7 Things Every Resume Needs in 2012

Age discrimination, unfortunately, is a fact of life for experienced job seekers. However, there is more you can do to make yourself seem modern, relevant, and qualified for the jobs you want than simply dying your hair or updating your wardrobe.

One key to job search success: an up-to-date, contemporary resume that doesn't make the reader assume you last applied for a job in 1995. Here are some tips to help you create a resume an employer will appreciate:

Include links in your contact information.
Include links to social media profiles (such as your LinkedIn URL) in your resume's contact information. If you use other social media tools professionally (such as Twitter or Facebook), include that information as well. Simply listing these will help someone reading your resume picture you as a candidate who is keeping up with modern communication tools. Use a professional email that doesn't reference your age or family status. (For example, avoid "gram@hotmail.com" or "mom7@gmail.com.)

Fonts.
Your resume doesn't need to be in Arial or Times New Roman. To create a more modern look, consider expanding your font choices to include: Georgia, Calibri, Tahoma, or Geneva.

Nix the objective.
While there are no absolute rules for resumes, adding an "objective," which usually focuses on the job seeker's needs, will make you seem out-of-step with today's market. Instead, use headlines to highlight what you offer that is in line with what the employer wants in a candidate. For example, take a look at the "before" and "after" highlights for a candidate looking for a medical administrative assistant job:

Before Objective:
Innovative, highly motivated, dynamic team player with extensive experience, stellar writing skills and the ability to effectively manage concurrent projects seeks opportunity to contribute in hospital setting.

After headline:
Medical Administrative Assistant / Unit Secretary / clerical expert Maintain Confidentiality – Coordinate Effectively With All Stake Holders - Strong Oral and Written Communication Skills – Organized – Reliable – Quick Thinking

Notice how the "after" example includes job titles and specifics directly from the job description to describe relevant skills.

Avoid "empty" words.
Notice the "before" objective includes "highly motivated," "dynamic," and "team player." None of these words help the reader learn something specific about the candidate. Do not waste space with generalities. The more targeted you can be, the more vibrant and interesting your resume appears.

Avoid "functional" resume formats.
Functional resumes focus on the job seeker's skills without emphasizing when and where he or she used those skills. Sounds great for someone who wants to de-emphasize age and years of experience, right? The problem is, hiring managers like to know when and where you used the skills you say you have. Many will assume someone using this format is trying to hide something. Since you don't want to arouse suspicion, stick to a "reverse chronological" format, where you describe your most recent experience first and include dates.

Graduation dates.
You may choose to leave off the year you earned your degree(s), but assume if you do, the person reading your resume may probably assume you are older than you are.

Don't include every job you've ever had.
It's perfectly acceptable to only include the last 10 years of your professional experience. You may even choose to headline the section, "Recent Experience." If it is relevant, summarize work you did more than 10 years ago at the end without describing it in detail.