

Resume Writing - Curb the Gobbledygook

Persons in highly technical professions possess much-needed skills and belong to exclusive circles. The majority of us might not be able to hold our own in a conversation with them unless the topic is a common-ground theme, but we also cannot function without these talented individuals. We often think of these positions in terms of scientists or engineers, but there are many specialized jobs that pervade the everyday workforce that we take for granted. We know these as statisticians, database designers, or derivatives traders, to name a few. Employees in these functions change jobs just like everyone else, but when they launch a search, they sometimes submit resumes that are incomprehensible to anyone outside their niche and in the process end up thwarting their search.

These individuals face a unique challenge when writing a resume - they must obviously convey their specialized knowledge but do so in a way that is understandable to others. Most times, resumes filter through search firms and Human Resource recruiters who are charged with short-listing hundreds of candidates to a half dozen for the actual hiring manager, and while these persons will be generally familiar with the technical lingo, the candidate's resume must not give them an excuse for being filtered into the turndown pile. It must communicate the candidate's skills and experiences in a way that the recruiter could recognize a potential match for the position without difficulty.

Employees in highly specialized jobs often prepare resumes that are incomprehensible to anyone outside their niche and in the process end up thwarting their search. If you are one of these people, your challenge is to bring this specialized knowledge across in a way that a recruiter could recognize a potential match for the position without difficulty. The objective is to get your resume past the screener so you can secure the interview.

Take for example, the popular Six Sigma methodology ⁽¹⁾ used to improve processes at many Fortune 500 companies. Already this sentence may have lost some readers. For the non-project management audience, the term "Six Sigma" refers to the ability of processes to produce output within a targeted measurement. Processes operating with six sigma level quality yield fault levels below 3.4 defects per million opportunities, otherwise known as DPMO. Six Sigma encompasses two key methodologies - DMAIC and DMADV - but also has spawned an alphabet of others, including CDOC, DMADOV, VCPCIA, DCCDI, IDOV, D-IDOV-M, and lots more, plus it uses a separate toolbox of techniques like Chi-Square Tests, FMEA, histograms, pick charts, stratification, and others.

So, you're a Black Belt (yes, *Six Sigma takes its certified hierarchy from martial arts*) looking to change jobs, but do you really need to include the sprawling list of methodologies and tools? For some targeted searches the answer may be yes, so obviously tailor your resume accordingly, but for broader searches consider the wider audience first. You will have ample opportunity to discuss the intricacies of your profession with the right people, but you have to get there.

Before the resume-screener forms the impression that you have difficulty presenting complex concepts in clear and understandable terms, consider how you can simplify your resume, yet still get across the expertise germane to your profession.

One way is to start by writing all the idiosyncrasies of your job in terms with which you are most comfortable. Put the resume aside for a few days, and then start scrubbing. Try to replace some (not all) technical lingo with translations that would be clear to a

reader on the perimeter of your line of work. Ask acquaintances from different lines of work to critique your resume, and if all else fails, consider a professional resume-writing service.



Remember, one of your objectives is to get your resume past the screener.

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(1) Six Sigma is a registered trademark of Motorola, Inc.