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'The ideal international resume'

Almost forty percent of the international students at Tilburg University want to find employment outside their home country following graduation. Either in the Netherlands or in a different country. But how to present yourself? Univers found out how to make the perfect Dutch, American, Chinese, or United Arab Emirates resume.

The Dutch resume:

Evidence-based

Dutch resumes should be clear and orderly, without an extravagant layout: personal information at the top, followed by education and job experience. Information on the resume is supposed to be in reverse - chronological order, which means listing the most recent things first.

Dutch culture is very evidence-based. It is, therefore, very important to mention the full names of past employers and educational institutions, including dates and a brief explanation of your responsibilities. A Dutch CV should not exceed two pages and should have a consistent layout.

Trudy Haneveer, career counselor at Tilburg University, also has a few tips for students writing a Dutch resume: "Employers often appreciate it when you put a personal profile at the top of your Curriculum Vitae, or at the bottom. This gives you the opportunity to really personalize your resume. Questions you might ask yourself to help you make such a profile are: What would I like to achieve? What characterizes me? How do others perceive me?" This personal profile offers students a unique opportunity to sell themselves.

But there is also a downside to this extra information, according to Haneveer: "When you do this, make sure you are very well prepared. It might be risky, because this self-awareness could lead to some difficult questions during an interview." Evidence-based as Dutch employers are, they will ask you to prove that these character statements are true.

The American Resume:

No personal information

According to Mark Vitullo, English teacher at Tilburg University, there is no such thing as 'The American Resume'. In the US there are four different types of resume, Vitullo explains: "First of all, you have the chronological resume, which is heavy on experience. It is used to show the progress you've made through a number of different positions. This type of resume is not the best choice for recent graduates, since they usually lack experience.

For them, the functional resume might be a better

option. This kind of resume is brief about education and work experience, but allows the candidate to elaborate on key qualities.

Furthermore, you have the Curriculum Vitae, which is meant for people with relatively large numbers of diplomas, certificates and awards.

And finally there is the option of the electronic resume. The latter is much like a functional or chronological resume, but formatted for electronic use."

In the US, it is best not to put personal information like religion or political affiliation in your resume. Some experts say you should even avoid mentioning your gender. Vitullo agrees with the former, "because you don't want to put people in a position where they might discriminate someone. However, I do think you should mention your gender, because if you don't, it might create tension during the interview."

Resumes are often run through a computer to look for key words which match the company. "In order to get a high score, you should check out a company's website and use their vocabulary." In short, the American resume should be 'clear, and focus on those key points that best illustrate a match between candidate and prospective employer".

The Chinese Resume:

The more, the better

Chinese resumes tend to be very long and detailed.

Over two pages is no problem for the Chinese.

Especially foreigners should explicitly mention and explain their diplomas and responsibilities in certain jobs.

Amy Hsiao, Chinese teacher at Tilburg University, explains: "Chinese and Dutch resumes are very much alike, although we do value education and languages a lot: the more, the better. You should elaborate on these things in your resume. Though resumes in China and the Netherlands are very much alike, working life is not at all. Working hard, being humble and being persistent are very important."

Amy laughs when she says "We don't have coffee breaks in China, like you do in the Netherlands." On top of that Guanxi is something you still need in order to succeed. Amy explains: "Guanxi is your network of friends, family and relatives. Thirty-four per cent of people find a job through their Guanxi. Even though it does not fit China's goals to become more international, it still exists and applying for a job without a Guanxi is almost a lost case. As an international job-hunter you should first build up a Guanxi and then look for a job within your network."

Hsiao also recommends translating the resume into Chinese, even if you don't speak it very well: "It is easier for your employer, who often does not speak English very well. On top of that, it shows that you made an effort, which relates again to our values of persistence and working hard."

The United Arab Emirates resume:

Always include a photograph

When writing a resume for a job in the United Arab Emirates, you should be aware that this country has a

Muslim tradition. It is therefore not wise to mention that you're living together with your partner without being married, since this is not accepted.

Things you should definitely mention are language skills, Middle East experience and Middle East knowledge. Always include a photograph of yourself and go to an interview well-prepared.

Bring original diplomas and certificates, your passport, photographs and an extra resume, and do some reading on the company, the United Arab Emirates and Islam. Another thing you should pay attention to during an interview is your appearance. Dress conservatively, which means a good suit and tie for men and clothing below elbow and knee for women.

Some people make the mistake of dressing too traditionally, taking the Muslim religion into account, but this is not appreciated either. Furthermore it is very important to express genuine interest in the company in your resume and during the interview.

Career counselor Trudy Haneveer does not have that much experience with students from the United Arab Emirates, but her first impressions of those she has met, is positive: "Arab students are very international and speak English in a correct manner. Arabs are able to observe themselves from a distance, in an objective way." She therefore recommends that students do the same: "Try to find your personal objective or goal: 'Where do you want to go?', and make this clear in your resume." [Wendela Huisman]

Send your reaction to: univers@uvt.nl

