

# Attorney's Counsel<sup>®</sup> —

## Does your resume rise to the Bar?

### Tracking Change: the Benefits, the Methods, and the Trap

Most people know to stay up-to-date on current events and new developments that will affect their work. However, are there any situations in which you should not track changes?

#### Track changes in your industry? YES

You should always stay up-to-date with news and new rules affecting your practice area. If you know what is happening you can be most effective not only in your business and with your clients, but also in your own career trajectory. The law is changing all the time, and lawyers are trained to Shepardize every case in a document before considering it a final draft.

Why would you give your livelihood any less attention? If you have the information and updates before anyone else, you can become the expert in that area and that can only help your legal job search.

#### TO DO:

- Read industry publications and set up Google alerts, or the news aggregator of your choice, to follow up-to-the-minute news.
- Write about the news and how it affects your work and your clients, taking care to remember conflicts and confidentiality.

#### Track changes in your career? YES

Like the law, your career is changing over time. Notice what is new this year compared to last year and the past 5 years.

- Do you have more responsibility?
- Do you have a larger budget to manage?
- Have you decided to change practice areas or not seek the partner track?
- Are you closing more deals, settling more cases, or winning more trials?

Pay attention to the changes and keep your resume up-to-date.

#### TO DO:

- Ask supervisors how you have excelled or fallen short in the past year. Don't wait for your annual review; be proactive.
- Notice whether you are happier in your current role or earlier positions. Why? What can you change to ensure you are happy now?

#### Track changes in your resume over time? YES

Save old versions, and create a "lifetime resume" to pull from when you need to tailor your document to a specific job application or when you need a story for an interview.

The ability to tell that you've been working on the same issues since law school shows not only dedication but also true knowledge of the field and the ability to more accurately predict the future. That makes you valuable.

- Do your titles tell a logical story of your rise up the ranks?
- Were you a summer associate, then an associate, and then a partner?
- Have you eliminated old and irrelevant information?

#### TO DO:

- Ask colleagues what word they would use to search online for you or someone with your skills and expertise.
- Take care not to include all of the old information on your resume, only what is relevant to and consistent with the job description.

# Attorney's Counsel<sup>®</sup> —

## Does your resume rise to the Bar?

### **Track changes ON your resume? NO!**

Tracked changes and edits will inevitably show up on a potential employer's computer screen. Do not risk it. Lawyers redline. We correct, and edit, and write, and rewrite. It is our job. However, when your job is looking for a job, turn off the redlining, literally. You never know what word processing program the recipient of your resume has, or what their computer settings are, and how your resume will appear to them.

### **You think you turned off "track changes" before you sent your document?**

I've worked with a number of clients who sent me their original resume with changes, some of them 4 versions old, all tracked on their document. I've only seen this problem on legal resumes although I am sure it occurs in other professions as well. There are many excuses, but lawyers should know better.

Consider these true-ish examples (names changed to protect the not-so-innocent):

- Julie's mother suggested Julie include "smartest, prettiest, best in everything," and Julie ignored the comment but did not delete it.
- Matthew's friend changed "two clients" to "too clients." Matthew incorrectly accepted the change.
- Ed applied for a job at Strategic Legal Solutions (SLS), and then later applied to SJL Attorney Search, a different placement agency. Guess what? SJL was not happy to see that Ed sent the exact same resume to SLS, which the change tracking clearly showed them.

While it is important to get a variety of trusted opinions on your resume, tracking them all on your document can be counterproductive. I've have seen too many resumes that people thought were safe from "tracked changes" and alas, those potentially perfect applicants didn't make it past the 1st round of resume pile sorting.

### **How do you avoid this problem and focus on changes in your industry, your career and your resume over time?**

- The easy way is to not track changes on the document.
- The other way is to accept or reject all changes in the document and to delete all comments.
- Send the document to a trusted friend as a test.

If all of that fails, go to your favorite online help site, or ask the question on LinkedIn Answers, and see what they say. The instructions above have worked for my clients and me.

In fact, I am tracking changes right now and will confirm, once I have completed my editing, that all of my changes are accepted or rejected. In the meantime, good luck with your legal job search and your resume revisions. Check back here for more advice each month.

### **Bottom Line:**

Your career and your knowledge of what affects it must stay up-to-date. Your resume should always appear unchanged, as if it were drafted specifically for the job to which you are applying, but you already know to update your resume for each position, right?

Originally published on Job-Hunt.org

<http://www.job-hunt.org/attorney-job-search/tracking-change.shtml>