

## Workforce Connection

PSW Ocala, June 09, 2010

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### Resume Tips

- What do you put on your resume if your passion or dream job has nothing to do with your skills and you're 48 years old? It sounds as if you are considering changing careers. A functional resume offers you the best opportunity to showcase skills rather than job experience; it's more of a forward-looking resume. The highlights or profile section at the top serves as a sort of editorial page where you can show the relationship between the kind of person you are and the job's demands. This section can be tailored to each prospective employer and position.
- How do I write a CV for a teaching job with no experience? You want a job to gain experience, but you can't find a job because previous experience is required. Don't be discouraged. You can still put your best foot forward and have a shot at the job. Describe courses, school projects, internships and extracurricular activities that are relevant to your career goal. In other words, areas where you have a lot of passion and interest. Focus on experience you have had, and craft them into a message that would translate into a professional environment. If you've ever been in a position of responsibility, provide details and examples on your CV to show you are reliable and trustworthy. Write about leadership responsibilities that you've had and completion of assignments for which you were selected over your peers. For a CV template, visit <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/career-center-for-job-seekers-powered-by-monster-com-FX010350405.aspx>
- Can you put down a college course (for certification) even though the course won't start for another 3 weeks? Use a cover letter to highlight your continued education. Since you have not completed the certification, it's best to leave it off the resume as it may be viewed as misleading to potential employers.
- I want to completely delete my current resume and start fresh. How do I do that? One suggestion is to use one of the free resume templates provided by Monster and Microsoft Office. You have a variety of different formats so you can determine what works best for you and your situation. When you're finished with the resume, you can upload directly from Microsoft Word to Monster. I would also encourage you to work with Workforce Connection for resume writing recommendations and definitely have them review your new resume.
- If it only takes 15 seconds for a resume to be reviewed, how and why is a cover letter beneficial? A cover letter is very important. The purpose of a cover letter is to pique employers' interest so they want to interview you. A cover letter should emphasize your

strongest qualifications, focusing on what you can contribute and how this contribution will benefit the employer.

## Interviewing

- Why don't they ask us about our hobbies and interests outside of work? This can show light on our personality. Recruiters, hiring managers, or business owners' primary concerns are your skills and ability to perform the job in question.
- I've never had an interview before. What are some interviewing best practices? Preparation is perhaps the #1 "best practice" for interviewing. The best way to prepare for an interview is to have a thorough understanding of what the employer is seeking. Use the job description for this. Then, take inventory of the work you've done in the past and the accomplishments you've made that tie directly to what the employer is seeking. Be prepared to talk about specific scenarios that you encountered at work that illustrate how these experiences can benefit the employer and the role they're looking to fill. Also, practice answering possible interview questions out loud. Enlist the help of Workforce Connection, a trusted friend or family member to conduct a mock interview with you. This will get you comfortable with answering questions and talking about yourself. Practicing in this manner makes it okay to stumble over words in a "safe" environment. The goal is to use that time to make your mistakes there and improve each time thereby making you much more prepared and comfortable for the real interview. I would also encourage you to visit <http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/careers.aspx> for lots of advice on interviewing.
- Why do they ask psychology questions during an interview? Should I give a short answer or long answer to them? Employers ask behavioral based questions because they are looking for self-awareness. They want to see that you've identified an opportunity for improvement and have taken steps to overcome this issue.
- How do you explain an extended stint at a job unrelated to your education? It's not uncommon for people to end up in an occupation unrelated to their degree or education. Focus on the skills you've acquired in your role and how they relate to the job for which you are applying.
- How do you answer when they ask you what salary do you require? I am always perplexed because I feel I desire a higher level. But I would be coming in at a lower employee level, even though I have experience behind me. Establishing a realistic salary range that reflects your actual income requirements is important. Once you've done that, the whole process of finding a job becomes much easier, because you know how low you can go and can eliminate prospective jobs that fall outside your range. You need to do some research to come up with your realistic salary range. Take a hard look at

your living expenses. Which are fixed? Which are variable? Which are discretionary? Once you've determined your salary requirements to keep body and soul together, make that the bottom of your salary range, and add \$10,000 to that number to establish the top of your range. Some argue that you should add \$20,000 to establish the top of your range, but where you put that top amount depends on how willing and able you are to negotiate once an offer is made. Now, if you're asked to provide salary information as part of the application process, you can do it without worrying about pricing yourself out of the market or grabbing a job that won't pay the bills.

