careerbuilder.com

Writer Guidelines

Did you know that 79% of web users scan the page instead of reading word-for-word? That people read from computer screens is 25% slower than from paper? Or that web content should have 50% of the word count of its paper equivalent?

When writing and/or submitting an article to CareerBuilder.com, please keep in mind the following guidelines. This will ensure an optimal experience for CareerBuilder.com users.

Article Essentials
- Clean Copy: no spelling errors, no missing words, no typos, no formatting issues.
- Fact Checking: All facts must be checked for 100% accuracy. Incorrect facts are unacceptable.

Style:
- Articles should be 500 - 700 words.
- Use plain language and avoid jargon.
- Bullets, numbered lists, subheads, etc. are encouraged to break up text for readability.
- Tips, steps, "how to," quizzes, tests.
- Be succinct. Write no more than 50% of the text you would have used in a hardcopy publication.
- Write for scannability - don't require users to read long continuous blocks of text.
- The Web is an informal and immediate medium, compared to print, so users appreciate a somewhat informal writing style and small amounts of humor.
- Limit the use of metaphors, particularly in headings. Users might take you literally.
- Use simple sentence structures. Convoluted writing and complex words are even harder to understand online.
- Add bylines and other ways of communicating some of your personality. (This also increases credibility.)

Appeal to Large Audience:
- Keep in mind you are writing for a national publication. Make sure there is appeal to a large audience.
- Unless it is a gender-specific piece, balance examples of male/female quotes, anecdotes, etc.
- Stories should be "balanced" to include all types of careers, rather than strictly white collar or office positions. The content should include and/or address service professions and blue-collar positions. Include a range of industries, such as from healthcare to technology to hospitality.
- Avoid niche topics. Treat all articles like they could stand alone by themselves.

Engagement:
- Make sure there is a good "hook"? Ask yourself: Is it fun to read?
- Keep in mind visual imagery. Is there a picture that might complement this article?
- Is this new info or info presented in a new way?
- Is it fun?
- How compelling is the info?
- Use examples of good and bad scenarios.
- Include anecdotes.
- Timeliness – what do people care about now?

Sources
- Be sure to cite all sources and legitimize their expertise if possible. As an example, mention the company that person works for, number of years of experience in the recruitment field or any of the expert's accolades (such as author of X book)
- Are your facts correct?

Bylines
- Include full name in the byline and any information to legitimize authority, such as "author of X book" if appropriate.
- Include short bio and email address at the end of article when author is expert source.

Tone
- Authoritative/expert
- Timely and/or useful
- Engaging/entertaining

Promotions
- Articles should not promote CareerBuilder.com's competitors.
- Keep self-promotion to a minimum when possible.

Headlines:
- Create a headline a user will feel compelled to click on.
- Headlines should be clear, strong and engaging. They should explain the article succinctly and contain key words.
- Do *not* use clever or cute headings since users rely on scanning to pick up the meaning of the text.
- Other factors to keep in mind when writing headlines

  1. Reference numbers
  Five Worst Coworker Types
  Seven Tips for Getting the Salary You Deserve
  Ten Worst Email Blunders

  2. Ask a question in the headline (this is especially good for polls)
  Do We Need More Vacation?
  Are You Dressing for Success?

  3. Play Off Negative Angles
  Things You Should NEVER Do In a Job Interview
  Worst Career Advice Myths

  4. Include "fun" and engaging words in the headline
  Negative: *Taboo, Disaster, Catastrophe, Failure, Ridiculous, Agonizing*
  Positive: *Triumph, Winner, Star, Sensation, Fashionable, Hip, Cool, Hot*

  5. "How to" Headlines
  How To Land the Impossible Interview
  How To Find Out If You are About to Be Fired

For more info on writing for the web, check out the Web Style Guide – Editorial Style
http://www.webstyleguide.com/style/index.html.

Remember:
Getting people's attention and conveying your message isn't about the number of words you use but how you use them. Technical communicator and design specialist William Horton demonstrates this by showing the words in influential and not so influential documents.
The Lord's Prayer – 56 words
Gettysburg Address – 266 words
Ten Commandments – 297 words
Declaration of Independence – 300 words
Box of breakfast cereal – 1,200 words
U.S. Government order on pricing cabbage – 26,911 words*

Developing Online Content, Wiley and Sons

Topics that work:
- Quizzes and Tests
- Anything tied to pop culture
- Hot jobs/industries
- Best/ How to . . .
- Bad/Negative bosses/ coworkers
- Tips for raises and higher salaries
- Cubicle culture
- Top 10 Lists
- Salaries
- Interviews

Topics that don't perform well:
- General self-improvement (ex. Keys to Job Success)
- Networking skills
- Office romance
- Career Change

Articles that have performed well:
- What Do You Want to Do With Your Life?
- High Paying Jobs in the U.S.
- What Your Workspace Says About You
- So You Think You Want to Be a CSI
- 20 Best Excuses for Calling In Sick
- Celebrity First Jobs
- Lessons from the Apprentice
- Fire Your Boss
- Growing Industries: Where the Jobs Are
- 10 Ways to Get Fired
- Cool Jobs
- Interview Disasters
- Lying On Your Resume
- Illegal Interview Questions: How to Answer
- Top Resume Mistakes
- Staying Motivated During Your Job Search
- Interview Fashion Blunders
- Believe It or Not – Guerilla Job Search Tactics
- Dressing for the Job Interview
- Ten Surefire Ways to Tick Off Your Co-workers