

YOUR RESUME: Your Passport to a Great Career

When you think about taking an adventurous trip to an exotic locale around the globe, you know the first thing you'll need is an updated passport. The analogy holds true when starting your job search: you will need an updated resume to help you along on that important career journey.

A resume is more than just a listing of your most basic information, however. A strong resume should present a thumbnail sketch of your career history, talents, accomplishments and achievements. Most professional resumes start off with a Summary of Qualifications, a brief five to seven sentence overview of your professional knowledge and skills. Next comes Areas of Strength which can be key words to show at a glance the areas where you have the most experience such as Political Campaigning, Canvassing, Data Analysis, etc.

The meat and potatoes part of the resume, of course, is the Professional Experience section. Here is your opportunity to not only list the companies, job titles, and dates of employment in reverse chronological order, but also to include information about your responsibilities and accomplishments. On one or two pages, you can present your best efforts, awards won, languages spoken, global experience gained, or specialized training and certifications. You need to get this information across before the interview or, chances are, there may not ever be an interview.

One of the best ways to make yourself stand out from the crowd is to have relevant work experience. If you would like to find an internship with an elected official, a campaign for a political party, a not-for-profit agency, an NGO or IGO, or a law firm, contact our POLS Internship Coordinator, Dr. Vicki Clarke, at 815.753.6149.

Of course, education, training, and computer skills also need to be included on your resume. Include your degree, major, and any outstanding awards or scholarship information.

Once you have your resume information polished and proofread, make sure that you take the time to send your resume to the best sources for career advice: NIU Career Services, your academic advisor, your professors, and past employers. Of course, answering job advertisements in major daily newspapers is a natural way to start, but don't forget to check out the many on-line services available for posting your resume, including NIU's online recruitment site, Victor eRecruiting (<http://niu.erecruiting.com>). Your resume can be posted on electronic bulletin boards, be searched by key words, or be screened by recruiters who are looking for someone with your particular education and qualifications.

Your resume is your passport to a great career and the more you can do to make yourself stand out from the crowd, the farther you'll go on that journey.