



career hub

insider's guide to resume writing



Insider's Guide to Resume Writing

Introduction



Hi!

My name is Louise Fletcher and I am the Managing Editor and Co-founder of the Career Hub blog.

I founded Career Hub to provide job seekers with the best advice from experts in career counseling, resume writing, personal branding and recruiting.

The nature of blogging means that our experts can't always get into depth about their favorite subjects, and that's why I decided to ask them to contribute to this eBook.

"The Insider's Guide to Resume Writing" is our second eBook (if you don't have "The Insider's Guide to Job Search" be sure to download it at www.careerhub.typepad.com) and once again, each of our bloggers has contributed a wonderful article.

Topics include defining your branded value proposition, the value of story-telling, the secret ingredient of context, common resume mistakes, and how you can go beyond the resume when marketing yourself. On all of these subjects and more, our experts provide real-world strategies for success.

We hope you find the information valuable.

Please feel free to share this eBook freely and visit us at the Career Hub blog (www.careerhub.typepad.com). You can check in daily, subscribe to our RSS feed, or request daily email updates.

We'll see you there,

Louise Fletcher

Managing Editor
[Career Hub](http://www.careerhub.typepad.com)



Insider's Guide to Resume Writing

The Resume is Dead. Long Live the Resume!	4
<i>By George Blomgren</i>	
The One Thing Your Resume Must Say to Win	8
<i>By Deb Dib and Mark Hovind</i>	
Don't Write a Resume – Tell Them a Story!	21
<i>by Louise Fletcher</i>	
How to Pass the Hiring Manager's 30-Second Test	27
<i>By Barbara Safani</i>	
How to Write a STAR Story ... and Boost the Power Of Your Resume or Leadership Addendum	36
<i>By Jan Melnik</i>	
Use Context to Create Impact	39
<i>By Louise Kursmark</i>	
Seven Secrets No one Ever Told You About Getting the Most Out of Your Resume	43
<i>By Wendy J. Terwelp</i>	
Pros and Cons of the Two-Page Resume	45
<i>By Susan Guarneri</i>	
WOW! Resume Tips and Tricks	51
<i>By Billie Sucher</i>	
Resume Disasters: Why So Many Executives Are Rejected	63
<i>By Janice Worthington</i>	
Why You Should Hire a Professional Resume Writer	67
<i>By Heather Mundell</i>	
How Personal Branding Can Be Used to Create More than a Resume	70
<i>by Paul Copcutt</i>	



[George Blomgren](#) has more experience as a job seeker than he likes to think about. He's also been responsible for recruiting, interviewing and hiring. He's a widely published author on career development and job seeking. He works for a national network of employment Web sites, where every day he gets to see what works and what doesn't. George likes motorcycling, the band Yes and vegetables that start with the letter "a".

The Resume is Dead. Long Live The Resume!

By George Blomgren

The idea that the traditional resume is dead (or at least dying) has resurfaced repeatedly in recent years. To paraphrase Mark Twain, rumors of its death have been greatly exaggerated.

Let's consider the alternatives and the reasons why each has allegedly unseated the reigning champion. I'll explain why each of these upstarts won't replace the resume as we know it, not anytime soon.

Networking and/or personal referrals have replaced resumes. While these avenues can open up a lot of potential job opportunities, they don't supplant the resume. A true "networking" hire may delay the request for a resume; it may not be required prior to an initial interview. But at some point in the hiring process, a resume will be requested. You will look very bad if, at that point, you don't have one or it isn't up to date. You will look even worse if you try to explain that, because you're there as a result of networking, you aren't obliged to provide one!

Video is now the medium of choice for resumes. Older job seekers may recall that resumes used to often include photos. The possibility that these photos could lead to any type of discrimination or profiling led to an abrupt and decisive end to this practice. So, it's interesting that the ability to see what candidates look like is re-emerging as a multimedia concept! Sound and



video don't eliminate the legal concerns. Furthermore, for a job seeker to spend the kind of money necessary to get a video resume professionally produced looks a little desperate, or at least ostentatious. But unless you spend enough to have it done really well (and, unless you are charismatic and articulate), a video resume is likely to work against you. In fact, as Yale University senior [Aleksy Vayner](#) recently discovered, video resumes can really backfire!

Your blog is your resume. Much like networking, a blog may open the door to opportunities, but it won't close the deal. At an interview, or as part of your application, you will be expected to share a copy of your resume. Additionally, no matter what your blog is about — personal or professional — is it a comprehensive document about your professional credentials? If it is, it's probably not a very widely read blog! If it isn't, it doesn't replace your resume. Besides, employers like to include your resume in your personnel file — they can't do that with a blog.

Profiles are better than resumes. Some employment web sites have bet the farm on this idea. Job seekers fill out a detailed personal profile that identifies their skills and experience. The profile also includes things like the job seeker's location, and whether or not they are willing to relocate. It may also include personality profiling and questions that seek to establish compatibility with different company cultures.

Next, employers fill out reciprocal profiles regarding job opportunities they have available. Computer-based algorithms then try to match suitable candidates and job opportunities. (If you're familiar with dating web sites, this is the "eHarmony" model!) One immediate problem with this model is that it is time consuming for employers and job seekers alike. This tends to weed out all but the most desperate job seekers and employers.



As much as I dispute the idea that the traditional resume is dead, or even on its way out, don't get me wrong. I'm not a big fan. Resumes are old school, in so many ways. In an era when marketing communications (that's what your resume is, after all) have become all about multimedia, collaboration, transparency, candor, hyperlinks, annotation, tagging, etc., the traditional resume is a dinosaur. But its extinction may take some time.

Employers can't afford to stop relying on resumes as long as job seekers use them, and job seekers can't afford to avoid using them until employers won't accept them any longer. In either case, the brave souls who lead the charge by refusing to provide resumes will be putting themselves at a tremendous disadvantage until everyone else catches up.

Having said that, the impending "war for talent" may prove to be the equivalent of the meteor that allegedly wiped out dinosaurs, or in this case resumes. The talent shortage employers will experience as baby boomers retire will, many experts believe, turn the employment market on its head. There will be almost no unemployment, so employers will be desperately competing with each other to recruit people who are already employed. If this scenario holds true, and employers are desperately wooing candidates, this may give candidates the upper hand. They may not have to provide resumes.

For the time being, smart job seekers will continue to use resumes. These documents will just be one more tool in a full arsenal, but for now they will remain an essential tool. That's why it's worth the time to make your resume as good as possible. (Of course, since you're reading this document, I'm preaching to the choir!) Circling back to the "alternatives" I listed above, although I don't believe any will replace resumes any time soon, some are worth borrowing from. Here are a few specific things you can learn from the contenders:



- Keywords are the relevant words and phrases that (if you upload your resume) get automatically indexed. The "web 2.0" replacement is tags – these are the words and phrases that you choose to identify yourself under. Considering add a new section to the venerable resume format: tags. If you post your resume on employment sites that utilize tags, take advantage of this feature.
- Though blogs won't replace resumes, blogs (if they are relevant to your profession, and don't include questionable content) can be both a great supplement to your resume, and a great place to house your resume. Of course, if you are currently happily employed, you may not want to push your luck by publicly distributing your resume on your blog.
- Although networking won't replace resumes, you should network as if this was true. In other words, don't expect your resume to open any doors from you. Networking (online and in person) is the key to creating the opportunities where your resume will then be invaluable.
- If you are in job hunting mode, there's no reason to back a single horse. Do it all! Use employment web sites that eschew resumes in favor of profiles. Network. Blog. But have a resume as well.

© George Blomgren – All rights reserved

=====

The Career Hub blog connects professional and executive job seekers with the best minds in career counseling, resume writing, personal branding and recruiting.

Check out the blog, subscribe to the feed, or ask for our daily emailed updates. www.careerhub.typepad.com



Deb Dib, helps visionary, gutsy six- and seven-figure C-suite executives shorten their job searches, maximize their performance and compensation, accelerate their careers, and even change the world a bit. She holds eight certifications; has contributed to 30+ career books; has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, Newsday, and Fox News; speaks at national conferences; and serves on the BOD of Career Masters Institute. Reach Deb at www.ExecutivePowerCoach.com or DebDib@ExecutivePowerCoach.com,



Mark Hovind is the President of www.JobBait.com. He helps six- and seven-figure executives maximize their job-finding odds through value proposition letters targeted at the decision-makers most likely to hire them. Always on the cutting edge, Mark recently pioneered the concept of the "stand alone" value proposition letter. Beta tested and now proven, JobBait value proposition letters are getting 2 to 6 times the response rates, compared to letters with resumes.

