

Playing the Job Market

One of the certainties in life is that at some time, we are all likely to have to prepare a resume.

Whether we are leaving school or university, changing our career, experiencing redundancy or returning from a career break, our first priority is to get a resume written.

Some of us have faced the frustration of knowing we can do the job, but how do we get a “foot in the door”? Your resume is the key to opening those doors. You need to know how to sell yourself and how to tailor your approach to each application you make.

The purpose of the resume is *to sell the interview, not to get the job*.

An advertiser puts just enough punch into a 30-60 second commercial to get you to come and see the product.

Once they get you there, you are more likely to buy it.

Strange as it may seem, people can be viewed as products. When they apply for a job or sell their services, they sell their skills, experience, qualities and potential. No matter how good a “product” the person is, their future success will depend to a great extent on how well they market themselves.

Your resume is your sales document that highlights your skills, achievements and experience in such a way that the reader is motivated to meet you.

Some Tips

⇒ Appearances count – Use good quality stock. Check for typos and grammatical errors.

Use spell check and ask a friend to review the resume.

⇒ Keep it clean – businesslike and simple.

⇒ Size matters - 3-6 pages maximum for most positions. Don't send attachments unless requested. Remember,

you want to meet the reader.

⇒ Be prepared for a panel interview.

⇒ Thank verbally at the end of the interview and send a note to thank the interviewer for their time.

⇒ Persistence wins the day.

⇒ This is the first step in gaining the job.

Playing Well Means Surviving the Interview

Your resume has done its job and you have an interview. The selling continues, you are now going into a face to face sales

⇒ **Be careful with your appearance.**

⇒ **Know your answers.**

⇒ **Plan for what you need to take with you.**

⇒ **Do your homework.**

⇒ **Research the company at the library, in newspapers and journals and on the internet.**

⇒ **Keep your items you take with you relevant.**

⇒ **Practise, practise, practise.**

pitch. The product “YOU” needs to be presented in the best possible light. The planning commences – do your homework, research the company, find out as much as you possibly can so that when you are at the interview you will be able to make intelligent comment and ask suitable questions. What is their current performance, the structure, staff turnover, Places to find information include the Library, newspapers and journals, the internet.

Look at the product that will be the first and lasting impression.

Take time with your appearance, practice what you are going to say and when to say it. Ask yourself “what do I have to offer” – what do I know, what have I done and what can I do”.

Know the answers, the interview is not the time to be thinking about it. The prospective employer is interested in the answers. You know you will be asked about your strengths and weaknesses – think about them beforehand.

Plan for what you need to take to the interview with you. Spare copies of your resume and cover letter, portfolio, references, certificates. Keep it relevant.

Be prepared for a panel interview.

The moment is here – remember first impressions are usually the last impression. The interview is a subtle, more subjective aspect of the job hunting process. You have practiced your greeting and handshake, you have taken a few moments before the interview to compose yourself to ensure you have an air of confidence. The interviewer will already have read your resume and probably formed some opinion about you.

- ⇒ **Demonstrate knowledge about the organisation.**
- ⇒ **Show them how you can fit into their team.**
- ⇒ **Think about your answers before the interview**
- ⇒ **Compose yourself before the interview.**
- ⇒ **Listen and think before you answer.**
- ⇒ **The interviewer is not the enemy.**
- ⇒ **Show that you are the best person for the interview.**
- ⇒ **Remember that it is normal to feel nervous.**
- ⇒ **Turn nervous energy into a positive.**
- ⇒ **Leave a lasting impression.**
- ⇒ **Remember that the interview is not a contest.**

Now is the time to listen, think and answer. The interviewer is not the enemy, he/she is looking for the best person for the job and it is up to you to show that you are that person. You need to be able to show politely and enthusiastically that you are knowledgeable about the organisation and have something to offer it.

Your resume will have shown examples of your skills as a team player, but now you have to convince them that you will fit into their team.

If you think about the kinds of questions you will be asked ahead of time, it is easier to be prepared with the answers you want to give. After all there are only three basic kinds of questions employers will ask. Do not be afraid to ask for clarification before answering a question and take some time to formulate your answers before you speak. It is important that you know why you want the job, why you want to work for this organisation as the interviewer will more than likely ask these two questions. The way in which you answer could well be what puts you ahead of the others.

It is perfectly normal to be nervous before the interview. It is important that you turn nervous energy into positive energy. You need to find a way to control that nervous energy.

The interviewer needs to be able to build a picture of you that will last through the interview and to decision time. The way you handle yourself at the interview is one of the building blocks for the picture.

Finally it is important to remember that an interview is not a contest between you and the employer. A winning interview means that both end up on the same team.