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Age-Proof Your Resume

By Virginia Bola, PsyD

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Older job hunters fear interviews where their age cannot be concealed and where an initial response of dismay on an interviewer's face, quickly hidden, confirms their anticipation of discrimination. The mature job seeker often prefers the anonymity of mailed resumes, e-mailed inquiries, internet applications, and telephone contacts.

Interviews, however, are the goal of everyone who wants to work. There is so much pre-selection and screening before an interview is granted that simply getting that far in the process provides at least some expectation of an offer being made. It is when interviews are not forthcoming that real concern is needed. Ask yourself if you may be inadvertently triggering screening filters by the documentation you submit.

Review the following three "red flags" and identify if your own presentation could be outdated and needlessly sabotaging your employment campaign.

1. Old Educational Data.

You may have obtained a degree or completed a vocational course many years ago. While you obviously cannot change the year of your graduation, you can concentrate on detailing other training received more recently. Any classes, workshops, or seminars attended over the past couple of years, even something in progress, stamps you as an individual who is continuing to learn and grow, someone aware of recent developments and open to new ideas and up-to-date approaches.

2. Job Titles.

The title of a job is designed to explain, in brief, your typical duties. Over the years, such titles change even when tasks and responsibilities remain similar. Review the titles on your resume that may reflect what your position was called at the time but no longer meshes with the current business environment. "Secretary," for example, is now rare. Similar job duties, flexed for innovations in technology, are now referred to as "Administrative Assistant," "Office Manager," "Office Analyst," or "Personal Assistant."

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Review your local classifieds and concentrate on the titles that seem to involve job tasks you have performed in the past. Then review your resume and applications and update job titles accordingly.

3. Jargon.

You probably have a resume which lists the duties and responsibilities of each of your prior positions. Re–read those descriptions, concentrating on the actual words you have used, especially the verbs (actions). Do those descriptions date you? Some obvious phrases are the old "variety duties" which is now generally called "multi–tasking," and "assisted with" now translates as "customer service." "Typing speed," so ubiquitous thirty years ago is now invariably "keyboarding skills." There are many other less obvious areas. A way to address them is to go to the newspaper or internet and review a number of job descriptions in your field. Any words or phrases that are unfamiliar to you need to be researched as

they may describe a task you have previously performed under a different description. If you cannot find the information you seek, check with a library, an employment agency, or someone in the field. If the new phrase fits you, substitute it in your resume and all future applications. If it is important enough to be included in a job description, it deserves your attention and neglecting the required investigation may doom your job search efforts.

Your goal is to have a potential employer read your resume and be familiar with the terms you use. It is your responsibility to be adaptive, flexible, and avoid being screened out due to inappropriate vocabulary. Don't expect an employer to take the time to figure out whether you really have the skills being sought. Remember that resumes are used to screen OUT – to reduce the "possible interview" pile to a manageable size.

When your resume and written applications have been meticulously age–proofed, practice the same terminology verbally, with a friend, to be ready for a thoroughly up–to–date self–presentation when that inevitably soon–to–be–scheduled interview arrives.

Virginia Bola operated a rehabilitation company for 20 years, developing innovative job search techniques for disabled workers, while serving as a respected Vocational Expert in Administrative, Civil and Workers' Compensation Courts. Author of an interactive and emotionally supportive workbook, *The Wolf at the Door: An Unemployment Survival Manual*, and a monthly ezine, *The Worker's Edge*, she can be reached at <http://www.virginiabola.com>

Resume Writing and Preparation is Free Online

By Donna Monday

Creating a strong resume is a very important part of applying for a job, either online or off line. There are many resume writing services that will help you build an impressive resume for job interviews.

You can also learn how to write a resume for free by surfing the Internet for resume writing help. Many sites will show you tips and advice on choosing a resume style that works best for you.

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You can also find samples of resumes, resume templates, resume software, and examples of resume cover sheets or letters.

Whether you're looking to create a business resume, marketing resume, military resume, electronic resume, accounting resume, nursing resume, acting resume, sales resume, teacher resume, executive resume, student resume or a customer service resume, you can find great advice online with a little research.

When preparing your resume, keep in mind that employers use resumes for several purposes:

Screen Applicants - Most employers will only look at a resume for about 30 seconds to determine whether or not an applicant is a good fit for their organization.

Develop Interview Questions - Statements on your resume can be used to formulate questions they may ask during an interview.

Communication Skills - Employers want to see how well you express yourself.

Qualifications - Employers will reference your resume when making hiring decisions based on how closely your qualifications match their needs.

Writing a resume isn't easy, but by studying various tips and advice, you can learn to create a type of resume that will get you one step closer to your ultimate goal of finding a great job.

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Donna Monday writes employment related articles for

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How To Choose The Right Resume Format

Tips For Writing Your Winning Resume

Understanding Resume Styles

The Resume: What It Is And How To Use It

The Ultimate Guide To Acing ANY Job Interview

Palmistry

Mail Order in the Internet Age

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Disaster Preparedness and Crime Protection Manual



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