Your Resume Has 6 Seconds to Impress a Recruiter

Is your resume good enough to get you a job within six seconds? It had better be. TheLadders.com recently conducted a comprehensive eye-tracking study of recruiters when they reviewed resumes. This study recorded and analyzed where and how long a reader focused when digesting a piece of information or completing a task.

Their discovery was that recruiters spend only about six seconds reviewing a resume before making an initial "fit/no fit" decision on a candidate. This is drastically different from job seekers' perceptions that they spend 4-5 minutes reviewing a resume.

So prioritizing your information is essential. Here are some tips on how to do so:

1) You must make certain pieces of information easy to find. In the 6 seconds, recruiters will look at your
   - Name
   - Current title
   - Current company
   - Current position start and end dates
   - Previous title
   - Previous company
   - Previous position start and end dates
   - Education
2) Avoid "bells and whistles" on your resume, including visuals. According to the study, visuals kept recruiters from locating the needed relevant information (point #1 above) because a visual naturally attract the eye.
3) Create a resume with a clear visual hierarchy (see picture below). An organized layout is crucial.

Keep the resume basic…..especially when initially applying for the job

Right or wrong, decisions are based on the eight pieces of data listed above (in point #1). Recruiters considered all the other information filler, and it made little/no impact on the decision to continue with or pass on the candidate. At most, recruiters simply scan the "filler" for keywords to match the open position. Every second counts.

SNELLING

So keep the resume basic…..especially when initially applying for the job. A well, organized, straightforward resume will help you pass through the first round. If you pass through to the interview stage, offer a more creative version of your resume directly to the hiring manager – if appropriate.

NOTE: The two resumes to the right include a "heat map" of the recruiters' eye movement. The one on the right side was looked at more thoroughly because of its clear and concise format. The use of highlighted and bolded text, bullets, space and section dividers all help for reading ease-of-use.