in that industry. Otherwise, use the generally accepted business terminology in your description.

Co-Brand Your Resume

Your employer already spends time and money on marketing; you can capitalize on it. In no other business relationship can you more freely use the branding and name of a company without consent. Ask yourself; what about my employers would reflect favorably on my resume through association? Are my employers thought leaders, leading companies in a particular product, technology or service? The company doesn't have to be the largest, but a strong reputation, strong internal team members, and visibility in their business sector can create a co-branding effect. Highlight your employer's strengths, size, industry or reputation just like you would your own in a quick sentence below the name.

These five Cs will help your resume trigger the interview so you get a chance to ask questions and determine if your objectives can be achieved in your next role.