



Interviewing Skills

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Hello Friends! Today I will talk in some detail about Communication for Employment. As you all know people apply for jobs all the time. But do you know how they communicate their credentials for the job? Yes – they use a Resume to communicate with a potential employer. So what is a Resume? It is a document that offers a quick overview of the various jobs held by the applicant over a period of time. It is also a type of marketing material that lets other people know what services an individual has provided and can provide to a prospective employer by pointing out relevant knowledge and skills. A resume can have very different formats. However, the chronological format and skills-based format are very common. A skills-based resume focuses on skills and a chronological format emphasizes experience. By the way, it is better to stick to a chronological format than a skills-based one since it prevents an individual from leaving out important information and also makes it easier for others to view the job applicant's progress.

A. Formulating Career Plans

Speaking of progress, it is also a good idea to develop a Career Plan and link it to the education, employment history and learning sections of the resume. So how do we develop this Plan? Well, first we need to know very clearly the kind of professional interests, values and skills that we like and the type of work opportunities we wish to explore in our area of interest.

I am sure you want to know why all of this should go on a resume. Basically, a Career Plan helps a prospective employer know that there is a match between an applicant's dream job and the position that's advertised. By formulating clear Career Objectives, an applicant reassures the employer with regard to the kind of goals that he/she is pursuing. Potential employers may not wish to hire people who are unsure about their career paths.

Accordingly, it is best to customize the resume and Career Objective to match a specific position and employer. Today, word processing software simplify

this job of altering a resume to suit specific positions. Does this mean that it is better to have different resumes for different opportunities? Yes – it is a myth that one resume will do for all positions, especially when people have several different positions in mind.

So, as long as each job meets an applicant's personal preferences – like type of work, type of organization, geographic location, work environment, or any other important criteria, it's ok to customize a resume. Interestingly, there are several types of objectives that job applicants can choose from. The most basic of these involves stating one's professional position. For example: Accountant, Graphic Designer, Medical Technologist, Speech Therapist or Videographer.

Alternately, the objective can also reflect the applicant's functional area of interest as well as mention that the applicant is seeking an entry-level position. For example, consider the following statements:

- Seeking a position in public relations.

- Seeking an entry-level position in genetics research.

Another type of objective statement references not just the applicant's functional skills but also his/her preference for a particular sector, size of organization, and/or geographic area. Consider the following statements:

- An administrative position in a non-profit agency in Mumbai, utilizing fundraising and public relations skills.
- An entry-level sales position in a medium to large-sized insurance company.

It is important to bear in mind that referencing skills in the objective statement is not enough. The resume should also clearly communicate evidence of those skills.

B.Planning Your Resume

So far, I have been describing only one important part of the resume. Now, let me talk about Planning the Resume. A resume is a type of personal advertisement. It mentions where a person has been,

what he/she has done, and where he/she is currently headed. It always includes positive facts related to professional accomplishments and work-related duties and responsibilities. The goal of a resume is to obtain an interview from a prospective employer.

To develop a resume, it is best to first list down all academic, extracurricular, volunteer, and employment activities. While it is good to be modest, it is also equally important to mention everything that is potentially important. Once this information is available, it should be easier to organize all life experiences and eventually create a resume. While developing a resume, we can opt for either the chronological resume, the functional resume or a combination format.

A chronological resume presents education and work experience in a straightforward, reverse chronological order i.e. the most recent experience is listed first. This style is effective if a good part of one's work experience is related to the stated job objective.

A functional resume differs from a chronological resume in that it emphasizes skills related to the stated objective rather than on the jobs that a person may have had. A functional resume is particularly effective if a person's work experience has not been closely related to the job objective. It is also appropriate for people who plan to change careers or seek a promotion. In this format the focus is on the skills necessary to perform the desired job, and on how a person may have demonstrated those same skills in different types of jobs.

Nonetheless, sometimes a combination format will adequately suit a jobseeker's needs, as it can help to highlight both a chronological employment history and also some outstanding skills and achievements, simultaneously.

Now, once the information, content and format are finalized, it is important to ensure that the content of the resume matches the career objective and the resume emphasizes and highlights abilities, skills and accomplishments.

Also, it helps to use active verbs to describe work experiences and skills. Additionally, the right tense

should be used to describe work experience. For instance, current work can be reported in the present tense while previous work experience is reported in the past tense.

The resume must be so designed that a potential employer can quickly scan it to find information easily. What this means is that awards, honours, certificates, licenses and accomplishments must be meticulously listed.

Remember that it may not be very important to spell out personal data like marital status or age, but degree titles should be spelled out in bold. Similarly, the resume should be so organized that it emphasizes those key points that an applicant may want to stress.

When planning a resume, due care must also be taken to clearly highlight or emphasize the dates of work and job titles. Also, categories should be clearly indicated with the help of text bullets or indented to create eye appeal. Moreover, type style

and font size must be consistent throughout, i.e. no smaller than 11 point font.

Now it is easy to overlook simple things like margins, spacing, bolding, bullets, punctuation, date formats, and state abbreviations. But these should be consistent throughout. Also, the information that goes into a resume should be nicely balanced such that the resume doesn't look crowded or empty.

In case references have to be included, these should be listed on a separate page accompanying the resume. Last but not the least, it is critical to ensure the resume is no longer than 2 pages and that it has been completely proofread for typos, spelling and grammatical errors.

C.Structuring the Resume

Now let us consider another very important aspect related to resume building – i.e. Structuring the Resume. A resume is read from the top down, like a news article. So the resume expands from the initial

headline, through the profile, with strong supporting information in the body of the document.

