



Thoughts for the New Year (2017)

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**Online Community
Assisting Veterans**

As the new year begins, it's important for job seekers to review job search and techniques from 2016 to see what's changed. Equally important is considering what trends may affect job searches for the new year. As always, there's a mix of good news and less-than-good news.

“Accomplishments – A Positive 2016 Trend”

In 2016, there was a noticeable movement toward ensuring resumes and LinkedIn profiles are focused on accomplishments – results-driven statements that clearly portray what a person accomplished. It's not unanimous yet, which is less than good news because there are still too many resumes with boring lists of activities and skills. And there are still too many resume writers writing or approving resumes written in a traditional style that should have disappeared decades ago.

An experiment comparing traditional versus “accomplishment-based” resumes showed 94.9% preference for resumes with action verbs or accomplishments. Even stronger resumes, with clear accomplishments that emphasized “strengths,” were identified as best by 66.7% of HR professionals and recruiters.

Too Much Information

As noted, there are still too many resumes – particularly among veterans – that focus on long lists of every duty performed and sometimes a seemingly endless of skills. Career military have a situation that is somewhat unique compared to civilians with a similar “length” of service. Military personnel are much more likely to have more assignments, different

positions, with significantly shorter time frames. Again, good news and not-so-good news. The good news is that veterans have had excellent opportunities to develop multiple skills. The bad news, this leads to too much information on a resume with lengthy descriptions of assignments and, too often, lists of skills that are way too long.

I've regularly seen resumes that contain 25 or more "skills" listed.

"Growing Job Market – Good or ??"

There are signs that the economy has improved the job market and signs that this will continue into 2017. But there are also signs that these strengths are still hiding many people who have given up and equally large numbers of individuals who have settled for a "have to have a job" situation and not the career they desire.

A bigger issue for job seekers is the incorrect assumption that an improved job market makes getting a job easier. This is only partially true. In an expanding job market, more and more individuals – who already have jobs – enter the job market to look for something better, something that pays more, or in some cases just something different. Suddenly there are more applications being submitted for positions and the competition intensifies.

In today's high-tech job market, a job seekers strategy cannot just be "average." It takes your best effort, likely extra time, to compete in this environment. It also makes it important to:

- Monitor not just the job market for opportunities, but the information on all the aspects of the process. That includes information about resumes, interviewing, networking, LinkedIn, etc. There's a lot of information out there – and often it can be confusing. But it's important to "keep up." This also leads to:
- Consider working with a coach. There are several resources available for veterans, including free coaching services. You'll have to navigate through the many veteran organizations but finding support for your search will be worth the effort.

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