- Other Considerations:
  - Verify the job's scope before you talk about salary. It is difficult to discuss compensation before you have sufficient information about the position and level of responsibility.
  - Research the job market before the interview to give you an idea of what the position is worth. You should know the going rate for the same position for a person with your experience and skills. A wealth of information can be obtained through Monster's [Salary Wizard](#), which offers regional salary ranges for a wide variety of positions.
  - Consider the timing. Depending on where you are in the interview process, it is best to delay giving your salary history or expectations until you are sure of the employer's interest.
  - Be prepared to reveal your past salary or history at some point in the interview process. By postponing the discussion, you have more control. Once you feel there is a sincere interest or an offer is forthcoming, you
- How do you answer, “why did you leave your last job?” if the circumstances involved a potential lawsuit? It’s a good idea to focus on the contributions you made to the organization and what you are hoping to accomplish in your next position. An appropriate response to that question would be “I am looking to build upon my experiences and accomplishments from my former position in my next role. Although my time at “x” company was valuable, I am looking for an opportunity where I can further utilize my talents”.
- Does it make you look desperate to apply to several positions in the same facility? EX-RN seeking position in ER, ICU, surgical... Not necessarily but you should have good reason. An acceptable reason for this would be if your skills and experience qualify you for a variety of positions. The problem surfaces when you are perceived as a “serial poster” applying for anything and everything. A good rule-of-thumb is to make recruiters or hiring managers aware that you’ve applied for other openings if you get contacted for an interview. This shows that you’re up front and honest and will prevent

problems down the road if you were to end up with multiple offers. It's best to keep everyone informed.

## **Networking**

- What is the easiest way to network? Whether you are new to an area or just beginning to realize how important it is to have a network established in times of career change, it all starts the same way -- communication and not "assuming" anything! Everyone is a potential contact. Everyone has a friend and those friends have friends and those other friends just might be your next employer. Don't be afraid of telling people what you want and asking for referrals. If you are like most people, deliberate, successful networking is not something you were born knowing how to do. It is a skill, and like any other skill it takes practice and discipline. You owe it to yourself to learn as much as possible about networking and understanding the doors that it can open for you. There are many books available on the subject, such as *Monster Careers: Networking*. Also, Monster's Career Advice Center has many articles on the topic to help further educate yourself on the subject.
- What does networking mean? Webster's Dictionary defines a network as, "usually informal interconnected group or association of persons (as friends or professional colleagues)". Whether it's to make business connections or expand your social and professional reach, networking means interacting with other people. Someone you meet today may not have an opportunity for you now, but they might in the future if you have maintained some type of professional contact, and/or help them with a referral or a contact-- you never know what or who just might lead you to your dream job. So when thinking about networking...think long term.

## **Changing Careers**

- When wanting to move to a new industry or company, how can that happen when they are asking for 2-3 years experience and there is a great need for employment? Work with your resources at Workforce Connection to identify your transferrable skills. Some companies do "require" that the candidates have a particular focused degree, but they are usually limited to specialties such as medicine, law, accounting, and top level corporate positions. As a whole however, the specific degree is not as important as having "a degree", passion and experience you bring to the table. If you're able, consider volunteering or internships to try out your new career choice.

- Obviously when you're changing careers you're not very experienced in that field. What some tips? How do we "get experienced"? If you're able, consider volunteering or internships to try out your new career choice. Explore the training and certification programs offered in your area.
- I am new to healthcare administration; I have completed the course, and have no hands on experience. Most employers require 6 months experience in this field. What do you recommend? If you're able, consider volunteering or internships to try out your new career choice. Show your potential employer you have the skills required to perform the job.
- How hard is it to find a job for home base? Some occupations and industries are much more likely than others to offer real opportunities for at-home work. Examples of legitimate companies that are using home workers may include taking orders over the phone or who employ customer service reps. If you think you might have identified a legitimate work-at-home job, it's time to do some detective work. Here are three trusted research resources:
  - The Better Business Bureau (BBB) maintains a national database of companies and complaints received about them. If BBB rates your prospective employer "unsatisfactory" or says the company has declined to answer requests for information, find another opportunity.
  - The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) goes after individual work-at-home scammers. Search the site for press releases or other information on any employer you're considering.
  - Fraud.org should be able to inform you of civil and criminal complaints with respect to your prospective employer.
- Whether you use a functional resume or not, companies still want an application completed with all dates. Then what? You are still showing you're "seasoned." If you feel that you're overqualified or your prospective employer says that your extraordinary qualifications cast doubt on your candidacy, reposition your past as an asset to your future at the company. Emphasize that "you're getting somebody with the potential to move up."
- If I have worked as a closing coordinator (home builder) and closer (title company) for over 10 years, how can I prepare my resume to reflect my medical billing and coding education? Work with your resources at Workforce Connection to identify your transferrable skills.
- How do I get an interview at an airline? I want to travel, meet people, and make good money, what is that job? Willing to be a ticket agent or trainer/speaker. Review different airlines career sites to determine whether or not they are hiring in areas that

are of interest to you. Your skills and experience will need to fit the qualifications of the job. Ask around, does anyone in your network have connections within the airline industry?