A clear resume structure plays a very critical role when narrating the story of one's career. Such a structure enables the reader to quickly navigate and find crucial career information. Of course, there is no "one size fits all" resume format. Format and content must both fit overall resume strategy. But all resumes will have seven common elements.

➤ Headline

For instance, it is critical to open with a strong, clear headline. Such an opening helps the reader know who the applicant is, and what the applicant is looking for. It doesn't help to make the hiring authority guess as, they won't take the time.

Needless to mention, it is absolutely critical to be clear and concise. If someone is looking for IT leadership roles, for example, a headline like "CIO /

CTO / IT Director" immediately brands the person for the opportunity he/she is seeking.

➤ Professional Summary

The resume should have a powerful professional summary. This initial paragraph is in many ways the key to the resume. It helps to inform the reader who the applicant is, and what makes him/her stand out from the crowd.

The resume should focus on key differentiators - the things a person does differently or better than his/her peers. It is good to avoid soft skills here, and concentrate on the abilities that will be fleshed out in the body of the resume.

It is a great idea to include impressive credentials – especially if its an MBA from an IIM or a B. Tech. or an M. Tech. from an IIT. Alternately, if the applicant has cleared a nationally or globally recognized certification exam, the same should be referenced in the resume.

➤ List of Core Competencies

The resume should highlight a person's competencies. Accordingly, the applicant should list skills that are most valuable, and most in demand. By reviewing interesting job postings, it should be easy enough to identify top skills that are in demand.

Now, if the applicant is a "hands-on" technical professional, it makes sense to put the applicant's technical toolbox on display on the first page of the resume. If the applicant is sufficiently senior, technologies can be better showcased at the end of the document.

➤ Professional Experience

The meat of any resume is professional experience. There's a fine line between too much detail and too little. It doesn't make sense to overwhelm the reader. However, it is important to provide enough

detail about one's duties and responsibilities to clarify the context of one's accomplishments.

When mentioning scope of work or type of responsibility like size of teams and budgets or nature of achievement, it is best to put down some numbers, whenever possible. Numbers make the information in a resume concrete and far more memorable.

➤ Education and Training

The Education and Training section of the resume is pretty straightforward. But it's important to keep the format clear and consistent. If an applicant has more than one BA or MA, only reference the degree that is relevant to the applicant's goals.

Also, professional training can demonstrate both a greater range of skills, and a commitment to professional growth and advancement.

➤ Qualifications

The qualifications section can include a range of material that adds value - technical competencies, languages, publications, and affiliations. As with the Education and Training section, consistency in presentation is the key to making this section easy to scan by the Hiring Authority.

➤ Interests

As for the Interests section, not all resumes will include a section on personal interests. So, it's certainly not required. But if an applicant has unique interests that may connect with a potential hiring authority, they can add value. For instance, if an applicant has won a Triathlon or a Martial Arts championship that information will stay in the hiring authority's memory. It is best to be careful and avoid anything controversial. For instance, political or religious affiliations, should generally be omitted. Of course, there's much more to a resume than structure - language, strategy, content all play important roles. But with this solid foundation, it's

far more likely that the hiring authority will read the document.

D. Content of the Resume

Finally, having discussed how to plan and structure a resume, let us look up another important aspect – the Content of the Resume. The order and content of everyone's resume does not have to be the same. However, formats are somewhat standardized so that employers can easily find the information they seek. After the heading, sequence all information on a resume from most important to least important. The overall sequence of the resume can be:

1. Personal Details
2. Job objective
3. Education
4. Professional experience
5. Computer Skills
6. Language and Personal Communication Skills
7. Extracurricular activities
8. References

E. Electronic Resumes

Before we end this session, I must share with you a few things about Electronic Resumes, since most resumes today tend to be created with various kinds of software. An electronic resume is a plain text, PDF or HTML document that provides an employer with information regarding a job candidate's professional experience, education and job qualifications, and is meant to be read by a computer program instead of by a human being. Many large companies process all their incoming resumes electronically by using an automated applicant tracking systems (ATS) or subscribing to a resume scanning service that scans resumes as images and uses optical character recognition (OCR) software to read the text.

Essentially, the information contained on the resumes is entered into a relational database so when the company needs to hire new talent, someone from the human resources management (HRM) department can query the database for

possible candidates. Resumes that match a specified score for keywords that were identified by the hiring manager are then selected for human review.

On an electronic resume, keywords can be stated in a separate keyword section, or they can be integrated into the text. The font should be simple and all text should be aligned to the left. It is best to avoid underlining, bolding, italics or bullets as these can confuse older OCR software programs.

In general, action verbs like "managed" or "facilitated," which are recommended for use in paper resumes, are not effective in electronic resumes because most ATS keywords are nouns.

Since computers read resumes differently than people do, recruiters recommend that job hunters should prepare two versions of their resume: a simple, electronic one for talent analytics programs and a more creative one printed on quality paper to hand-deliver to someone within the organization or bring to an interview.

So friends, to summarize what we have discussed in this session, as part of communication for employment, it is very important to formulate concrete career plans and then plan our Resume according to the career plans. The resume has to be structured systematically, and its content has to cover all the relevant information in a proper sequence. Lastly, we have also discussed the electronic resumes and their importance in the corporate world.

I hope you are in a better position now, to improve your resume and communicate your knowledge, skills and experiences much more confidently.

Thank you.