CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES LLC

OFFERING YOU THE PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE YOU NEED FOR THE CAREER SUCCESS YOU DESERVE

EDITING TO PERFECT YOUR RÉSUMÉ

You know that you should double and triple check your résumé before you send it off into the 'employment market', making sure it's error-free.

But to make sure that résumé is in the best possible shape, you really have to take the editing process a few steps further.

This is critical:
Editing is more than just giving something a once-over to eliminate boo-boos like typos and grammar mistakes. It's really about looking at something with a critical eye, then making changes to ensure it's the best it can possibly be.
And that's what you want for your résumé, right? From someone who edits all day, every day for a living, here's a five-step editing plan that will take your résumé from good to full-blown awesome (and—of course—eliminate the typos, too).

Step 1: Consider the Overall Picture

When I look at a résumé for the first time, I have to resist the urge to correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling boo-boos. But it's important—the first thing I need to determine is whether the document is working as a whole. Will the document, in its present form land in the 'keeper pile' and further inspire the hiring authority to issue the invite for an interview? Are there any major gaps or sections that are superfluous? On that first proofing of your résumé, try to do the same thing. Ignore typos or formatting issues, and think about the big picture with the following criteria in mind:

- ✓ Does this sell you as the perfect candidate for the types of roles you're seeking?
- ✓ Are there any *mismatches* between the experience on the page and the experience required for the job?
- ✓ If so, are there ways to repair what might, at first glance, appear to be a deficit?
- ✓ What makes your experience stand out from the rest of the herd? *You sure don't want to look and sound just like everybody else in your field and at the level that you aspire to*. {Check out my article on cover letters which shows examples of non-aggressive terminology compared to the highly-effective aggressive terminology}
- ✓ Does the top third, the most valuable piece of your 'Résumé Real Estate' © serve as a hook to get the recruiter or hiring manager to read more?
- ✓ Is there anything on your résumé that distracts the reader away from the professional persona you're trying to project or '*stuff*' doesn't need to be there?

STRATEGY: Look at the LinkedIn profiles of people at your level in your field, and see how they tell their stories. Which ones are most compelling or stand out the most? See what you can learn from them and how you can apply those lessons to your own résumé.

Step 2: Scrutinize the Bullets and Details

As editors, we ask constantly ask ourselves if each word is the best one, if a sentence structure is right, if there's anything that could be said more clearly, effectively, or quickly. And oh yeah, do we add examples! Why say something if you can show it? It makes for better writing and a more interesting read.
Go through your résumé again. Your job, at this point, is to look at every section, every sentence, and every word, and determine if there's a better way to get your point across. For each bullet point, ask:

- ✓ Is this the strongest possible language you could use?
- ✓ Can anything be said more clearly? Or more succinctly?
- ✓ Is there any language that someone outside of your company or industry wouldn't understand?
- ✓ Could anything benefit from examples?
- ✓ Can anything be quantified or qualified?
- ✓ Is your phraseology kind of repetitious? Can they be replaced with more 'visual' language?

STRATEGY: Have a friend who's not in your field read your bullet points, and ask what he or she thinks your strongest achievements are. Do you agree? If not, adjust so the most important ones really stand out.

Step 3: Fact Check While You Spellcheck

Read every word on your résumé again, this time asking yourself:

- ✓ Are the companies you used to work for still called the same thing? Still located in the same city?
- ✓ Are your position titles accurate?
- ✓ Are your employment dates correct?
- ✓ Re-visit all of the numbers and percentages you use to describe: increases; quotas; budgets; savings; and achievements ... are they (*reasonably*) accurate?

STRATEGY: Make sure that your numbers are accurate, but you do have some leeway with your résumé. As long as you're reasonably sure that you're 'in the ball park' don't worry about having the "official" numbers to prove it, especially if you don't have access to that data.

Step 4: Proofread Some More

As I well know, you can work intently on a document for three hours and somehow not notice that you've used "their" instead of "there" or mistaken "bran" for "brand." So, proofreading one last time is a step you can't skip.
Try to have someone else look your résumé over. But before you do, proof word-by-word, asking yourself:

- ✓ Are there any typos? Wrong word usage?
- ✓ Does each bullet point end with a period (or not)? Either is fine, just be consistent.
- ✓ Are you using the serial comma (or not) throughout?

*STRATEGY: Read your résumé backwards, i.e. start at the end. **You know what you intended to write, and that's exactly what you'll see if you just read it normally.** Starting at the end, you'll be seeing each individual word and **WILL** catch a boo-boo or two that you otherwise would have missed. Afterall, manger is **NOT** man**a**ger ... **don't rely on spellcheck**!*

Step 5: Make Sure it Looks The Best You Can Make It

Make certain that it looks professional and is appropriate for both your field and the level that you are aiming for. Be consistent in applying boldface effects. You might also need to adjust font size or spacing to avoid what graphic designers call '*widows*': a line that only contains one word. Using too small of a font will make your résumé look crowded and will be difficult to read. Because part of great writing is making it look great, too.

You don't have to send your résumé off to a graphic designer, but keep in mind that presentation is important, and that a few adjustments to your text can make a big difference in how it looks. Give it a final once-over with a designer's eye, considering:

- ✓ Does your résumé have a visual hook, calling the reader's attention to your most valuable achievements?
- ✓ Is the page overly cluttered?
- ✓ Is the font size too small? Is it difficult to read?
- ✓ Is the font size and format for each section consistent?
- ✓ Does your layout and section sequencing make sense?
- ✓ Is your contact information prominent?

As a final note, I recommend editing your résumé again and again—adding in your new accomplishments, shifting the way you talk about an experience based on something you've seen someone else do, and making sure there's nothing you've missed. After all, as any writer or editor will tell you: The best masterpieces are never done.

Mark Berkowitz is the owner and President of Career Development Resources, LLC. *Changing lives and revolutionizing careers since 1985*, Mark provides one-on-one career consulting services, résumé building assistance and guidance to help each client achieve not only job advancement, but lasting and meaningful success in their career path as well. A distinguished figure in his field, Berkowitz is one of the top career builders in the country and has been quoted in dozens of books and publications on the topic of career advancement. Passionate about empowering others to realize their dreams, Mark served as an executive board member of the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches. He has been helping clients successfully advance in and/or change their careers for over 36 years. With a Master's Degree in Career Development and four specialized certifications (National Certified Career Counselor, Certified Professional Résumé Writer, Int'l Certified Job & Career Transition Coach, and Certified Employment Interview Professional), he is uniquely qualified to help you improve your career situation. A recognized expert in the field, he had not only taught in Graduate Schools and led workshops and seminars, but also trained other counselors. Mark served as

chairman of the Certification Board for the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches and was a founding member of the Career Management Alliance (fkn Career Masters Institute). Additionally, he has shared his expertise in effectively utilizing career assessment tools with graduate counseling students from nearby Fordham University, helping to prepare them for their future counseling careers.

Mark connects with clients locally as well as international clients via the internet. He also provides outreach to high school and college students, presenting career planning and job search strategy workshops.
• Highly regarded with résumés, cover letters, and interview strategies showcased in nearly two dozen books.
• Enjoys an INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION as a "Résumé Guru" by members of the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches.

You can contact him at **1+ (910) 883-5013** or cardevres1@gmail.com to find out how he can assist you in launching your career into a higher orbit.

See how you can benefit from professional expertise instead of suffering from your career mistakes.