The One Thing Your Resume Must Say to Win

By Deb Dib and Mark Hovind

Poke your job-seeking head in a decision-maker's door and watch what happens next. He or she will look up from the desk and ask:

"What do you want?"

Followed in close succession by any, or all, of the following:

1. Why should I waste my valuable time talking to you?
2. What good are you ... exactly?
3. Why should I care?
4. What makes you so special?
5. Why should you get the big bucks?



If, in about just 10 seconds, you provide clear, concise, compelling answers to these questions—answers with tangible benefits measured in dollars or percentages—you’re invited to step in and sit down for a chat.

If you can’t answer those questions—and answer each well—you’re still out in the hall. In fact, you’re out the door.

This scenario happens every day—not in doorways—but as resumes pass through electronic tracking systems and/or across decision-makers’ desks. If your resume doesn’t have what it takes to get attention you won’t get in the door.

No interview, no job.

What does it take to get the attention of a decision maker?

Ironically, it’s the thing that is usually missing from most letters, resumes, and elevator pitches. It’s the **one-two punch of a value proposition and personal brand**.

Here’s what usually happens without that one-two punch: You craft a resume and letter that says what you do. The first line in your cover letter, or the summary section of your says something like, “I’m a seasoned Chief Operating Officer with offshore outsourcing experience, an MBA and 20 years of experience.”

The decision-maker responds, “So what? Who cares? Go stand in line. You can cut in front of the MBAs with 15 years of experience, but please stand behind those with 25. By the way, what does ‘seasoned’ mean? Are you experienced or are you ready to retire? I have plenty of people on staff with offshore outsourcing experience. Why do I need you? We’re just fine.



You've hidden your potential value to the new company so well, behind meaningless facts, that you—a successful and valuable leader—can't get face time with a decision-maker.

No interview, no job.

Can you turn lead into gold?

If you can do that, it doesn't matter who you are, or where you worked, or for how long. If you're currently a janitor who dropped out of high school and only learned how to do this yesterday...it doesn't matter.

All that matters is the result ... the outcome ... the potential benefit to the decision-maker and the company. All that matters is that you can turn lead into gold. That's your value proposition.

A **value proposition** is a clear, concise, and compelling statement of the **tangible** benefits of your services. It focuses on **measurable results**, primarily in dollars or percents. It must be crisp and to the point ... without fluff, self-praising adjectives, generalities, or any other vague language that has built-in wiggle-room. And it must describe something that decision-makers want—even crave—because what you do has no value if no one needs it.

What if someone else can turn lead into gold, too?

Let's say you're one of a just a few people who can turn lead into gold, and you want the same job a fellow alchemist wants. You're both very valuable and you're both on the short list. How does the decision-maker choose?

Let's say that the decision-maker's company has been in a downward slide lately. Morale is low, people are leaving, and even bringing on someone who



can turn lead into gold may not work to turn the company around fast enough to save it. The people in the company are resistant to change—even good change that could save their jobs.

Let's say that your alchemist competitor is a real go-getter, make-it-happen-yesterday kind of guy. What he says goes—no questions—no deviation. Let's say that you are just as driven, but are a more hands-on, "Let me get in the trenches, work with the folks, and show them how this will work to their advantage" leader.

Both of you are valuable. Both of you get results. But the decision maker can't use your value propositions alone to make the decision. He needs to know the contenders better—who you are and how you both do what you do. Who will best fit into the company culture and the management team? Whose style will help deliver the best results?

The decision-maker needs to know more than your value propositions. He needs to know your personal brands. Without that critical information he can't make the best hire for the situation.

Why? Because a **personal brand** is a clear, concise, and compelling statement of the intangible benefits of your services. It focuses on **non-measurable elements**—your passion, leadership style, culture, work style, chemistry, and more.

Your personal brand is **your promise of value and your differentiation**. It's authentic. It says who you are, how you do what you do, and where you want to be. It guides your direction and decisions.

Your personal brand helps employers make decisions about you.

The power of the branded value proposition.



Neither your value proposition nor your personal brand is enough to guide the best hiring decision.

But the one-two punch—the branded value proposition—helps the decision maker understand the two elements critical to a hire:

1. Can you help the company make money?
2. Will you bring the right chemistry to fit within the company's culture?

A branded value proposition answers these two questions because its one-two punch combines money and chemistry.

Money (the dollarized value proposition) is the interview driver that gets you in the door and can **get you on the short list**.

Chemistry (the brand) is the “who you are and how you do what you do” that demonstrates fit and **gets you hired from the short list**.

Remember that bland, tired profile we discussed? “I’m a seasoned Chief Operating Officer with offshore outsourcing experience, an MBA and 20 years of experience...”

What if you transformed that into a sales pitch with a dollarized impact? What if you stuck your head in the decision-maker’s door and said, “Would you like to increase your gross margins by outsourcing? I’ve already helped others increase theirs from 32% to 41% on the average by moving their production to China...and the program I developed to support displaced employees was profiled in the Wall Street Journal. The jump in margins and positive press helped raise our stock price 10 points.



Now the decision-maker might respond with, "Please, come in, sit down ... tell me more." Why? Because the decision-maker speaks only one language—**money**. Yet the decision-maker hires with his head and his gut—and you've sweetened the deal with your **chemistry**.

Your dollarized and branded value proposition is your sales pitch.

That sales pitch is the only thing decision makers want to know up front. Education, job chronology, and title can come later.

Let's review the components of the "sales pitch" above:

"Would you like to increase your gross margins by outsourcing? I've already helped others increase theirs from 32% to 41% on the average by moving their production to China (MONEY) and the program I developed to support displaced employees (hint of BRAND) was profiled in the Wall Street Journal (ENDORSEMENT). The jump in margins and positive press helped raise our stock price 10 points. (MONEY)

Dollarized impact (the value proposition), with a hit of fit (the brand), and a "third-party" endorsement (proof)—opens the door.

Branded value propositions create new jobs.

Suppose in the "China" example above that the decision-maker does not have an open job for the executive who's asking. But wait, how can he possibly turn down an opportunity to increase gross margins by 9%? That's a \$900,000 benefit for every \$10 million in sales. Wouldn't you create a new job for this executive?



The question is not, do you have a position open for me? The question is—would you like **results** like these? Now imagine your salary negotiating leverage.

Try it ... and test it.

Here's a challenge: Take out a blank page. You get to write one-sentence on it. That's it. That's all you get to send out. Could you do it? Will that sentence be enough to get attention? That sentence is your value proposition and it's the top of the organizational chart for your resume. Everything else springs from it. It's the foundation for all your strategy and messaging.

Write down several variations of your branded value proposition. They should be concise, clear, compelling, dollarized, and authentic.

You will not be the best judge of your branded value position.

Send the variations to your former bosses and colleagues and ask what they think. Which do they like best, and why? Which do they like least, and why? What do they see as your value? For what are you known? How are you different? Does your value proposition have legs in your marketplace? Is there a need for it at all? (If there isn't, it's useless.)

Don't explain and don't justify—just listen, take copious notes, and keep asking for more. You will probably be surprised; you may even be shocked. But knowing the truth and transforming this high-level feedback into a succinct and powerful branded value proposition can significantly improve your job-finding odds of success.

How does this fit into a resume?



First, throw out all your ideas of what a resume should look like and what it should say. Yes, we know that you've got a resume. In fact, we know that as an executive you see resumes come across your desk all the time. Yet, how many of those resumes immediately interest you? How many would compel you to call immediately, whether you had an opening or not?

The likely answer is none, or at least not many.

That's because most resumes and letters never say what a decision-maker needs to know. They don't speak money, they don't speak value, they don't speak brand—they just speak "responsible for..." And they're often long and rambling, or so short that they are packed to the margins. And they are universally difficult to read.

Now imagine a two- to three-page executive resume that leads with a compelling branded value proposition and contains content that is strategically developed around the decision-maker's needs. Imagine a resume whose message is based upon dollarized results rather than career chronology, a "responsible for" list, and a few accomplishments. Imagine a resume that attracts the best potential employers and naturally deselects the wrong ones.

Imagine you're the decision-maker reading a branded value proposition resume. Imagine you're a decision-maker reading a typical resume. Which one hits the trashcan? Which one gets the call?

The five things your resume just can't leave out

To be an exciting read and compel a decision-maker to call, your resume (and your cover letter) must contain the following five key areas of impact. They will help you clearly demonstrate your branded value proposition—the "what I do" and the "how I do it."



Ask yourself what is my...

