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Essential tools of the trade

Good résumés should be concise, clean, readable

BY VERONICA DAEHN
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A résumé might be the most important piece of paper college students ever will possess.

"A résumé says to an employer, 'Hire me,' and gets you the interview, which, in turn, gets you the job," said Janet Ehlers, an assistant director of the University of

Nebraska-Lincoln Career Services Center.

When done right, a résumé is a marketing tool that sells a student to potential employers.

But it must be done right, Ehlers said, and she offered several tips.

First, students must determine the type of résumé they should create. Three styles of résumés exist: chronological, functional and combination.

The chronological style is the most common choice among recent college graduates, according to the University of Nebraska 1998-99 Career Handbook.

It provides a description of where students have worked and what duties they accomplished on the job. Work experience should be listed in reverse chronological order, with the most recent job first.

On the other hand, a functional resume emphasizes what type of work has been done, rather than when and where it was done.

With this style, specific skills and experiences obtained from a variety of different places can be highlighted and reinforced.

People changing careers or those re-entering the work force after a prolonged absence commonly use this style.

The third type of résumé is the combination, which combines elements from the two other types.

It provides an overview of the job candidate's skills at the beginning and then resorts to reverse chronological style for the remainder of the document.

Ehlers suggests students meet with a Career Services Center counselor in order to determine which type of résumé best suits them.

"Ten counselors are on-call every (weekday) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to accommodate whatever career questions students may have," she said.

Regardless of which style of résumé students decide upon, they should include several important details.

First, they should use a variety of past-tense action verbs in describing their experiences.

Most people who read résumés scan them quickly from left to right and top to bottom, she said. Therefore, the first words they read should be powerful verbs that make the candidate sound competent and motivated.

Next, points of interest and conversation-starters should be included in the résumé, as these work to set the tone and provide the employer with a memory of who the candidate is.

A résumé also must be clean, concise and appealing to the eye, representatives from two Lincoln-based employers said.

Heather Thomas, hiring coordinator for Sandhills Publishing, said a résumé's appearance is a factor in hiring.

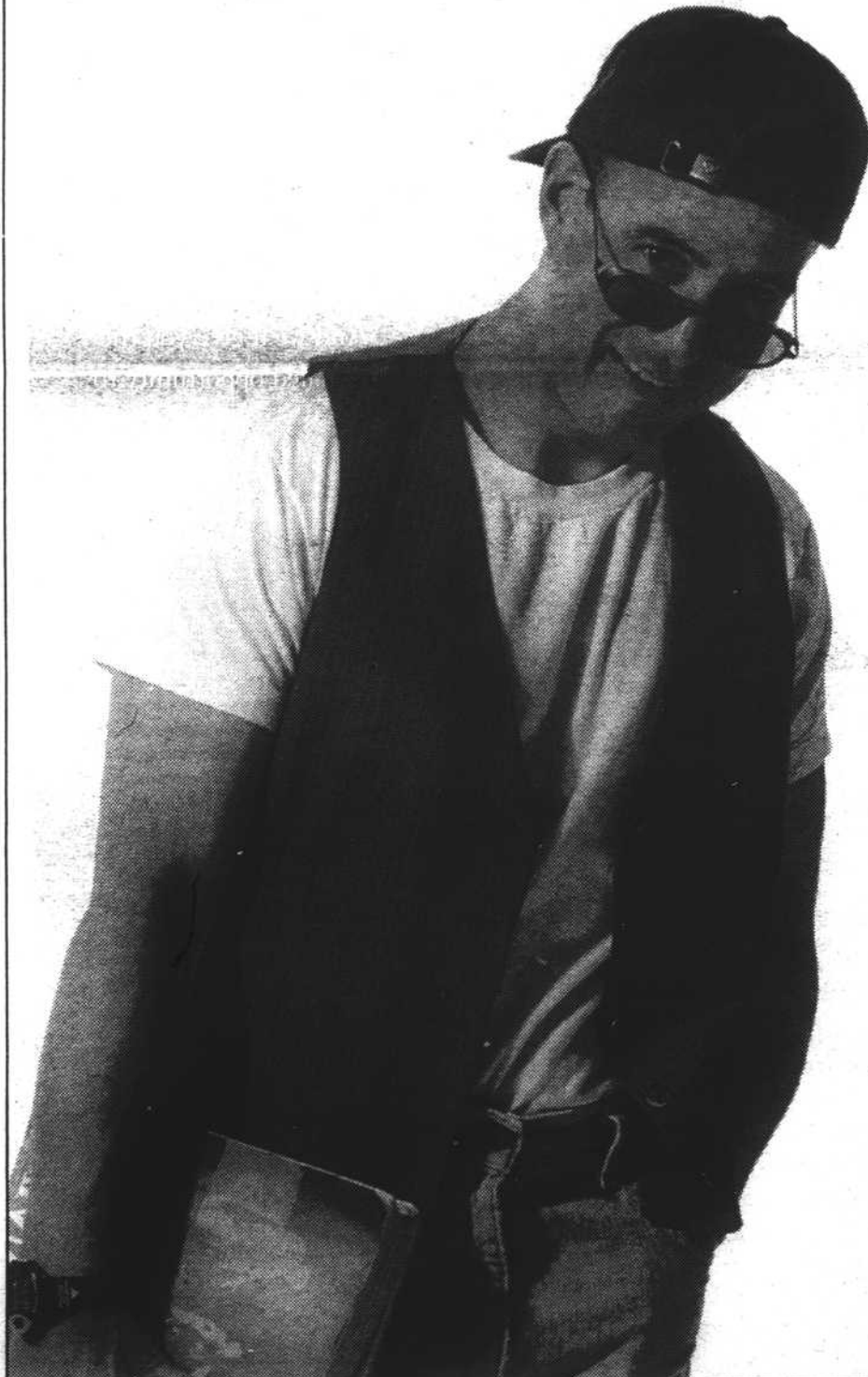
"Some people don't format it correctly," she said. "There shouldn't be sentence breaks between lines and page to page, and we also want to see work experience, an objective, an education, computer experience and any activities or affiliations they had."

Thomas added that candidates should provide both a current and permanent address, so contact is possible at all times.

Lisa Knollenberg, a Union Bank human resources generalist, agreed that a résumé's appearance is important. It should be clean, brief, short and to the point, she said.

Sample résumés are available in the Career Services Center, 230 Nebraska Union.

“Look everybody, it’s a **JOB FAIR!** Wow...just me and several hundred of my *closest* friends sharing an *intimate* moment with **MEGAGLOMERATE, INC.** **Yawn.** Wouldn’t it be *cool* if one of these companies **REMEMBERED** what it was like when they were about to **get out of school?** I mean, these guys know my **gpa**, *blood type* and *next of kin*. **HOW MUCH** do I **really** know about *them?* this is my **LIFE.** Just give me **ZERO BS** and lots of **STRAIGHT TALK** about stuff that really matters. Wouldn’t that be *cool?*”



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