Six Tips For A Better Engineering Resume

Author : Karen Watson

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No one knows your background and experience better than you. Most engineers can get the basics of their projects and experience down on paper in a sensible fashion. What most engineers who write their own resumes have difficulty with is making that sell to the reader. Here are six tips to help you make your engineering resume sell.

1. Select the best organizational format. Most resumes are written in chronological (reverse time order) format, but that does not mean that the chronological choice is best for you. A combination format may be best. The combination format is evenly balanced between skill set description, achievements, and employment history, with the advantage being that projects can be highlighted for greater impact.

2. Assume that your resume will be viewed on a computer screen rather than on a piece of paper. Most resumes are sent, received, and managed via PC. That does not mean that the document has to be drab and ugly, visually. Many engineers who have images or pictures of project work have good success with creating a CD ROM portfolio of these images.

3. Make absolutely sure your document is error free. An error in a resume can often be the killer between two closely matched candidates. Engineers are expected to be detail-oriented so an error in the engineering resume reflects badly on possible future performance.

4. Find a balance between wordiness and lack of detail. Employers need to see details about your work history and engineering experience, but they don't need to know everything. The fact that you were Den Leader in your Cub Scout troop is irrelevant. Keep information germane to the goal of attaining an interview.

5. Think “accomplishments” rather than “job duties”. What made you stand out from the crowd? How did you come up with a way to do things better, more efficiently, or for less cost? What won honors for you? Information such as this will be what makes you grab attention and put your engineering resume on the top of the stack.

6. Keep it positive. Reason for leaving a job, setbacks, failed initiatives, etc. do not have a place on an engineering resume. Employers are seeking people who can contribute, have a positive attitude, are enthusiastic, and have successfully performed similar job skills in the past. Concentrate on communicating these issues and avoid any detracting information.

Remember, resumes do not get jobs – people get jobs. Resumes get interviews. Most first time job interviews are conducted via telephone rather than in person as they used to be. Make sure you are prepared for that telephone call when it arrives. And make sure you have an engineering resume that will make the phone ring!