1. **Value Proposition?** The key thing I can do and why anyone else would care.
2. **Proof?** What I've done that has value and that predicts I can do it again.
3. **Brand?** Who I am and how I do what I do.
4. **Differentiation?** Why I should be hired instead of someone else.
5. **Passion?** What I think/feel about what I do.

A branded value proposition resume and letter are both built around these five key concepts. Every word counts and no word is wasted.

No platitudes allowed here! What do you do that's unique to you? If every executive does what you do—leave it out! Who cares?

Start with a branded value proposition profile.

Great resumes begin with focus. Your branded value proposition is your focus. And that focus has to be apparent from the first line.

Great resumes start off with great profiles—a section of the resume right at the top of the page that is a summary of your “best of the best” offerings.

Springboard your resume profile off your branded value proposition.



When creating your profile, think about what industry hiring managers want to know most of all. Use your value proposition, brand, and accomplishment to “tell ‘em and sell ‘em” in the profile.

Carefully edit out any boring and/or self-serving platitudes that creep in. Rule of thumb: if all successful executives do it, leave it out! Say what’s different, exciting, vital, and strategic about you. Be bold, be courageous—no baby steps here. Guts and glory! If you’re great, say it—but in a way that speaks volumes of value. Prove it, and it’s not bragging.

Next, brand and dollarize your impact.

With a great profile, a great resume can follow. But you’ll need to make tough choices for that to happen. You can’t, and shouldn’t, write about everything you’ve done.

Of course you’ll need to describe your jobs. But your job descriptions need to be lean and tight. Aim for impact and take the time to get it!

Decision-makers don’t much care about what you know—they care about what you accomplished with what you know. Forget boring “responsible for” paragraphs, and go for the gusto—give ‘em your best stuff.

Then move to the real-deal—accomplishments—the “get you hired” content. Start big then edit down to the essence of your contributions. Don’t forget to make your accomplishment descriptions specific and measurable. How did you hit the top or bottom line? Dollarize your impact whenever possible.

Here are five suggestions to help you develop value proposition accomplishments for your resume. Think...

...What



Not what you know, but what you accomplished with what you knew.

...So what?

What happened? Did it matter? If so, why? What did it mean for the company? If you can answer the "so what" of a statement with dollars and/or percents, you're there. If you can't, leave it out. No proof, no power.

...Strategy

What makes the most sense? What is the most compelling? What is the best fit for the value prop and brand? What do you think the reader (decision-maker) wants?

...Value Proposition

One for each job. Think "impact" Think "results." What goes at the top of the org chart for each job? What was your major impact?

...Two Lines

If you could write only two lines about what you did for the company, what would you say? If you could write only two lines in the middle of a blank page to get an interview—what would they be?

Do you have the courage to create a strong value proposition and brand?

It takes courage to have a strong value proposition and brand. It takes courage to be different and stand out.

Most of all it takes courage to deliberately disqualify opportunities. A branded value proposition resume attracts and repels in equal measure. If you want to be all things to all people, this is not the device for you. But be aware that



being all things to all people usually produces the reverse effect. “Generalist” is not a compelling executive descriptor!

A branded resume with a powerful value proposition makes tough choices. It’s strategic. It leaves a lot out and uses only what works best. By doing so, it will disqualify you for certain positions. You can count on it. But it will attract the right opportunities and save you from chasing the wrong ones!

Most of your peers will never do this.

This is going to take you far longer than you realize. It’s not uncommon to spend 20 to 30+ hours to define a value proposition and brand; do research; and prepare, write and revise a resume.

Most of your peers will never go that far. Either they don’t know how, or it’s just too hard for them. Yet the hours of thinking, strategizing, writing, revising—and doing it all again when you decide it’s not yet good enough—will pay off in a resume and letter that place you far above your peers.

Now you know the one thing your resume must say to win!

You know how to build a dynamic resume and cover letter entirely focused around the one-two punch of a branded value proposition. Prepare to accelerate your career!

© *Deb Dib and Mark Hovind – All rights reserved*

=====



Louise Fletcher is the Co-creator and Managing Editor of Career Hub. She is also President of Blue Sky Resumes (www.blueskyresumes.com). She is a frequent contributor to job search publications such as Monster.com, The Ladders, Net-Temps, Job Bank USA and Employment Spot, and her work is featured in numerous resume books, including the JISTworks "Expert Resume" series. Louise is widely recognized as a pioneer in the field of career marketing for her work leading the transition from offline to online job search strategies.

Don't Write a Resume – Tell them a Story!

by Louise Fletcher

To understand the impact that a strong resume can have, take a moment to put yourself in the shoes of the hiring manager who needs to fill a position. Let's call our manager Harry. Harry desperately wants to make the right decision. After all his team is understaffed, his workload keeps mounting and he seems to have new problems every day. Now he's been given permission to hire an extra person Great! Someone to help with the extra workload and maybe solve some of those nagging problems that no one has time for. But as he starts to wade through resumes, another possibility occurs to him. What if he makes the wrong choice? What if the person he selects actually makes the problems worse? It's happened before. It wouldn't be the first time that a candidate who seemed wonderful turned out to be under-qualified or lazy or a trouble-maker. And Harry knows that if he makes that mistake again, he'll just fall even further behind and his life will get harder, not easier. Not to mention how he'll explain to his bosses that hiring the extra person didn't actually make any positive difference. All this after he spent months getting permission to hire someone in the first place.

So he's nervous and as he wades through the stack of resumes, he doesn't see any way to identify which pile each resume belongs in – the one for people who will make his life better or the ones who will make it worse. After



all, all the resumes look pretty much alike. Half of them were created from the templates that come with Microsoft Word, the other half are bland and conformist. They all seem to be from 'self-starting, highly motivated people persons.' These are generalities that tell Harry nothing.

Each resume outlines the responsibilities of prior positions, but this is no help because knowing **what** you did (or were supposed to do) is different from knowing **how** you did it. Being "responsible for helping customers and tidying the store" tells Harry what the candidate's employer expected of her. It does not tell him whether she actually did it, or how well she did it.

The problem is that most resumes do not represent the living, breathing person who wrote them. Instead of expressing skills and individuality and outlining the great things the person has done, they are simply a bland recitation of standard phrases and pat descriptions. This does nothing to help Harry decide who will fit into his company.

And therein lays the answer to getting Harry's attention and creating a resume that is a living, breathing document that screams "Hire Me!" You need to tell him about yourself. You need to bring yourself alive on the page and make him curious to meet you.

How? Tell him stories that illustrate your ability to help him succeed.

The Power of Stories

Since the beginning of time, humans have enjoyed stories. Stories help us make sense of the world – we listen as the story begins, follow it through to the middle, and then feel satisfaction when we reach the resolution. A good story is both compelling and memorable.



But obviously you can't just tell any old stories. (The one about that New Year's Eve in Las Vegas probably won't do you much good!) The stories you tell on your resume must show Harry that you have solved problems in the past – and that the problems you have solved are similar to the ones he is facing now. If you do that, why wouldn't he interview you?

The Importance of Research

So you have to show Harry that you can solve his problems (or maximize his opportunities) but what are they?

If you currently work in the same industry and are simply changing companies, you probably know, because you work in a similar environment every day. If you are looking to make a career change, you will need to be more creative and do some research. Make contact with people who currently work in that industry, speak to recruiters, read trade magazines and interviews with industry luminaries. Review job postings for the positions you are interested in and make notes of what seem to be the major concerns. Read financial reports. Patterns will emerge. You will learn what is important to industry insiders. (Hint: the issues will almost always relate to efficiency, sales, profit, costs, customer satisfaction or some combination of all five.)

What are Your Stories?

Go back over your career and think about each job you have held.

Ask yourself: what problems did I solve for that employer and/or what improvements did I make? Your answers will form the basis of the stories you tell.



The stories do not have to be earth-shattering - we're not looking for Middle East peace or a cure for cancer - but they should center on the impact you have made in prior positions.

In my practice as a professional resume writer, I constantly meet people who have made a great impact on their employers but just haven't really thought about it until we talk. These people are from all walks of life and all levels - from CEOs to clerical workers.

For example, a recent client was looking to stay in retail customer service with a major retail chain. We talked about her past experience and I asked her to describe a problem she had solved.

Client: "The customer service desk was horribly disorganized which meant that customers had to wait on line while staff hunted for the information they needed."

Now I asked what she did to fix this.

Client: "I stayed late every night for a week after the store was closed and reorganized everything. Then I conducted a training session for the customer service team so that everyone knew where to find what they needed."

What was the result?

Client: "Lines were much shorter and we won the company's customer service award 2 quarters in a row. Our mystery shopper ratings went up significantly."

