IT CAREER EXPERT

IT Resume Myths

By IT Career Expert · In IT Resume Writing Tips

The typical job searcher is deluged with suggestions about what they can do to improve their resume. Keep in mind that everyone has an opinion on how to write resumes, since we've all created our own. But there is a huge gap between writing an adequate resume and writing an amazing one.

Avoiding bad advice is particularly difficult when you don't know who to believe. The large job sites —and we all know who they are —are compelled to produce reams of articles about writing resumes. Much of it isn't original thought but regurgitated from one article to the next. Most often the person who writes these articles is not an actual resume writer but is someone who is obligated to create articles about writing resumes. What an awful job!

Here are some examples that I found in an article. The author recommended removing each of these. I have provided explanations that demonstrate that it is not always the case.

1)   "Salary negotiable" and "References available by request." Commonly mentioned, but still good advice.

2)   "Responsible for _____." Sometimes you have a list of somewhat disconnected tasks that you really need to get your resume, so you use the wording 'responsible for…' or 'scope of responsibilities include…' or 'accountability for…' It shouldn't be a long list — 3 to 4 phrases will be fine. If you overload this bullet item, then it might be ignored.

3)   "Experience working in _____." The summary of your resume is an overview of your capabilities and it is perfectly okay to use this phrase in that particular section. However, it is not appropriate for your professional experience section where you need to use action oriented verbs.

4)   "Problem solving skills." I agree that it is generally not a good idea to use this phrase since it is overused. Many people choose IT because they actually do have good problem solving skills. For the unique individual who has extraordinary skills, it is fine to use this phrase followed by specific examples of the problems they solved.

5)   "Detail oriented." Not everyone is detail oriented and in IT this is a great characteristic.

- For project managers, I typically don't use this phrase because some people get so involved in a task that they are not able to step back and see the overall picture. If

my client has the combined capability of working at a detailed level while also being able to see the "big" picture, then I will include it in their resume.

- To be successful, testers and programmers need to be detailed oriented. If this phrase does a great job of describing my client, I'll put it on the resume along with information about how they use this quality.

6)   "Hardworking." I had never used this particular verbiage in a resume until recently. I had a client, who was a software developer and received her degree in Computer Science from a distinguished university. She had held a number of internships while attending school that required a high level of competency to resolve real world problems. She achieved success by being diligent, hardworking, and conscientious. She chose 'hardworking' as being one of her three core strengths. It would have been remiss not to include it in her resume.

7)   Team player." Working in a team is not the same as being a team player. Hiring managers are looking for individuals who will fit within the culture of their organization and they may use 'team player' or 'team member' as one of their search keywords. If you work well in a team environment of shared learning and collaboration, then why shouldn't you put it on your resume?

8)   "Proactive." When I use the word 'proactive' or 'proactively' I typically follow it with a specific example of how the person demonstrates this quality.

9)   "Results driven IT professional." I agree that this should generally not be included in a resume. It is assumed that you will provide valuable results. I have, however, used it for individuals who have phenomenal quantitative results that are directly tied to revenue generation. I'll use the phrase quickly followed by 3-5 specific examples. It makes a compelling message.

The point of this article is to tell you that there are few hard and fast rules in resume writing. Hiring managers aren't certified in selecting candidates. They are individuals who have different perspectives and they can't be easily categorized. Just use your common sense when writing your resume.