A Few Notes About Resumes

Create a Resume that Gets Interviews

Buying Motivators and Value Propositions

When you apply for a job, you are marketing yourself to a company. Another way of looking at this is that you are marketing a product to a buyer. And in order to market this product effectively, you need to have a good idea of what the buyer wants and needs, and what will motivate them to buy you over another product (or job candidate). You need to develop a value proposition which summarizes how you are a good (or the best) match for those motivators.

To come up with your "value proposition," consider the following. You'll perhaps want to do this twice to start, one run-through for your general career goals, and then ongoing for each specific job you apply for:

- What is your target role? What industry? What kind (size, activities, products and services, etc.) of company? What position(s) specifically? Answers to this question will help with responses to the next.
- What are your target organizations' buying motivators? By this I mean: How will they expect you to contribute to their business success? What results (KPIs) will your work be evaluated on? Will you be expected to increase revenue, or cut costs, or reduce manpower, or improve efficiency, or support the mandate of the organization? Something else? What activities (both technical and soft) will you be expected to perform? Much of this info can be researched in the job posting, on the corporate website, and in networking meetings with current employees/managers.
- What qualifications, experiences and past accomplishments allow you to satisfy the buying motivators of your target organizations and roles? What items in your resume/cover letter seem not to be relevant to the role you want?
- What added value do you bring? Relevant languages? Personality characteristics? In other words, what sets you apart from other candidates as "the best" for your target roles? What personal characteristics would former/current supervisors and colleagues comment positively on?

Profiles

Once you have given the above some thought, you can write your profile, which will consist of a summary paragraph describing some of these qualifications, experiences and added value points, and then a summary of relevant skills, with or without accomplishment statements.

Job Descriptions

Job descriptions should ideally consist of the following:

- A brief summary of the organization you work(ed) for (organizational products and services, number of employees and locations, revenues, etc.). This gives context to your working environment.
- A summary of your work context (who you reported to, how many – if any, even informally – reported to you, and a high-level – not too detailed – listing of your accountabilities). This gives high level job context, and allows you to cut out a lot of the bullets and bulk found in most job descriptions, many of which can be guessed just from the job title and industry.
- 4-6 bullets, all of which are relevant (to the buying organization) ACCOMPLISHMENTS, in a SMART format. By that, I mean the usual Specific, Measurable, Action and Result oriented, and Time-bound.

CPA Alberta Resume Reviews

If you would like a full review of your resume from CPA Alberta Career Services, please email a copy, in Word, to careerservices@cpaalberta.ca. Career services are free to all CPA Alberta members and Alberta-based candidates in the CPA Professional Education Program (PEP).