Cover Letter Versus Resume – Which Is More Important?

Some people say that the resume is THE most important part of the job changing process, while others say it's the cover letter and even others say it's the interview. The truth is that they are all right and wrong!

It's like asking …what is more important in a car, the brake pedal, the gas pedal or the steering wheel. Obviously you need all three to get you from point A to point B.

The main purpose of a resume along with the accompanying cover letter is to get you the interview, pure and simple. The way to accomplish this is to show off your strengths and achievements and minimize your weaknesses (we all have them). Now is not the time to be modest - if you don't tell the hiring manager how good you are and what you can do for his or her company, no one else will.

Cover letters and resumes are both used to get you the interview; they just do it a little differently.

The cover letter:

- is the perfect place to expand upon your resume, add information you couldn't fit on the resume or to place more emphasis on a specific point or experience.
- directs the reader to your resume for more information.
- tells the reader how, where and when to contact you.
- explains why you are interested in their company and why they should be interested in speaking with you.
- suggests action...I'll call you...please call me, etc.
- lets you clearly state why this company is interesting and a good match for you and the potential employer.
- should concentrate on how your skills and abilities can benefit the employer both now and in the future.

In addition, a cover letter gives the reader more information about you such as your writing style and your "personality". It must be interesting enough to entice the reader to spend some time reading your resume.

The cover letter may say something like, "*as you'll see in the attached resume, blah, blah, blah"* or *"in addition to the information listed on the attached resume, I have also done, blah, blah, blah."*

A good resume:

- zeros in on those skills and abilities that you have that are most relevant and important to the job you are seeking.
- focuses on your achievements and accomplishments not just the responsibilities you had at each job.
- reveals the results of your achievements.
- should project your career as a series of progressive accomplishments.
- needs to be short on words and long on facts.
- is eye appealing and visually inviting.

But remember, your past accomplishments and achievements are relevant only as it relates to what you can do now for the hiring company. No matter how good you were at a previous company, to the hiring company, it's all about what can you do for them.

Jason Adams is President of Street Smart Sales and Marketing and author of the highly acclaimed book The StreetSmart Job-Changing System©. For more information visit http://www.JobChangingSystem.com/

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