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Seven Traits of an Effective Resume

Unless your resume has all seven traits below, it is not working to your advantage.

1. **Introductory Statement**
   Most hiring companies don't have time to match unspecified resumes to open positions, so lead off with a career summary or introductory statement that makes it clear what type of position you are seeking and why you are qualified for the job.

2. **Keywords and Phrases**
   To pass through tracking software your resume must contain the keywords and phrases it screens for. These words are not the verbs stressed in paper resumes, but nouns such as job titles and technical skills.

   To find out what keywords to use read the job posting or obtain the actual job description. You also may want to check out the book *2,500 Keywords to Get You Hired*, which lists keywords for each career and shows examples of how to use them in your resume.

3. **Your Experience**
   Your resume should not merely list the jobs you've held. It must provide specific examples of how you achieved success. Resume professionals recommend using the PARS formula: Describe a Problem, the Action you took, the Results you achieved, and Skills you applied.

4. **Too Many Personal Pronouns and Articles**
   With just two pages to sell yourself, make each word count. Write in telegraph style, eliminating all personal pronouns and articles like "the," "a," and "an." Removing the "I," "me," and "my" not only frees up space, but creates a subliminal perception of objectivity.

5. **No Irrelevant Information**
   Irrelevant information keeps the reader from seeing your selling points. Weigh each portion of your experience from the hiring company's perspective to decide what to include and emphasize. If you're applying for an engineering position don't devote a paragraph to your job as a camp counselor. And never include information about your marital status, hobbies, or interests unless they are relevant to the job.

6. **Proper Formatting**
   Unless you have no work experience or have held a number of different jobs in a short amount of time, a chronological resume is the most effective. That means using the following order:
   - Header (your name, address, e-mail address and phone number)
   - Career summary, profiling the scope of your experience and skills
   - Reverse chronological employment history, emphasizing achievements
   - Education, training, languages spoken, and community service

7. **No Typos or Misspelled Words**
   From the administrative assistant who claimed to be a "rabid typist" to the executive who boasted that he was "instrumental in ruining the entire operation," misspellings communicate that you have poor writing skills or a lackadaisical attitude. Proofread your resume carefully and have friends and family members read it as well.

Remember: The purpose of your resume is to communicate your experiences and accomplishments as they relate to an open position and get you the interview. You can't fit every detail of every job into your resume, nor should you try. But outlining key accomplishments is critical to getting you called for the interview.