## Background Checks

- How do companies conduct background checks? Many companies use third party vendors to conduct background checks.
- I am concerned about a background check that has a mysterious “charge of failure” title on it. I’m worried I may not get hired because of it. If you are turned down for a job because of credit problems, the employer has to give you a copy of the report and explain your rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.
- Does it also hurt you if you are not on Facebook or MySpace? If they do not find anything on you. An online presence is becoming more common, especially among IT professionals. If your online persona can prove your value as a potential employee, it does no harm. Be mindful of the personal information you share.
- What are they looking for? How far back are they looking? An employer will conduct a credit check to review your ability to manage your finances, particularly if the job involves finance, accounting, cash or valuable merchandise. How you manage your finances will often be an indicator as to how you are going to manage the companies’ resources. If your credit is poor or you’ve filed bankruptcy, be ready to provide interviewers with a short, contrite explanation and to redirect the conversation to one of your strengths as well as to a reference that can back up your story. If a company has requested a background check they are looking for criminal activity in your background.
- What is the reason for a credit check? For a non-banking position? An employer will conduct a credit check to review your ability to manage your finances, particularly if the job involves finance, accounting, cash or valuable merchandise. How you manage your finances will often be an indicator as to how you are going to manage the companies’ resources.
- How can anyone get past the credit check after a bankruptcy? If your credit is poor or you’ve filed bankruptcy, be ready to provide interviewers with a short, contrite explanation and to redirect the conversation to one of your strengths as well as to a reference that can back up your story. If you are turned down for a job because of credit problems, the employer has to give you a copy of the report and explain your rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.
- Are there specific state laws of employment consideration? Is it legally ok for a manager to speak and say anything to his/her employees? Over a broadcasting radio? Without

knowing the details of what was said, it's difficult to say. Use your resources at Workforce Connection to learn more about state and federal employment laws.

## Monster Site

- Why is Monster.com so unhelpful? No matter how specific the job info/request is- the site responds with numerous irrelevant jobs and locations! Without knowing your search parameters, this is a difficult question to answer. Use Monster's online chat service or call 1-800-Monster for help.
- On Monster.com- I'm registered for construction management and I get nursing and all the gas station attendant jobs. Why? You might need to fine-tune your profile. Contact Monster at 1-800-Monster for help.
- How do you get Monster to only select the area you want to work in instead of the whole nation? On our main home page, Location is the third search field. Simply enter the city and state you want to work in to see a list of jobs available.

## Other

- If you have been out of work longer than 1 year, what factors are going to work against you? Gaps in your employment or holding multiple jobs is can be explained in the resume itself, under the title in parenthesis (Reason for leaving: .....) or in your cover letter by simply stating, "I would like to explain the gaps in employment or reasons for multiple jobs." There is never harm in addressing the obvious questions as long as the explanation is tactful and professional.
- If you don't hear back from applying for a job, what is the proper way to follow up? A week is an appropriate amount of time to follow up. If you reach the person involved in the hiring process, the follow up phone call is also a good opportunity to establish with that person what the timeline is to make decisions, schedule follow-up interviews, etc. And then ask that person if it would be acceptable to continue to follow up and at what frequency. This establishes the expectation that you are engaged in the process and very interested and the person at the company will be expecting your follow up calls or emails.
- Why would employers look at MySpace and Facebook to determine if you're going to be a good employee? I feel that has nothing to do with the way you do your job. Everyone has a personal life. You're right and this is a topic of much debate. Social networking profiles are public and you should expect that anyone might see it. Carefully crafting your public online image to emphasize your best qualities is a good idea. Think of it like

this, how you behave online should be the same as how you'd behave in any other public place.

- Should I have my own voice on my voicemail message or should I use the automated voice? It's OK to record a personal message. Keep it simple, professional, and remember to ask callers to leave their name and phone number.
- Due to privacy issues, is it safe to use first and/or last names? Look for a privacy statement or policy on Web sites you visit, and read it to learn what personal information is collected about you and how it is used. Determine if other information is collected about you and your use of the site, such as IP addresses, click stream data and whether the site uses cookies or Web beacons. Monster is committed to protecting the privacy of our users, and strives to provide a safe, secure user experience. Monster's full Privacy Policy can be reviewed at <http://my.monster.com/privacy/default.aspx>. This Privacy Statement sets forth the online data collection and usage policies and practices that apply to the Monster web site.
- Do you have to pay to Google yourself? No, anyone can conduct a Google search on themselves.
- Must you establish a "digital footprint"? An online presence is becoming more common, especially among IT professionals. If your online persona can prove your value as a potential employee, it does no harm. Be mindful of the personal information you share.
- For the last 30 years, I have worked for two companies, both of which just closed their doors. How can I prove I worked for them? Provide references, former manager, co-workers, or employees that worked with you at these companies.
- How do you stay positive? Surviving with no money went to school, no experience! Use your local resources to identify opportunities that will help you financially while you pursue your ideal career path.
- Should I apply for a position that says, "2 years experience" if I don't have any? Am I wasting my time? Unless the job specifies they will consider candidates with "related experience", your time may be best spent pursuing other opportunities.
- Most places want experience. How do you get experience if no one hires you without it? You want a job to gain experience, but you can't find a job because previous experience is required. Don't be discouraged. You can still put your best foot forward and have a shot at the job. Describe courses, school projects, internships and extracurricular activities that are relevant to your career goal. In other words, areas where you have a lot of passion and interest. Focus on experience you have had, and craft them into a message that would translate into a professional environment. If you've ever been in a position of responsibility, provide details and examples on your resume to show you are reliable and trustworthy. Write about leadership

responsibilities that you've had and completion of assignments for which you were selected over your peers. If you have work experience you can mention your perfect attendance record, additional duties assigned to you because of your excellent performance, and experience training new employees.