Chapter
7

Editing: Résumé-Speak 101

"Words, like eyeglasses, blur everything that they do not make clear."

—Joseph Joubert

How do you make an average résumé outstanding? Edit, edit, edit. Conversely, when you disregard the details of style and punctuation, you can make an average résumé mediocre—certainly not the impression you want to give prospective employers.

Copyediting on résumés presents some special challenges. With too many words, your résumé will look crowded and uninviting to read. With too few, it will look anemic next to its competitors. If you err on the side of too much detail, you might drone on with detailed job descriptions that leave readers offended by your presumption that they are interested in, or have time to read, such minutiae. If you lean too far in the opposite direction, you might submit a skeletal, overly generic presentation that leaves readers wondering whether you were purposely vague in an attempt to hide something. The anemic version also presents another risk with the advent of online and employer résumé databases: Your résumé might float aimlessly because search engines cannot find any relevant keywords in it.

To find the right balance, you must "hook-n-hold" your reader—much as an advertisement hooks your attention with sales appeals that address "what's in it for *me*," or as a mystery novel casts clues that hold you captive and make you want to read more.