

TRANSCRIPT

HOW TO WRITE A GREAT RESUME AND COVER LETTER

What makes a great resume and a great cover letter? What's important to know is that these are marketing documents. It is also important to know that the average employer now takes up only about 7 seconds, so they're not reading these resumes, they're skimming these resumes. So they need to know, right off the bat, how you add value.

So here's a great example of a recent alum's resume. It's one page, although two pages would be fine. This person has their contact information. They are then listing their education, although it is possible to put the education at the bottom. You need to ask yourself, is it my education that's more marketable, or is it my experience?

This is also a good resume because rather than a mini job description in the experience section, this former student is using what we call accomplishment statements to describe his experience.

Basically three criteria: you want to begin with a nice strong action verb, and in our resume writing handout, we have a list of a 100 plus action verbs. Then, as you write each of your sentences, your phrases, you want to say to yourself, so what, big deal, so I did that, how did I make a difference? Did I increase anything? Decrease? Modify or change? So if it's possible to pull out accomplishments and results. And the third criteria would be to quantify information.

Here's another strong example of a resume. What I like about what this student did is in the experience section, she has strong action verbs, she has strong results, but she also has strong numbers; she was able to quantify her results and accomplishments.

In terms of cover letters, it is important again to know again that this is another marketing document, relevant, should be one page, and should be a highly customized document. And basically cover letters are answering two questions: Why you for that specific position at that specific organization. So it is certainly important to have a strong resume and cover letter, but it is important to remember that the number one job search strategy is networking, and you don't want to have an entirely reactive job search, just reacting to jobs that are posted on internet job boards for example. The problem is that you don't know them and they don't know you; your odds of being called in are probably slim. So I highly encourage you to implement networking, to conduct a series of informational meetings, so in fact they're meeting you first, and then your resume comes along, and it's more of a placeholder, and it doesn't weigh as much.