

OPCD Podcast: Episode 19 - “Creating a Polished Resume” (2/19/2015)

Interview with Ms. Erica Stallings and Ms. Levy Daniel, *Career Coaches within the Office of Professional and Career Development, Harbert College of Business*

Voiceover: So you’ve checked out the resources that we talked about last week and now it’s time to take a closer look at the document that represents you during your job search. This week on the OPCD podcast: understanding the resume break down and how to build one of your own.

For most students in the Harbert College of Business, a good resume should be no longer than one page. But there’s a lot of great information that has to find a place in that limited space. Ms. Daniel and Ms. Stallings are back with us this week and, as the OPCD career coaches, they’re helping us check out content, organization and format. To start with an overview - a resume should have six major sections: the header, the objective, education, experience, leadership & activities and ending with skills. Organizing your resume’s content is key. A perfect skill set and great work history can easily be overshadowed by poor formatting choices.

L. Daniel: If your resume isn’t easy to read, it's not consistent, if the font is too small, if it's just kind of all over the place, it's going to be hard for a recruiter to breeze through that very quickly which is something they really need. They need the efficiency because there are usually two hundred applicants for every job.

Voiceover: So with that in mind, let’s start with the first resume section: the header.

E. Stallings: On the resume template there are specific sections. You have your header which is really the first thing an employer sees. So your name, you want it to stand out, but you don't want to get crazy on the font. It needs to be readable and not too large. So typically we say that your header should be two to four points larger than the body of your resume. In your header you want to include your email address, a working phone number where you will answer the phone and your permanent and university physical addresses.

Voiceover: And if you’re in the process of sending out resumes be sure voicemail message and ringback tones are polished and appropriate. Moving on to the next section: the objective.

E. Stallings: Your objective should really be targeted to a specific job or internship in a specific company. It should also relate certain skills that you can contribute, as well as what you want to get out of the opportunity. So it's really a goal statement more than anything. It needs to be targeted and specific as to what you want to do and what your goal is with sending your resume to an employer.

Voiceover: Good to know! And that objective will change to fit each job that you apply for. What about the education section?

E Stallings: Everyone in the Harbert College of Business should have Auburn University listed underneath their education section, as well as a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. The great thing about the standard template is it's already there for you so you don't even have to worry about it. However, you do need to specify what your major is. So if you're majoring in finance, marketing, supply chain management, whatever you have declared you want to make sure that you indicate that on your resume as well as any minor that you may have chosen as well.

Voiceover: And when it comes to filling in the blanks under experience, remember that this covers a lot more than you may realize.

L. Daniel: I would really recommend focusing on all types of experience, not just work experience. Sometimes students put themselves in a little box and think “I don't have any work experience, I have nothing to put on a resume” which is simply not true. If you have volunteered, if you been involved in any campus organization, any kind of experience can count. It can be paid or unpaid, volunteer, it doesn't matter. So if you feel like you don't have a lot of work experience look to other areas because chances are you fill up your free time with something. Most experience will be valuable so make sure you include those things that don't jump out at you right away. Take your time and think about what else you been involved in.

Voiceover: Sometimes it's difficult to see how experiences you have relate to a job you're applying for. This is where stopping in to the OPCD can really be a game changer. Getting that added perspective from our career coaches can help you create a resume that will really stand out of the crowd. And back on the topic of resume organization, keep in mind that both the experience and the leadership and activities sections should be listed in reverse chronological order.

E. Stallings: The leadership and activity section is another really important section. However, if you do not have many activities or you haven't held leadership positions that's okay. If you have honors, maybe a lot of academic honors or athletic honors, this may be a section that you want to change and call it your honors section instead.

If you're including an organization you want to include the full organization name. Try not to abbreviate because sometimes within those organization names there could be a key word and those keywords are very, very valuable.

Voiceover: Your resume should end with a skills section. References should be kept on a separate page instead of taking up valuable space on your main document. With anything included in here, be sure to indicate your level of proficiency or fluency.

E. Stallings: The skills section is really important, especially for those who may not have a lot of experience. Within this section, you want to identify technical skills, business competencies, any certificates you may have received or foreign language.

Voiceover: And in terms of the look of the finished product - resume paper is a must.

L. Daniel: It's a heavier grade of paper that's a little bit more coarse than your regular copy paper. It is a little more expensive, but it definitely does set you apart and shows you're going that extra mile and anytime you can do that in a job search shows that you're serious about it. I think it's really important that students remember that if you're not willing to go the extra mile in your job search, you're not going to be willing to go that extra mile for your job.

Voiceover: And that's where we leave you for today, but if you'd like to learn more check out TRL at jobs.auburn.edu and set up a resume and cover letter appointment. I so appreciate Ms. Daniel and Ms. Stallings sharing their insight with us today and we'll see you next week here on the Harbert College OPCD Podcast. See ya!