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How to Strengthen a Resume

To get the most mileage out of your resume, you'll want to emphasize certain aspects of your background. By doing so, you'll present your qualifications in the most favorable light, and help give the employer a better understanding of your potential value to his or her organization. To build a stronger case for your candidacy, try highlighting the following areas of interest:

Professional achievements: For example, if you're in plant management, the first thing a hiring VP will want to know is your ability to drive cost productivity, service, and quality. How did you rank versus other plant managers in your company? Did your plant receive any awards or special recognition?

Educational accomplishments: List your degree(s) and/or relevant course work or specialized training. Be sure to mention any special honors, scholarships, or awards you may have received, such as Dean's List, Cum Laude, or Phi Beta Kappa.

Additional areas of competency: These might include computer software fluency, specialized product, or process knowledge that may give you an edge in your area of focus.

Professional designations: If you are licensed or certified in your chosen profession or belong to a trade association, include this information in your resume. Certified Six Sigma Black Belt, Master Black Belt, CQE, CQM, and CPIM are great examples.

Success indicators: You should definitely include anything in your past that might distinguish you as a leader or high achiever. Special project work or assignments where you demonstrated above the call of duty results or achievement should be noted on your resume. Leadership roles in professional organizations should be noted as well.

Related experience: Anything that would be relevant to your prospective employer's needs should be noted. For example, if your occupation requires overseas travel or communication, list your knowledge of foreign languages.

Military history: If you served in the armed forces, describe your length of service, branch of service, rank, special training, medals, and discharge and/or reserve status.

Security clearances: Some industries require a clearance when it comes to getting hired or being promoted. If you're targeting an industry such as aerospace or defense, give your current and/or highest clearable status, and whether you've been specially checked by an investigative agency.

Citizenship or right to work: This should be mentioned if your industry requires it. Dual citizenship should also be mentioned, especially if you think you may be working in a foreign country.

In a competitive market, employers are always on the lookout for traits that distinguish one candidate from another. Use the above examples to find ways from your relevant work experience and background to help distinguish your resume from all the rest.