I summarized her story as follows:



- Turned around ineffective customer service department by reorganizing customer service desk and training all associates. **Result:** Store subsequently won 2 company awards for customer service and mystery shopper ratings improved by 50%.

By telling this story, my client showed that she has problem solving skills, takes the initiative and really cares about excellence in customer service.

More stories

Here are some of the recent examples of stories I told for actual clients:

Programmer for animation studio

- Developed tool to enable modelers to diagnose and correct modeling problems before rigging. Prior to development of this tool, modeling problems were only identified during animation, resulting in expensive charge-backs and loss of productivity.

Event Planner – not-for-profit

- Conceived, managed and publicized regional Earth Day partnership with Whole Foods Market which resulted in record breaking sales and extensive media coverage, including The New York Times and WABC. As a result the two organizations formed an ongoing national partnership.

HR Manager

- Negotiated a renewal of health benefits at 10% below nationwide average increase while enhancing employee benefits.

Product Development Executive – Video Games



- Redefined product strategy and production processes for (company name withheld) resulting in a 40% increase in revenue over a two year period, from \$140M to \$200M annually.

Publishing Executive

- Built and led publishing division to package and sell original children's books to major publishers, generating over \$2M in sales to date. First book sold over 500,000 copies with pre-orders of 400,000 for the sequel.

Executive Assistant

- Designed, created and maintained a resource assignment database using MS Access. The new system allowed management to allocate 70 consultants efficiently.

You can see that the achievements vary depending on the seniority and length of experience but all address some frequent problem experienced by the hiring managers in that industry/profession.

Now it's your Turn

To create impactful stories, think back over each position you have held and the things you did to help your employer. Describe the initial situation, what actions you took, and the results of your efforts. Then summarize your story into no more than two of three lines.

By filling your resume with stories of achievements, you will do more than attract the manager's attention to your resume. You will also provide him with a source of interview questions. He can ask you about each story you told and if he doesn't, you can use them anyway as you answer his questions.



In this way the work you do on creating compelling stories for your resume is also preparation for acing your job interviews. So start now - tell them a story!

© Louise Fletcher - All rights reserved

=====

The Career Hub blog connects professional and executive job seekers with the best minds in career counseling, resume writing, personal branding and recruiting.

Check out the blog, subscribe to the feed, or ask for our daily emailed updates. www.careerhub.typepad.com



Barbara Safani, owner of [Career Solvers](#) works with Fortune 100 companies and individuals to deliver targeted programs focusing on resume development, job search, networking, interviewing, and salary negotiation. She is a triple certified resume writer, frequent contributor to numerous career-related publications, and co-creator of a leading resume writer certification exam. Ms. Safani advises members of the NY chapter of the Financial Executives Network Group and chairs a SHRM networking group for HR professionals in career transition.

How to Pass the Hiring Manager's 30-Second Test

Personal Marketing Strategies for More Powerful Qualifications Summaries

By Barbara Safani, M.A., CPRW, NCRW, CERW, CCM

The average hiring manager spends less than 30 seconds reviewing a resume. With so little time and so much at stake, applicants must strive to create a self-marketing tool that passes the hiring manager's initial screening test. Hiring managers scan resumes to quickly see what "pops" or sparks their interest in a candidate. Their first glance at the document often focuses on the text within the top third of the page. This makes it imperative for candidates to create a career summary at the top of the document to quickly communicate competency, scope, fit, and value add. Below is an overview of the three "tests" hiring managers use to screen candidates and recommended writing strategies to pass each test and score high grades with the hiring manager.

The Competency Test: Strategies for Showcasing Your Skills

First, the hiring manager looks for your competencies to determine if you have the experience and scope necessary to perform the job. When writing a resume, make sure that your areas of knowledge and expertise are communicated clearly within the top third of the first page of your resume. Don't hide the competencies within your profile summary; instead create a



separate section in the resume called core competencies, areas of expertise, or areas of knowledge to call direct attention to your qualifications. Make sure your competencies section discusses specific rather than general job expertise. Try to match your competencies to the words and phrases that are most commonly used in your industry. Review job postings and job descriptions for positions in your field that are similar to the ones you will be targeting in your search to create a clear match between your competencies and those necessary for the position.

Example:

<p style="text-align: center;">CORE COMPETENCIES</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Management</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Organizational Redesign and Restructuring ▪ Information Systems and Technologies ▪ Cost Reduction and Avoidance ▪ Market and Operations Risk Assessment ▪ Client Relationship Management RFP Development ▪ Recruitment and Retention ▪ Training and Development</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Operations</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Global and Domestic Custody ▪ Clearance ▪ Mortgage Backed Securities (MBS) ▪ Securities Lending Offshore Fund Administration ▪ Corporate Trust ▪ Transfer Agent ▪ Risk Management Cash Management ▪ Funds Transfer ▪ Money Markets ▪ Letters of Credit ▪ Loans</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Compliance</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">AML ▪ BSA ▪ OFAC ▪ SAR ▪ FINCEN ▪ USA Patriot Act ▪ SOX ▪ Graham-Leach-Bliley ▪ SEC Rule 17 W-1099 and W-1042 Reporting ▪ Double Taxation Treaties ▪ Balance Sheet & P/L Reporting</p>
--



The Creative Writing Test: Strategies for Showcasing Your Personal Brand

Create a professional identity

A professional identity is not the same as a job title. The professional identity conveys your personal brand and the scope of your responsibilities through a few targeted words. When placed in bold near the top of your resume, your identity calls attention to your candidacy much the same way that a catchy headline on the front page of a newspaper grabs the attention of the reader.

Example:

EXECUTIVE STRATEGIST AND CHANGE AGENT
CEO/President/Principal/Founder

EXECUTIVE PROGRAM DIRECTOR
NOT-FOR PROFITS • SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CAUSES • GRASSROOTS
EFFORTS
MASS DEFENSE • AIDS AWARENESS • YOUTH PROGRAMS
ACTIVIST • AUTHOR • RADIO TALK SHOW HOST

Offer a mission statement or personal quote

What are your goals and dreams and how successful have you been at attaining these objectives in different business environments? Share your value proposition with your reader to build rapport and establish a connection between your successes and the goals of the company.



Example:

RECORDING INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE
SIX-TIME GRAMMY NOMINEE · GRAMMY NOMINATED PRODUCER
Building multimillion-dollar record labels by promoting authentic niche talent and executing strategic crossover marketing campaigns to create breakthrough hits that increase artist recognition and capture new market share.

Discuss business environments

Have you worked in particular business environments that have helped shape your brand? Were your achievements focused in a turnaround, high-growth, or international environment? Have you worked across several businesses or across multiple industries? This may very well be part of your value add and it is certainly information that will gain your reader's attention and encourage them to read on.

Example

SENIOR MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE
Start-Up, Turnaround, Fast-Track Growth & Multinational Corporations
Global Business Ventures/ Multi-Site Operations

Name drop

As a hiring manager scans your resume, he will be quickly looking at the companies you have worked for. If you have worked for several Fortune 1,000 or fast-growing start-ups and your association with these firms is part of your brand, add the company names to your headline to build credibility and interest in your candidacy. If you have worked for lesser known



companies, but held account responsibilities for well-known firms, showcase the names of your clients if this is not considered proprietary information.

Example:

STRATEGY CONSULTANT
Booz Allen Hamilton • Accenture • Deloitte Consulting
Turn-arounds • Spin Offs • Post Merger Integration • Outsourcing • IT
Enterprise Integrations

MARKETING EXECUTIVE
Key clients include Radio Shack, Circuit City, CompUSA, Brandmart USA, General Electric, Staples, Home Depot, and Winn Dixie.

Add a testimonial

One great way to build authenticity into your profile is to showcase a quote from a senior executive or customer. Content for these testimonials can be found through a variety of sources including performance reviews, 360 assessments, and customer satisfaction surveys.

Example:

"Jonathan was asked to take responsibility for a piece of a mission-critical e-business application project that was behind schedule due to an unresponsive software vendor. Several others had tried to remedy the situation, including a senior vice president at Ernst & Young, but no one was able to make any progress. However, Jonathan was able to build rapport with the vendor, negotiate a workable relationship, and marshal internal resources to deliver the solution." **Andrew Finn, Management Consultant, Ernst & Young**



The Math Test: Strategies for building your portfolio of accomplishments

Problem-Action-Result Statements

Hiring managers believe that proof of past successes helps them determine how successful you will be in their organization. The best way for you to prove your success is to discuss accomplishments thoroughly rather than focusing heavily on job tasks. To create accomplishment statements, examine a problem you have faced in the past, the actions you took to fix the problem, and the associated results of your actions. Think of the before and after picture and try to assign a number, dollar value, or percent change to your results. Accomplishment statements must be present throughout the resume and the profile section of your resume should include overall accomplishments that help set the tone for and frame your candidacy.

