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RESUME & KSA TIPS



RESUMES

As you may have noticed if you have begun your Federal job search, agencies have varying and unique application procedures to meet their hiring needs. One application format may be acceptable for one agency and not another. In the past, this proved to be frustrating for job seekers applying to multiple positions.

Building Your Resume on USAJOBS

In an effort to drive the Federal hiring process toward a universal application format, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) gathered together several agencies from around the government to create one resume format that would include all of the crucial data required for Federal application into one uniform resume format.

The product that resulted was the USAJOBS Resume Builder. The USAJOBS Resume Builder allows you to create one uniform resume that provides all of the information required by government agencies. Instead of creating multiple resumes in different formats, you can build your resume once and be ready for all job opportunities.

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Resume & KSA (Knowledge, Skills & Abilities) Tips

Pay Attention to Keywords

Whether you're writing your first resume, updating an existing one, or answering a position's Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities (KSA's), stop and think about which keywords you need to add. You could be the most qualified person for the position, but you could be lost in a sea of applicants without the right keywords.

→ A Single Keyword Communicates Multiple Skills and Qualifications

When a recruiter reads the keyword "analyst," he or she might assume you have experience in collecting data, evaluating effectiveness, and researching and developing new processes. Just one keyword can have tremendous power and deliver a huge message.

→ Study Job Announcements

This is the best way to determine important keywords. Review several job announcements and their questions for your ideal position. The jobs don't have to be in your geographic target area. The idea is to find skills, experience, education and other credentials important in your field. You will probably find keywords frequently mentioned by different agencies. Focus on the "requirements," "skills" or "qualifications" sections of job ads, and look for "buzzwords" and desirable credentials for your ideal job.

Be Concise

Don't confuse telling your story with creating your autobiography. Recruiters are inundated with applications and are faced with weeding out the good from the bad. The first step involves quickly skimming through submissions and eliminating candidates who clearly are not qualified. Therefore, your application needs to pass the skim test. Look at your resume and/or KSA's and ask yourself:

- Can a hiring manager see my main credentials within 10 to 15 seconds?
- Does critical information jump off the page?
- Do I effectively sell myself on the top quarter of the first page?

→ The Sales Pitch

Because applications are quickly skimmed during the first pass, it is crucial your resume and KSA's get right to work selling your credentials. Your key selling points need to be

prominently displayed at the top of the first page of the resume and directly address each question asked in the KSA section. For example, if an advanced degree is an important qualification, it shouldn't be buried at the end of a four-page resume. If a KSA question asks about your writing ability, immediately detail your experience instead of enjoyment of it.

→ Use an Editor's Eye

Many workers are proud of their careers and feel the information on a resume should reflect everything they've accomplished. However, a resume shouldn't contain every detail and KSA's should only address the question at hand. So be judicious. If your college days are far behind you, does it really matter that you pledged a fraternity or delivered pizza? The editing step will be difficult if you are holding on to your past for emotional reasons.

Use Numbers to Highlight Your Accomplishments

If you were a recruiter looking at a resume or an answer to a KSA, which of the following entries would impress you more:

- Wrote news releases.
- Wrote **25** news releases in a three-week period under daily deadlines.

Clearly the second statement carries more weight. Why? Because it uses numbers to quantify the writer's accomplishment, giving it a context that helps the interviewer understand the degree of difficulty involved in the task. Numbers are powerful resume tools that will help your accomplishments draw the attention they deserve from prospective employers. With just a little thought, you can find effective ways to quantify your successes on your resume.

→ Think Money

For-profit, nonprofit, and government organizations alike are and always will be concerned about money. So as you contemplate your accomplishments and prepare to present them on your resume or in your KSA's, think about ways you've saved money, earned money, or managed money in your internships, part-time jobs and extracurricular activities so far. A few possibilities that might appear on a typical college student's resume:

- Identified, researched and recommended a new Internet Service Provider, cutting the company's online costs by **15** percent.
- Wrote prospect letter that has brought in more than **\$25,000** in donations to date.
- Managed a student organization budget of more than **\$7,000**.

→ Think Time

You've heard the old saying, "Time is money," and it's true. Companies and organizations are constantly looking for ways to save time and do things more efficiently. They're also necessarily concerned about meeting deadlines, both internal and external. So whatever you can do on your resume or in your KSA's to show that you can save time, make time or manage time will grab your reader's immediate attention. Here are some time-oriented entries that might appear on a typical college student's resume:

- Assisted with **twice-monthly** payroll activities, ensuring employees were paid as expected and on time.
- Attended high school basketball games, interviewed players and coaches afterward, and composed 750-word articles by an **11 p.m. deadline**.
- Suggested procedures that decreased average order-processing time from **10 minutes to five minutes**.

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