

Students & Professionals:

That Resume Better Be Updated and Ready!!

In today's ever changing economy, it's vital to have an updated copy of your resume on hand. After all, you never know when an amazing job opportunity in the park and recreation industry, or unfortunately, a pink slip might be given to you.

You have to be ready to provide your resume on short notice. Candidates who have not taken time to update their resume may be passed over for another candidate of similar caliber that is ready to go now. You just never know when that opportunity may land in your lap and you have to be ready to act.

Updating one's resume today, however, is not as easy as it once was. As job losses and layoffs continue to swell, people have to do more with less to enhance their resumes. Job seekers are unsure how to deal with lack of employment, gaps between work, title demotions, fewer duties and shortened job spans when updating their resumes

So, here are some helpful tips to enhance your resume if it is lacking in any of the following areas:

You have a time gap between jobs

Depending on the length of the time gap, you should fill in the gap with something you've been doing in your time off. This will show employers you've taken initiative during this period rather than waiting for something to fall into your lap.

Consider getting actively involved in volunteer projects and/or consulting opportunities, even if you do the work for free. This will allow you to use your skills in a way that is worth describing on your resume.

You've just been told that your being laid-off

These days, no employer will be surprised see an applicant who's been laid-off. Be honest about your departure. In this economy, it's going to happen. Don't misrepresent that you're still employed by dating your last position as 'to present' if you're not currently with that park and recreation agency. It's a red flag if a recruiter sees [you] as currently employed when in fact you've been laid off.

You were recently hired, but laid off right away due to the economy

Don't leave any employment off your resume, no matter how short a period you may have held a job. Just don't explain the details on your resume.

In today's economy, most people will give you the benefit of the doubt that your departure was not a result of your performance. Be prepared to discuss it if it comes up in a conversation or interview.

You were demoted or had a title change

Titles are just that -- titles. They say nothing about your specific accomplishments and your track record of meeting or exceeding expectations for your organization.

State your title, but focus on your achievements for the organization. Any good recruiter or potential employer is going to be most interested in your track record of meeting objectives no matter what your role. A Parks Director for one agency may require something completely different from a 'director' role at another organization. Focus on your measurable accomplishments.

You went from a senior-level position to a "filler" position at lower level

In this situation, it's critical to include an objective that outlines what type of position you're looking for at the organization where you're applying.

If you have to take a 'filler' position between professional positions, you need to include the role but place your focus on the activities you have maintained during that time to remain current in your professional field. Volunteering, professional networking and taking classes are all things that will help keep you current.

You're a recent college graduate with little experience

Most people have skills that they don't realize are important resume builders. Experience occurs any time you're gaining insight and perspective in your chosen field. Classes, volunteer experience, internships, leadership activities and professional networking groups are all examples of experience you can incorporate in your resume.

Now that you know how to correct any potentially sketchy parts of your resume, here are five tips for keeping it up-to-date.

1. Keep up with trends

Keep up-to-date with current trends for resumes and online profiles. Be sure that you are highlighting how you stand out and emphasizing what makes you special.

2. Keep a brag book

Keep a log of your performance reviews, coaching reports from managers, annual reports, goal assessments and the like to use as content for your resume.

You're going to be measured against someone else in most any position you may hold. Update this list each time you receive an e-mail from your manager or a report from your company. Include achievements applicable to the position to which you're submitting your resume.

Additionally, keep a file of any nice things that supervisors, clients and colleagues say about you, and asking for recommendations on social networking sites like LinkedIn.

3. List more than job duties

Listing job duties on your resume is OK, but include the metrics you were held accountable for and your performance to those goals. Many people just list the duty but don't include the scale of their accountability and how they performed.

4. Always ask for feedback

Never stop asking for feedback or critique from colleagues, friends and experts. You never know what someone may see in your resume that needs further enhancement or may just need to be eliminated.

5. Keep lists

In order to keep your resume up-to-date, you need to keep a running list of your accomplishments and things you've done in the workplace, and add to it regularly. Keep track of your digital profile, too, and recognize that your digital footprint is an important part of your professional presentation and job search.