

inMotion

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**Employment
Resources**

**The State of
Employment
for People
With Disabilities**

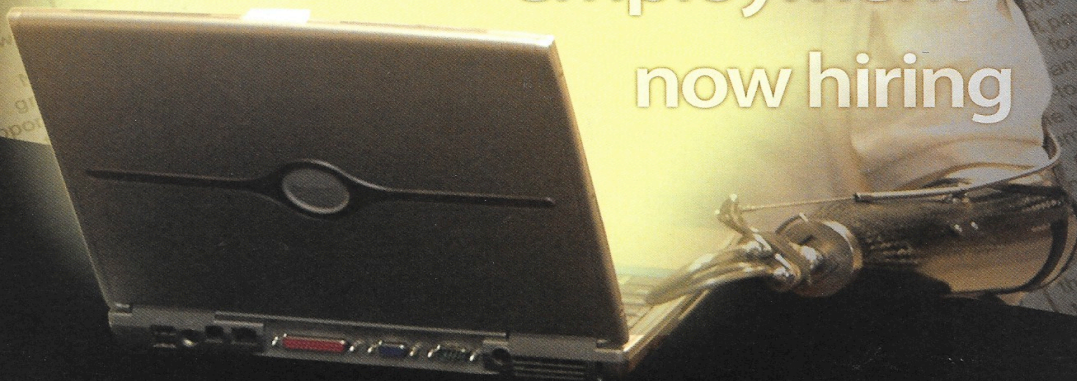
**Resumé and
Networking Skills**

**Tips for Parents
of Kids With
Disabilities**

**Conquering Fear
of Job Reentry**

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ongoing proj

Using Your Résumé and Networking Skills to Find a Job

by Deb Shuck

Whether you are looking for a job out of choice or necessity, you need to set yourself apart from all the other job candidates, especially during the present tough economy. You can do this by creating a résumé that gives potential employers the information they want in a manner that is clear, concise and easy to read.

The Write Stuff

Start with your current or most recent job, followed by each previous job so that it reads in reverse chronological order. If you spent time volunteering, add that information as well. After all, you didn't sit at home feeling

sorry for yourself, but rather used that time as a learning experience. That is perfectly acceptable. People realize that there are many individuals out of work through no fault of their own. Don't try to hide it, but do try to use that time to your best advantage. Leave out everything that you think is unnecessary. Don't waste potential employers' time by forcing them to wade through useless information to find what applies to a particular position. Also, make sure that your résumé is job-specific. A one-size-fits-all résumé just doesn't work anymore.

Many good résumés include a stated objective close to the top. Here is a great opportunity to let the potential employer know your career goals, such as what type of job you are looking for and what you want to do long-term.

You may also choose to include a section for your qualifications. This can be tailored to every job you apply for. Think about past experiences that have given you certain skills that are relevant to a particular position. This

section should succinctly convey that you are the best person for the job. Examples of qualifications include general descriptions such as "self-starter" and "problem-solver," as well as specific examples such as "managed a budget of \$50,000."

Next you might include a section titled "Work Experience" or simply "Experience," which should include a detailed work history in reverse chronological order: your previous workplaces, positions held, dates worked and a brief list of your responsibilities. Use strong verbs like *created, developed, secured, acted, established, implemented* and *designed*.

Another section, which sometimes comes before the work experience, is your education history, simply titled, "Education," also written in reverse chronological order. If you have been out of school for over 20 years, you may leave out the dates. In this section, include your schools and years attended, grade point averages and thesis titles, if applicable.

You may also add sections such as "Awards & Honors" and "Community Involvement." If you have done a lot of volunteer work, this can be used to your benefit. However, be aware that your involvement in certain organizations may tip off a potential employer about your limb loss. This is obviously a point of pride for many active amputees. However, I have spoken to some people, including employment counselors, who believe that this may give employers pause—or lead to blatant discrimination. This is an issue you may decide on your own, on a case-by-case basis.

Every good résumé needs an even stronger cover letter. If you can't get them to read about you in the cover letter, they are unlikely to go on and read your résumé. Make the cover letter short—no more than four or five paragraphs—and be specific. Describe how specific job responsibilities will make you qualified for the job you are hoping to get. Make them want to know more about you and use words that are in the job posting. Most importantly, the letter should complement, not duplicate, your résumé and should reinforce your strongest skills. Close the letter by letting them know when you will contact them to follow up.

When writing both the résumé and the cover letter, think about the needs of the person hiring. Describe how you will make the company more money or further the organization's mission and goals. Also, make sure that you use correct grammar and that there are no spelling errors or careless typos. Read over your letter and résumé multiple times to make certain everything is correct, and then, if possible, get a friend to proof it for you. If you don't have anyone else to read it over for you, read it backwards, sentence by sentence, to help spot errors.

Get Connected

Having a solid résumé and cover letter is only one piece of the employment puzzle. You also need to find out about the best available jobs for you. Looking in the classified section should not be your only method of job searching. In fact, the best way to find out

about jobs and to land your ideal job is to let people in your social and professional network know that you are available and interested in a specific type of job.

To go about networking, you will need a plan. Find key people in your immediate network who can help you set up introductions with others who can help you. Look for prearranged opportunities such as local chamber of commerce networking events, meetings at your local church or at professional organizations such as Rotary or Lions clubs. Many local business journals offer networking events to subscribers. If you haven't already, sign up for social networking sites such as

LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, which may offer a chance to widen the pool of contacts who can help you. There are many chances to network once you begin to look for these opportunities.



When You Get the Interview

Congratulations! You've landed an interview. Now what? Start by researching the company or organization. Find out everything you can about the company and the person interviewing you. Find out how long the company has been in business and about the company policies. How long has this person been with the company? You can find some of this information on company and state Web sites, and in business journals and local newspapers.

You will get a chance to ask questions, and you should take advantage of the opportunity to do so. This helps to show a true interest in how you can be a positive addition to the workplace. But don't ask about salary and benefits in the first interview. That discussion should only happen if the potential employer brings it up or offers you the position. Be professional and always send a thank you letter to everyone you met during the interview as soon as possible. This will allow an opening for future communications. You may also follow up with a phone call to let them know you are still interested, but be prudent and don't cross the line by pestering. Once you're done, relax, knowing you've done everything

you can do. To take your mind off of waiting to hear back about a job, keep an eye and ear out for the next job opening.

Now get out there and find a job! ■

About the Author



Deb Shuck is owner and president of Manor Steel Fabricators, a structural steel fabrication company, along with her husband. Last year she was named Business Woman of the Year for Manufacturing by the Tampa Bay Business Journal. She currently lives in central Florida.

Top 10 Job Search Resources

careerbuilder.com	LinkUp.com
Craigslist.com	Monster.com
Dice.com	SimplyHired.com
Indeed.com	USA.gov
LinkedIn.com	YahooHotJobs.com

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