

Could a Blue-Collar Resume Get You a Better Job?

A growing number of blue-collar workers are using resumes to sell themselves, and it's not hard to figure out why. A resume is a marketing piece, and all job seekers can use some help marketing themselves regardless of industry.

Twenty years ago, resumes for blue-collar workers were unheard of. All potential employers cared about were candidates' credentials. Applications were the obligatory information-gathering tool for hourly workers. And whenever there was a choice, most blue-collar workers opted for hourly wages, because they often were able to earn more than their salaried middle-management bosses. And once hired, all they had to do was good work and then go home at the end of the day knowing their positions were secure. Resumes were for the starched white-collar crowd who never got their hands dirty.

Job mobility was also easy for most blue-collar workers, making resumes unnecessary. Many job changes were simple for workers whose reputations preceded them. For tradesmen, their circles were small, and their good work carried them from job to job. It was effortless networking -- the best kind.

Regardless of whether blue-collar workers were employed in maintenance, food service, warehousing, manufacturing or electronics, resumes were never part of the job-getting machinery. But it's a different story today. Now, resumes can be used to land all kinds of jobs, including the sprawling blue-collar category.

What Employers Want

Companies are looking to hire skilled, well-rounded candidates who can do a host of things well. They also want workers who have soft skills, such as the ability to communicate effectively. Employers complain that it's often difficult to find well-qualified blue-collar workers who possess these soft skills.

To stand out as a candidate, you can use a blue-collar resume to highlight your skills. Even if a potential employer does not require a resume or asks you to fill out an application, offer to send a copy of your resume or bring one along to the interview.

Five Tips for Writing a Killer Blue-Collar Resume

Begin with a clear objective stating precisely what you want. If you do not have a clear objective, skip it -- presenting a vague one will not help you.

[Examine job postings](#) to learn which skills employers are seeking. Make sure the language you use in your resume highlights the relevant skills. The umbrella goal is to sell your skills so there is no question in an employer's mind that you're right for the position and will make a contribution.

Keep your resume tight and to the point. Use plain, simple English that gets your point across quickly. If an employer has to figure out what you're saying, you're a goner.

Don't describe the details of prior jobs; rather, explain what you accomplished. A job title alone tells an employer what you did. But it's your achievements that make you stand out. For example, improving or boosting sales, or designing an efficient distribution process can distinguish you from your competition. Employers love candidates who saved their prior bosses a bundle.

Other than your primary skill, master machinist or senior auto mechanic, for example, mention additional skills used on the job, such as managing a shop when the boss was away or taking the initiative to work with

customers and explain a product or service. Don't forget to mention relevant courses you're taking to update your skills.