Example

- Year over year success building businesses that yield as much a \$250M in new revenue; couple innovative marketing concepts with solid merchandise planning and program development skills.
- Accelerated purchases as much as 300% by successfully leveraging concept development to create connections between intrinsic brand elements and consumers.

Accomplishment Hooks

Hiring managers are looking for examples of how you have helped the companies you supported make money, save money, save time, improve a process, reverse an existing problem, be first to market, build relationships/brand identity, grow the business, attract new business, or maintain existing business. Accomplishment hooks should be woven throughout the document and the strongest hooks can be incorporated into the profile or career highlights section. Statements should be front-loaded



which means that the key metric driving the accomplishment should be at the beginning of the statement.

Examples:

Make Money

- **Accelerated profit margins by 30%** with projected sales of \$400M by launching seven innovative insurance and POS products in just three years.

Save Money

- **Cut expenses incurred by temporary staffing agencies by \$5M;** consolidated vendor list by 60%.

Save Time

- **Eliminated over 30 administrative hours weekly** by authoring and designing 50-page web-application interface that standardized and automated responses to general support desk inquiries regarding the group's flagship product.

Improve a Process

- **Streamlined 10,000-user email list** to improve distribution and accuracy of mailings significantly.

Reverse an Existing Problem

- **Reduced product imperfections by 500%** by implementing more stringent controls to improve fabric and product quality; achieved ISO 9002 status.

Be First to Market

- **Pioneered *CarpetSafe*® exclusive insurance product for ABC Carpets** offering replacement carpet if original is damaged through general wear and tear or staining.

Build Relationships/Brand Identity

- **Garnered \$13,000 in grant and donation money** and free publicity for *Furnish a Future* by forging partnership with Corcoran Realtors.



- **Successfully launched \$50 million gourmet sales market** despite president's skepticism of products' earning potential.

Grow the Business

- **Boosted revenues for *Virtual Auction* from underperforming \$12M to over \$30M**, with average markup of 18% vs. previous 3%, well above comparative auction margins.

Attract New Business

- **Grew female customer base from 15% to 60%** by repositioning merchandising strategy and offering high margin apparel, home, health, and beauty products.

Maintain Existing Business

- **Reversed strained relationship with \$22B supranational client;** renewed three-year contract despite internal and external expectations that account was unsalvageable and secured an additional \$4B in business.

Add charts and graphs

By adding a visual component to your profile section, you can quickly communicate dramatic results to your audience without taking up too much space on the document. Charts can chronicle success over time, across products, or across businesses.

Example:

NY Branch	2002	2003	2004	2005
Revenue	\$15MM	\$20MM	\$27MM	30MM
Market Share	15%	22%	35%	46%
Client Retention	82%	89%	93%	97%
Referral Business	10%	21%	45%	72%



Great qualification summaries tell an authentic and compelling story. Content, format, and design all play a role in your story and each component should be considered when crafting your unique message. Hiring managers need to read the “book jackets” of a lot of stories and quickly decide which ones to read in greater detail. Try some of these strategies to improve your chances of getting on the “must read” list and “must interview” list of employers.

© *Barbara Safani 2006 – All rights reserved*

=====

The Career Hub blog connects professional and executive job seekers with the best minds in career counseling, resume writing, personal branding and recruiting.

Check out the blog, subscribe to the feed, or ask for our daily emailed updates. www.careerhub.typepad.com



Jan Melnik, MRW, CCM, CPRW, is president of Absolute Advantage, a resume-writing and job-search coaching practice in Connecticut, which she has operated for 23 years. She assists clients coast-to-coast with career strategies and resume services. Jan is the careers expert on Money Matters radio, syndicated nationwide. The author of five entrepreneurial books, she has been featured on television and in numerous periodicals. Her newest book is Executive's Pocket Guide to ROI Resumes and Job Search, co-authored with Louise Kursmark. Learn more at www.janmelnik.com

How to Write a STAR Story ... and Boost the Power of Your Resume or Leadership Addendum

By Jan Melnik

Two of the most important features of a well-written resume are the qualifications profile detailing “predictors of success” and the STAR stories that present a candidate’s most significant accomplishments and contributions. This article will focus on developing effective stories that describe the Situation, Tactic, Action, and Result.

The STAR approach to resume writing focuses on an individual’s signature strengths. To make the process more approachable, consider describing key accomplishments from the standpoint of telling a story. There are four elements to this story.

The first step is to describe the specific challenge or opportunity faced, the **Situation**. Set the stage for describing the role you played, the initiatives you took in turning a situation around or solving a problem. This could range from such things as spearheading a new product launch, optimizing an underperforming sales organization, or exploring new distribution channels. As much as possible, quantify what the challenge was—forming a basis for which you subsequently drove a solution, performance improvement, performance boost, or increase of some type (profitability, productivity, etc.).



By establishing a clear picture of the situation, a reader is in a good position to understand the full context of the problem you faced.

The next element is describing the **Tactic(s)** you used to effect a change—what steps did you take? What initiatives did you propose? What was your method of attack? What resources did you engage? What methods or strategies do you use in figuring out an attack or a solution? Your goal here is to describe what drives your performance in addressing a challenge and provide uniquely transferable skills. This section is all about your strategy and approach.

Action is the third step and takes the tactics identified and shows what you did to then execute. Highly descriptive action verbs are suggested for this section. Literally answer the question: What did you do to bring about the end result? Facilitated ... Managed ... Spearheaded ... Reengineered ... Transformed ... Drove ... Orchestrated ... Led ... and so forth. Don't get too detail-oriented in describing your actions, but do be sure to thoroughly describe your key skills and action steps.

The fourth and final step is to show the **Result**. This is the bottom-line—the all-important outcome reached through taking the action steps outlined to implement the key tactics identified. Quantify this result wherever possible—showing numbers or percentages that help substantiate the results and tell your story with credibility. Try to link the impact to an organization to the result. How were you instrumental in bringing this about? Did you personally garner any recognition or award for your efforts?

Here's an example of a STAR story that is presented in a more abbreviated fashion on a resume and in its expanded version in a Critical Leadership Initiative Addendum.



Resume Example:

Betty Crocker ... Contemporized General Mills' flagship brand through innovative first-to-market new product initiatives and a communication campaign to expand brand's appeal to a broader (and younger) demographic. Result: Elevated brand to largest and most profitable in category with sales growth of 29% (\$95MM), two 5% price increases, and a 45% reduction in trade dollars.

Critical Leadership Initiative Addendum Example:

Increased momentum of signature premium brand through innovative first-to-market initiatives and doubled growth expectations.

Challenged to accelerate market reach of General Mills' #1 brand (Betty Crocker), representing 22% of US profits. This super-premium product already enjoyed fierce loyalty from 3 million customers (75% of which were in over-50 demographic). Reshaped product proposition, harnessing internal expertise and leveraging marketing know-how. Executed campaign that communicated contemporized brand and delivered extensive sampling to appeal to a broader audience.

Results ... Grew sales and profits 29% (\$95 million) since 1999, despite a 6% category decline, two 5% price increases, and a 45% reduction in trade dollars. Boosted from #3 to #1 as largest and most profitable brand in the category, which delivered \$320 million annually (2002).

Key Strengths ... "I am professionally exhilarated by challenges to extract incremental value from already profitable product lines and turn around sluggish performance in under-optimized brands."

© Jan Melnik 2006 – All rights reserved

=====



Award-winning resume writer, career consultant, and author (18 career books), Louise Kursmark helps executives in transition develop powerful, distinctive, and highly strategic career marketing documents. She is a frequent speaker to corporate, peer, and job-seeker audiences, a regular contributor to top executive sites, and a founding Board member of Career Masters Institute. Among her multiple certifications, she was the first person worldwide to earn Master Resume Writer status. Contact her at LK@yourbestimpression.com or www.yourbestimpression.com.

Use Context to Create Impact

by Louise Kursmark, MRW, JCTC, CEIP, CCM

A good executive resume is concise, focused, well organized, and contains powerful accomplishment statements. What's more, a good executive resume clearly communicates areas of expertise and is easy to skim for essential details such as work history and education. It is a useful tool for recruiters and hiring authorities to assess initial match with an available opening, and it is a handy reference for networking contacts.

As a job seeker, you are competing with other talented executives who have worked hard to produce an effective resume. In fact, many executive resumes fall into the "good" category. Wouldn't it be better, then, to advance your resume from "good" to "great"?

