

CAREER CORNER

NEWS ARTICLES & OTHER JOBSEARCH TIPS AND IDEAS WRITTEN BY EXPERTS IN THEIR FIELD

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resume

Critiquing

"Judgment Day"



Does Your Resume Rate With the Best?

Send it in to find out.

Once a month, legal professionals will put their cover letters and resumes against a panel of career counselors. The counselors will rate each cover letter and resume between *one and five gavels, five being the best*. Their comments on the resume are listed below.

E-mail: ResumeCritiquing@LBPC.com

(Your name, contact info, places of employment will remain confidential)

Click [here](#) to view
January's Resume.

The Critiques:

Curtis Linder's Resume Critique



The first thing I do with resumes that the Law Bulletin forwards to me to review and critique is to extract the resume from the email I have received and then print the resume on paper. I know that the words on most resumes today are never make it to a printed page - but seeing it on paper gives this reviewer the opportunity to view the document as presented. It helps me easily see page breaks, layout, margins, font selection and size, and the overall "balance" of the resume.

Our first resume for the first year is very good - but it could use some overall formatting help. Let us review. It is a 'tweener. That means it is a 1.5 page resume. The entire bottom half of page two is blank and that is a no-no. Page two is not paginated. The section headings are centered and there is a common failure to place an extra blank line space among those. It looks peculiar that way she has it laid out. Overall the margins are nice and big - nothing cramped on either page.

But why is the text set at 9 point? Set it to the easy-to-read 12 point and that fixes two things. It becomes a more balanced two-page and it becomes easier to read. I like that she has an Objective section at the top of page one - but that sentence could be worded more convincingly. This is a two gavel resume, on our five gavel resume. It is close to 3 gavels - but the layout keeps me from going up to that next rating.

Curtis Linder, President and Owner Linder Legal Staffing Inc.

Chere Estrin's Resume Critique



This is a very good resume for a legal assistant. In the second position, however, it does flow in and out of past and present tenses which leads me to believe she may just have copied a job description which, unfortunately, leads the reader to be suspect of all responsibilities. On the other hand, the resume has a good format and specific dates of employment instead of just the years which makes her a believable candidate.

I am uncomfortable with the high school education only and would sooner see it left off then on. Additionally, certainly in 12 years, there must have been some sort of continuing legal education classes, and I'd like to see those listed.

All in all, a very good resume.

4 gavels.

Chere Estrin, Chairperson Board of Directors, The Organization of Legal Professionals

Jean Krypton-Durham's Resume Critique



This resume is laid out okay. I would definitely recommend changing the objective to the actual type of position that she is seeking. Legal Secretary with 15+ years experience in the following areas of law. This job market has been a bit different for the legal secretary. There has not been the volume of openings that there were in the past. Law firms are being very specific about what they are seeking and the areas of expertise. While her resume is okay, the issue in this case is finding the right opportunity. If she changed the objective and showed her strengths in legal - how many years in ___ real estate, probate and or litigation, this would be helpful to a law firm manager. In this market, clients want to know what her strength would be and how many years of experience does she have in those areas. With the changes - I would give her a 4 star. Because she has skills in so many areas, you can't tell where the best place for her would be. It would be to her advantage to lay this out on her resume.

Jean Krypton-Durham, President Jean Krypton, Inc.

Continued on next Page.

Sarah Haley's Resume Critique



3.5 gavels

First, I recommend limiting this resume to one page. This can be accomplished by writing contact information on 1-2 lines and altering the margins. The "objective" needs to be re-worded; it is not grammatically correct. I would use the heading "Computer Skills" or "Legal Software Skills" instead of knowledge. In the experience section, I recommend unbolding the information on the right and removing the commas after the months. For the most recent position, the names of the law firms should be listed, if that is permitted by the agency, and also because the agency is not listed for the other temporary positions. The title (and the titles for all positions) does not necessarily have to reflect that the role was temporary, especially if that information is repeated in the description. I would certainly not draw attention to it by underlining "Temporary Contract Position" for roles that lasted several months. The verb tenses need to be consistent (all past tense). Remove "references are available upon request."

Sarah Haley, Associate Director Career Services at The John Marshall Law School

Nancy Glazer's Resume Critique



Thank you for submitting your resume.

You certainly have a great deal of law firm experience! I suggest you take your one and a half pages of experience, decrease your margins, and have everything on one page. You have a lot of white space on that first page, so I do think it can be done. (I happen to like reduced margins in favor of showing how much experience you have - right up front. Having two pages does not bother me at all; that's not my point here.)

Most of my comments about your resume have to do with word choices and tense choices. Therefore, my comments are fairly consistent throughout your resume. I have underlined the words that have been replaced:

- Objective: "Join an established firm where I can provide
- Your heading, "Knowledge" I would change to "skills."
- "Worked short-term, temporary" With two adjectives next to each other, a comma is needed.
- Your second bullet needs to be consistent about the tenses -- change to past tense as those assignments have ended.
- With all of your dates on the right side, you do not need a comma between the month and the year.
- With Law Firm, P.C. position, start with a past tense, action verb: "Served as ..." Also, "Created and revised"
- "Landlord Agreements and Negative Pledge Agreements. Worked"
- "created redlined documents"
- "Filed ...memorana entered..... billed"
- Under Law Firm II and the rest, you need to be consistent with your titles. The remainder here are underlined. I would suggest no underlining. Be consistent!"
- "Typed and revised all legal documents; transcribed ... worked ...and entered attorney time and billed clients." Just making this bullet more consistent is all ...
- With Law Firm III and Law Firm IV have both changed their names. You need to name the new name and then you can state f/d/b/a
- With Law Firm III (and any section really), you do not need legalese "but not limited to We only should see this kind of language in legal documents -- not letters, resumes, etc.
- "Typed and revised all transcribed ... entered ... billed clients; and worked on ...projects and performed administrative duties for theDepartment.
- Law Firm IV: This should all be in the past tense.
- Law Firm V: Start with a past tense, action verb, "Served as ..." All of the bullets should start with a verb.

Overall, the main thing this resume needs is a good review for consistency and tenses. Perhaps you have a friend or someone who can look at your re-write with a sharp eye for detail. Again, a resume does not get you a job; it typically only gets you an interview. Because you need to be detail-oriented on the job, a prospective employer is looking for that exact quality when she first looks at your resume. You need to make a good impression. Certainly, your work history gives you that impression.

Overall, 2.5 gavels.

Nancy Mackevich Glazer, Esq., Manager, Legal Launch, LLC



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