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Résumé 101

By Paperitalo Staff

As the year has progressed, people out of work or just entering the workforce have asked me to help them with their résumés. I have been delighted to do so.

One thing strikes me when I look at raw résumés. Despite all the books on job searches, despite all the seminars on résumé writing, it seems many still miss the basics. Yet, the basics of résumé writing are a clue to being a person who can keep (if they want) the position they already have.

Distilled further, there is just one basic which really matters. It is the content of those bullet points one puts under the introductory sentences of a job experience. I recently told one young person to take out every bullet point that could not be associated with (in our currency here) dollars. For if a bullet point does not say how much you saved your employer or how much your work expanded your employer's business, all denominated in the currency of your location, it is absolutely uninteresting. In fact, it is merely a record of attendance, and attendance is a given.

This relates to your work every day, for every day, you are building your résumé. Every day, as will be documented in broad terms on your résumé, you will be assisting in helping your employer spin their invoice printer (have not used that line for a while, time to bring it back). Think every day of building your résumé, in fact you may want to keep a diary of details of significant activities so that when you build your résumé, you'll have an easy and concise reference work as an aid.

In some places, one can pre-plan their funeral. Many do not take advantage of this service, for they don't want to think about it, but it is inevitable. Likewise, you may think you will never need to build a résumé again, in fact, this is something you don't want to think about. Yet of all the people I have known to reach age seventy or so, I can only think of one or two that only had one job in their entire career. Some make choices of their own in changing jobs. Others are forced into it involuntarily. These days, many who had steady jobs for thirty years or so find themselves on the outside looking in as expensive positions occupied by senior, expensive employees are eliminated.

You will need a résumé. It can be a planning tool you use daily to guide your overall direction in your current job, for if you wouldn't want to put an activity on your résumé, it is likely your current employer does not want you to do it. This is the litmus test for your everyday actions where you are right now.

I once had a boss tell me, and I think I have mentioned it here before, that my job was to "make him look good." In some ways, this might be viewed as a cynical statement, but in reality, it is great guidance. So is the opposite statement: "your job is to make sure you never, ever embarrass your boss."

Simple ideas, but ideas which serve two beautiful purposes: helping you help your employer spin their invoice printer and helping you be prepared for the inevitable day when you will need a résumé again.

For safety this week, think about how safety helps your employer stay profitable (and keep you employed). There is a definite financial link here.

Be safe and we will talk next week. ##