A great resume stands out and grabs attention both at a quick glance and then a deeper, more thoughtful review. A great resume tells more than where you've been and what you've done – it communicates your executive brand, tells why and how you've accomplished what you have, and clearly distinguishes you from competitors who have equally strong backgrounds.

Other articles in this e-book address how to write a great positioning statement, communicate your brand, and tell the accomplishment stories that will sell your capabilities. In this article, I'd like to address one small way that



you can create a big impact – by using context as a key element of your position descriptions and accomplishment statements.

Context Sets the Stage

Have you ever arrived late at a play or a movie and found yourself puzzled by what was going on? The rest of the audience gasps or laughs or otherwise reacts while you sit wondering what you're missing. This is because everyone else was there for the "stage-setting" parts of the show, the initial introduction of characters and situations and relationships that make all the difference to understanding the rest of the plot.

Similarly, in your resume, if you don't provide context information to your readers they won't fully understand the meaning and impact of your activities and accomplishments.

Consider this accomplishment statement:

- Increased revenue 4% yearly for 4 straight years.

On its own, this is a clear, clean, straightforward accomplishment. It's certainly worthwhile to include in a resume. But let's see what happens when we incorporate context that more fully edifies readers as to the meaning of that accomplishment. You can see how it really ramps up the impact.

Scenario 1: Relates internal challenges and more fully explains what you did.

- Inherited a downward-spiraling operation with 6 straight years of deepening revenue losses. Led a comprehensive marketing/sales overhaul that halted slide within 6 months and generated 4% annual revenue growth every year from 2003 to 2006.

Scenario 2: Magnifies impact by comparing a seemingly modest achievement to industry and competitors.



- Increased revenue 4% yearly for 4 straight years – while industry as a whole sank 1%–5% yearly and closest competitor averaged 10% annual loss.

Context Helps Readers Understand Scope

In the chronological work history section of many executive resumes, each position often begins with a brief description of scope of responsibility – perhaps something like this:

Managed P&L, new business development, product development, manufacturing engineering, strategic planning, and sales forecasting for \$60M, 300-employee division producing climate-control systems for major automotive accounts.

Again, this is a crisp, clear description of job responsibilities that is helpful to readers – it lets them know the size and type of organization you have been responsible for.

Yet it gives no indication of what you accomplished in the position. We have no idea if you were good, bad, or ineffective on the job, what kinds of challenges you faced, or what was going on with the company at the time you took the job.

Consider how much more interest and impact you create by adding context – one short sentence at the beginning of that same position description:

Turned around unprofitable business unit, aggressively applying Lean Manufacturing and Six Sigma methodologies to reduce costs and increase both productivity and profitability in a QS 9000 production environment. Managed P&L, new business development, product development, manufacturing engineering, strategic planning, and sales



forecasting for \$60M, 300-employee division producing climate-control systems for major automotive accounts.

Below this high-impact introduction you can add individual bullet points that describe the specific initiatives that produced the turnaround; but immediately, in just a quick skim, readers understand that you led a successful turnaround and that you have an expert grasp of in-demand methodologies (Lean and Six Sigma).

Make Room for Context

You might be concerned that adding context will overload your resume with details and create an unwieldy, unnecessarily wordy document. That’s a legitimate concern – you certainly want to keep the resume readable. Here are some strategies that will allow you to make room for the critical context information.

- Trim details of job “duties” and “responsibilities.” Provide a brief scope, then use your accomplishment statements to convey information about the activities you were engaged in.
- Strike out achievement statements that are vague or non-specific. Fewer but more meaningful accomplishments are more beneficial.
- Be sure you are focusing on information that is relevant to your current goals.
- In general, edit from the bottom up, as the oldest material on your resume is usually the least relevant.

Remember, resume writing is really story-telling. Context helps you tell your story in a way that is interesting, exciting, meaningful, and dramatic. You’ll capture your readers’ attention from first word to last!

© Louise Kursmark 2006 – All rights reserved

=====



Are you ready for your next big gig? Wendy Terwelp, President of Opportunity Knocks™ (www.knocks.com), partners with entrepreneurial executives and business owners in transition. In addition to personal branding and career marketing tools, her innovative Rock Your Network® program helps execs network effectively – without begging. To date nearly every person attending her live events has landed a new gig. In career management since 1989, Wendy also possesses a degree in Journalism along with 4 career management certifications. Email Wendy at wendyterwelp@knocks.com.

Seven Secrets No One Ever Told You About Getting the Most Out of Your Resume

by Wendy J. Terwelp, CPBS, CCMC, JCTC, CEIP

- 1. Clearly define your objective.** “We don’t have time to be career counselors,” said Tim Moran, Hallmark’s Director of Human Resources, at a recent Career Masters Institute conference, “so please, help us out a little. Let us know what you want.” “Candidates have to be focused,” said Laurie Purcell, Executive Recruiter. “The biggest complaint from employers over the years has been ‘We didn’t hire so-and-so because they didn’t know what they wanted.’”
- 2. Be specific when recounting your achievements.** “Dollarize” them,” says Jeffrey Fox in [Don’t Send a Resume](#). Qualify and quantify them in some manner that demonstrates what you can offer a prospective employer.
Use the CAR method to help you recall your achievements: Challenge, Action, Result. Achievements are the most important part of the resume say recruiters and human resource professionals. “Past performance predicts future productivity,” said Lynn Williams, President, Prestige Placements.
- 3. Use action words and statements.** “Responsible for”... is out, “Developed; Directed; Achieved; Coordinated, etc.” is in.



4. When responding to an online ad, **e-mail your resume in WORD.** PDF and other formats aren't easily scanned into existing HR and resume-management software. "We want Word," said an HR Director of a local manufacturer. Moran said, "We can easily zip Word documents to all areas of our company." Purcell said recruiters want Word as well.

5. When responding to any ads, either online or in the newspaper, be sure you clearly read the ad and assess your qualifications. Companies don't have time to meet with unqualified applicants. According to one recruiter, "Companies are cherry picking now. **Candidates must be an exact match before a company looks at them.**"

6. If you know someone at a company, give them a call. Networking is the No. 1 method used by candidates to get jobs. According to a recent survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 5% of people found jobs through advertisements (online and in print) while **48% of employees landed their jobs through referrals (networking).**

7. Think creatively in how you distribute your resume. According to the above survey, **23% of newly hired employees found jobs through alumni** (professional associations and/or employers), employment agencies, and temporary placement firms and 24% found jobs through cold calling companies (no job advertised).

© Wendy Terwelp 2004 – 2006 – All rights reserved

=====



Known as the "Career Assessment Goddess", Susan is an expert in using personal branding and career assessments to reveal exciting career and business choices. She is the only National Certified Career Counselor in the world with certifications as a personal branding strategist, career management coach, distance career counselor, and expert resume writer. These multiple credentials and her 21 years of experience represent the "cream-of-the-crop" for the careers industry. Her web sites include www.assessmentgoddess.com and www.resume-magic.com

Pros and Cons of the Two-Page Resume **How to Use the Advantages and Avoid the Traps**

by Susan Guarneri, CERW, CPBS, NCCC

Like many people, you may be wondering if a two-page resume is right for you. It may seem a lot easier to write a one-page resume. After all, that could simply encompass a brief listing of your jobs, job titles, and duties and responsibilities, as well as education and training. Unfortunately, such a simple "listing" does little to separate you from the crowd of other applicants vying for the same positions.

Consider the following pros and cons of a two-page resume. Such a resume could serve your goal of making a stellar first impression and landing interviews faster, provided you make good use of the advantages (pros) and avoid the pitfalls (cons).

Pros (Advantages) of a Two-Page Resume

1. Wide Open Spaces

With a two-page resume, you have SPACE to develop and customize an intriguing document containing well-developed accomplishments in relevant skill areas required for the job. These related accomplishments can arise from your current and previous jobs, as well as your community involvement, leadership activities, education and training, and professional affiliations.



Rule of thumb: the bulk of accomplishments need to be within the most recent 10-12 years. A short reference to earlier accomplishments can be included if they are outstanding or show a common thread of functional skills essential to the applied-for job. Full-bodied accomplishments can be written in the following R-C-C-A-I format:

R – RESULTS (quantified) obtained by solving a CHALLENGE (problem)

C – CONTEXT of the situation (job and job title, scope of responsibilities)

C – CHALLENGE (problem that you overcame to produce RESULTS)

A – ACTIONS you took (these are often functional skills of the job)

I – IMPACT on the organization; what the RESULT means for the “Big Picture”

This format clearly shows the specifics (proof) that demonstrate the functional skills you claim. Resumes now need to be more than just a laundry list of credentials, job history, and duties and responsibilities you copied and pasted out of your past job descriptions. Your resume is your personal marketing brochure; it has to answer the potential employer’s question, “Why should I hire you?”

2. Readability

A two-page resume encourages readable fonts (10-14 point size depending on the font), reasonable margins, and plenty of white space so the eye can “rest” and absorb content between blocks of text. How often have you seen a one-page resume crammed with information so tiny it can barely be read? Rule of thumb: ask yourself “How eager would I be to read such a jam-packed resume, especially if there were many more resumes from other qualified candidates?”



Another crucial piece of resume real estate can be accommodated in two pages: the Summary or Profile on the top of the first page. Make this meaningful to the employer by summarizing (that's why it's called a Summary) your key qualifications for THIS particular job, as well as your personal branding attributes that make you a distinctive candidate. Think of the Summary as the "Cliff's Notes" of your two-page resume. An employer, short on time, can scan the Summary to gather an overview and will likely make the decision to read further if the Summary is compelling.

3. Keywords

The inclusion of keywords has become critical for resumes that are scanned and emailed into resume databases for searches by employers and recruiters. Keywords are nouns and noun phrases that describe the required and desired skills, credentials, experience, traits, and so on, that an employer may specify for a particular job.

With a two-page resume, you will have room to increase the number of relevant and desired keywords, and all their permutations. For example, you could say "Bachelor's Degree", "BS", and "Bachelor of Science" to be sure the resume gets a "hit" no matter what keyword search string is used. Incorporate as many required and desired keywords as possible on the first page of your resume; you will also want keywords on the second page, but realize that placement on the first page is essential.

Cons (Pitfalls) of a Two-Page Resume

1. Fluff Factor

Padding the two-page resume with "fluff" just to fill up the space is the



most common pitfall. Remember, an employer is most interested in what you have been doing in the past 10-12 years. That should occupy the largest amount of space on your resume. Careful development of the most recent 10-12 years of experience and accomplishments, demonstrating your ability to solve problems, deliver results, and get along effectively with a team, will persuade the prospective employer that you could be a valuable and productive addition to the team. Your job in the interview is to prove the employer right!

Unfortunately, this kind of accomplishments-based resume development is not easy or straight forward. If you are attempting this on your own, you may not even recognize your own accomplishments! The assistance of an objective third party (like a professional resume writer) will help you to identify and articulate the kind of “proof” required to make your case, in the resume AND in the interview.

2. Overkill

Like a two-page treatise on one’s life, a two-page resume can invite “overkill” and wordiness. This is especially true if the resume is written with dense paragraphs (more than 5 lines long) or “machine-gunned” multiple bullet points.

Your resume, whether one page or two, needs to be:

- Focused and relevant to the sought-after job and target industry
- Well-organized with descriptive headers and white space
- Visually compelling (reserve bullet points for accomplishments, for example)
- Clear, concise and containing quantified accomplishments.

Rule of thumb: do not list everything you have ever done in great detail, going back to the dawn of time in your career history if it spans



more than 15 years. The amount of content should be formatted like an inverse pyramid, with the most recent experience taking up the bulk of the resume space, and then tapering down to very little (or no) mention of earlier career experience on the resume.

3. Burial Ground

Be careful of burying important information. For example, education is often presented after professional experience. The reader (prospective employer or recruiter) is forced to go to the second page to determine your educational and training information. But this information is often a requirement in the job posting, so do not make it difficult to find.

In addition, a keyword search of your resume in a resume database may not get to the bottom half of the second page. Often the search string asks for the first 60 keywords and then stops. What if your MBA, a required keyword for your targeted job, appears at the very bottom of page two and nowhere else on the resume? How likely will it make the 60-keyword cutoff? Will the exclusion of that required keyword keep you out of the candidate pool? The remedy for this is easy: include any important required keywords in your Summary at the beginning of page one (e.g., CPA, Kellogg School of Management graduate or Project Management Professional).

You have heard it before and have probably experienced it already – this is a highly competitive job market. Your resume is the first step in positioning yourself as an exceptional candidate and winning well-deserved notice from a prospective employer. Make that first impression a memorable one by incorporating the pluses of a two-page resume and steering clear of the common mistakes that will derail your efforts.

If you have a relatively short career history (recent college graduate or entry-



level worker), a one-page resume is probably sufficient. In any case, pay attention to the pros and cons of resume writing. You will be distinguishing your resume with top-notch content and personal-branding marketability. One page or two, your resume will put you at the top of the "To Be Interviewed" pile and create positive spin for your candidacy.

© Susan Guarneri 2006 – All rights reserved

=====

The Career Hub blog connects professional and executive job seekers with the best minds in career counseling, resume writing, personal branding and recruiting.

Check out the blog, subscribe to the feed, or ask for our daily emailed updates. www.careerhub.typepad.com



*Billie Sucher has an unwavering passion for her life-work as a career transition consultant, outplacement specialist, resume writer, speaker, trainer and poet. Since 1985, she has provided career services to individuals, executive-level to entry-level, coast-to-coast. Billie holds a Master's Degree in Counseling, industry certifications, and her resume / cover letter work is featured in numerous resume and cover letter publications. The author of *Between Jobs: Recover, Rethink, Rebuild* and *Baseball for Life*, she invites you to visit her website at www.billiesucher.com or e-mail: billie@billiesucher.com.*

WOW! Resume Tips, Tricks and Tactics

by Billie Sucher, MS, CTMS, CTSB, JCTC

There are no etched-in-stone rules when it comes to writing resumes. Everyone has an idea, notion, thought, or expert piece of advice on how to write a resume *right*. The bottom line is that no one has a crystal ball with magic answers for a WOW resume. The *right* resume is the one that works! Therefore, to the best of your ability, educate yourself about *how* to write a resume. Start your research by perusing resume books and talking with people who might know a tidbit or two more than you about this topic. Then, and only then, decide what makes sense for *you* when it comes to writing a WOW resume. Here's my take on what constitutes a WOW resume...

Results-driven document that is relevant and essential to proving that you have the requisite credentials to perform the job.

Educational tool that exemplifies the essence of you and enlightens readers about the who, what, when, where, why, how (and how much) of you.



Shares information while selling and supporting your value, benefit, and worth to the organization.

Uniqueness of you, the inimitable individual, captured in print.

Meaningful marketing tool designed to fulfill your goal of getting an interview with your target audience.

Evokes a positive response from the prospective employer...**“we’d like to interview you.”**

My Favorite Tips, Tricks and Tactics

Presented below are some of my favorite resume tips, tricks, and tactics for you to contemplate. You may agree with them; you may not. What matters most is that you are actively pursuing knowledge in a subject area relevant to what’s happening in your world, now or in the future. Choose the entries that fit *you* and your specific resume-writing needs at this time.

1. Devote some quality time to researching opportunities and areas of interest to you *before* you write your resume. Two outstanding online resources:

O*net OnLine: <http://online.ontcenter.org>

Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>



2. Don't write your resume *until* you have thoroughly assessed your product features, functions, and benefits, have a good grasp of self, a clear focus on your career direction, and a specific target market. Common sense suggests that you wouldn't spend one dime on a brochure for a new business start-up until you first identified what business you're in – the same holds true for resume writing.
3. If you don't know how to write a resume, get help. It will be some of the best money you'll ever invest in yourself. Ask around before you engage services – there are hundreds of talented professional resume writers in America, on-line and in-person. Find one that is credentialed, experienced, and *just right* for you!
4. Determine the best resume format for you to tell your story – is it *chronological, functional, or combination*? If you are staying in the same line of work, chronological or combination are good choices. If you are changing careers, retraining, or re-entering the workforce, the functional format is often a good choice. Research resume samples on-line and in resume books to get ideas of what's best for you and your goals. A competent resume consultant or career coach can also help you identify the most appropriate format.
5. Your resume is an exemplary body of work that projects a "*this is where I'm headed*" message versus a "*this is where I've been*" story. Sometimes, where you've been has absolutely nothing to do with where you hope to go if, for example, you are changing career direction.
6. When using a chronological format to write your resume, center your thinking on the three R's – (roles, responsibilities, and results) to



educate the reader about your professional experience. Beyond stating the employer's name, city, state, and dates of employment, focusing on the three R's will help you filter what's relevant from what's not.

7. Choose a font size that is legible and easy to read. Do not use a font size that is smaller than 9 point. In my resume work, I prefer to use a 10, 11, 12 point system (it's also easy to remember), as follows.

12	Key Section Headings
11	Employer Identification, City, State, Dates
10	Supporting Text

8. Select a typeface that is clear and easy to read. Arial, Bookman Old Style, Garamond, Georgia, Tahoma, Times New Roman, Trebuchet MS, and Verdana offer a clean, crisp look.
9. Create more than one version of your resume if you are targeting multiple, or unrelated opportunities.
10. If you are a *worker* looking for a new job, use a resume. If you're a *self-employed* professional or *business owner* engaged in marketing your products, goods, or services, use a brochure. Each document signifies something different to the reader; the resume *generally* implies a traditional "employer / employee" relationship, while the brochure *generally* conveys "I'm in business for myself."
11. Keep the length of your resume as brief as possible without comprising a good story for the sake of brevity. Today, few hiring managers have the time to read four or five pages of text per individual resume, no matter how great it is. A one to two page document is a reasonable rule of thumb. For a seasoned executive, a three to four page resume may be the best option.



12. If your name is a common name such as John Jones or Susan Smith, include your full middle name – John *William* Jones or Susan *Olivia* Smith. This small step could save you a hassle or two in the reference-checking process. Also, present your name in bold typeface, all capitals.

13. List one phone number on your resume where someone can contact you without playing phone tag, day after day. If you *absolutely must* list multiple telephone numbers, label them – (residence, cellular, business). Call yourself at the numbers listed to ensure that your voice mail is active, working properly, and able to receive incoming messages. *Make your recorded message professional, succinct, and clear.* Nothing cute or inappropriate. “*Hey what’s up; you know what to do*” is not appropriate. Also, do not have your precious six-year old make the message for you. They’re not looking for a new opportunity; *you* are!

14. Choose an e-mail address that is appropriate and unrelated to your work. For example, **iamso_cool19@aol.com** isn’t in your best interests when it comes to resume writing.

15. Avoid using letter or number combinations in your e-mail address that can easily be confused or mistaken. For example, the “**I**” in “**cool**” in the above-referenced e-mail address could easily be mistaken for a “**1**”. Where does that leave you if the employer sends communication to **iamso_coo119@aol.com**?

16. List your website address, if you have one. If you don’t have an e-mail address, get one.



17. List key section headings (**GOAL / QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY / EXPERIENCE / EDUCATION / AFFILIATIONS**) in capital letters, bold typeface.
18. Compile a list of relevant keywords aligned with your target goal and weave them into the body of your resume. Tap into keywords that reflect your knowledge, skill, or abilities that address the employer's needs.
19. Present *first* whatever it is you have *more of* to sell regarding your asset base...is it experience or is it education? That said, *if* you are in a profession where the expectation is that education comes first, obviously, do so. Research and find out; don't wonder.
20. Include dates of employment; dates can be presented in years only, or both month and year. Be consistent in how you express this information.
21. Take credit for what you know as it pertains to technology – hardware, software, and applications.
22. Use bullets or other symbols of your preference to produce a visually-pleasing document. Large chunks of text take more time to read and decipher. Help your reader gain, within a matter of seconds, a first-rate glimpse of you.
23. Insert your name on each page of your resume, along with the page number.
24. Create a resume that is an enticing, easy-to-browse piece of sales literature that compels the reader to take immediate action.



25. Avoid too much detail and trivia in resume content...that's what interviews are for.
26. Present the best-of-the-best of you in your resume. In addition to teaching the reader about your key functions and accountabilities, be certain to include the highlights of your greatest:
- accomplishments
 - achievements
 - contributions
 - outcomes
 - performance
 - results
 - successes
27. Quantify content in your resume by using numbers (including dollars) and percentages to create a powerful mental image in the reader's mind.
28. Choose *strong* words instead of *weak* words for your resume. For example, *partner* sounds stronger than *work closely* with – *charismatic* sounds better than *bubbly*.
29. Keep a Thesaurus handy, or use your computer's Thesaurus to identify a lively, interesting mix of words instead of the same boring, trite, repetitive words. "Developed, developed, developed" or "increased, increased, increased" soon finds a bored and yawning reader.
30. Be consistent with the usage of periods. If you're going to use periods at the end of each one-liner, do so throughout your resume.



31. Don't plagiarize...yup, that means don't copy your best friend's resume or some stranger's resume you've downloaded from the Internet. Dare to be original and express your very best unique self. You're *you*! Let that originality shine through in your resume!
32. Do not lie about anything on your resume. Somewhere, some way, somehow, someone will discover it!
33. Do not include information regarding salary or compensation.
34. Do not cross-out information and insert handwritten corrections.
35. Do not abbreviate words unless the abbreviation is widely accepted and understood. States can be abbreviated. Statistical process control (SPC) cannot.
36. If you have recently sold your business or lost your job to restructuring, downsizing, acquisition, or company closing, consider including such information on your resume. While there are arguments for and against doing so, contemplate this – if the hiring manager is looking at 25 top-notch candidates and everyone is employed, except for you, what *might* the employer deduce if they notice you haven't worked since May 2006? *Sometimes* it works to your advantage to teach the reader the reason you are "in transition." Not always. Sometimes.
37. Allow for plenty of white space on your resume – start with the *one-inch rule* for top/bottom and left/right page set-up. This allows for reduction or expansion, as needed. Leave ample space between key sections of information to achieve an open, attractive, and uncluttered look.



38. Less is more on a resume. If you can say something in five words instead of 10 or 12, do so.
39. Make your resume *good and effective*. Good, alone, is not enough in today's competitive market.
40. Sprinkle your resume with a plethora of different verbs and action words to begin short phrases and one-liners. Refrain from using tired, over-worked words....loyal, honest, and hard-working. (The last person who said that didn't show up, stole stuff, and was really lazy)!
41. If you can't decide what text to include or exclude, ask yourself this question -- is this piece of information absolutely relevant and essential to support my goal? If so, use it; if not; lose it.
42. Eliminate or minimize the usage of the word *responsible*. Upon completion of your first resume draft, take a marker and highlight this humdrum resume word, then replace it with a livelier one.
43. Delete the words "I, me, and my" from your resume.
44. Be prepared to *back-up* what you say in your resume through relevant examples and short stories in the interview.
45. Spice up your resume with a testimonial about your product – you! Your resume is your voice about yourself – adding a powerful testimonial from someone lends credibility to what you are saying about yourself in *their* words, not yours.
46. Check your resume for the **C factor**:
 - **c**lear, **c**oncise **c**ontent
 - **c**redible message



- consistent quality
- compelling story
- call-to-action by the reader

47. Proofread your resume for grammar, spelling, punctuation or other errors. Spell checking your resume won't catch *all* of the mistakes 100% of the time. For example, if you intended to say "manager" and you inadvertently typed "manger" (deleting the "a"), spell check would not catch this mistake. Whoops!

48. Does your resume read smoothly and does it *sound* like you? You may think this is a silly question, however, it is an important one to ask yourself *before* you send the resume to prospective employers. It doesn't take long for a hiring manager to figure out that what they're looking at on paper doesn't match what's in front of them.

49. Read your resume aloud, word-for-word. Go slowly. You may catch another mistake using this method.

50. If you think your resume is terrible, boring and awful, it probably is. Redo it until you are proud to claim it!

51. Does your resume reflect a vibrant, robust, healthy ROI when it comes to:

- R** results?
- O** outcomes?
- I** initiatives?

If not, consider integrating *continuous-improvement* strategies to your resume!



52. **Always** keep your resume current – just like your will! In today's volatile market, be prepared to hit the ground running 24/7. Don't be caught off guard!
53. Your resume is a constant work in progress. Change it daily, if need be, to best meet your target goals and the employer's particular needs.
54. Do not send a resume to *anyone* the same day you finish it. Wait! Undoubtedly, you will catch a mistake the next morning! Whew!
55. If you have one mistake on your resume, in *most* instances, you will not be considered a viable candidate. While there are exceptions, don't count on it.
56. Have three to five people review your resume prior to sending it to prospective employers. Preferably, the individuals you select will be decision-makers and hiring managers – people who deal in the people business on a routine basis. Listen carefully to their feedback, and make resume changes accordingly. While Grandma and Aunt Ruth think your resume rocks, run it by a few *other* people, too!
57. Share a copy of your current resume with your professional references to keep them apprised of you, your credentials, and your plans for the future. Help them *help you* get what you want!
58. Think like your reader thinks. If you were the hiring manager, would your resume get noticed (and picked) for the yes, no, or maybe pile?
59. Prepare, process, and store your resume on *your* personal computer, not your employer's. Save it in *multiple* storage places, i.e. disk, CD, flash drive.



60. **D-e-c-i-d-e** (**d**raft; **e**xperiment; **c**ompress; **i**mprove, **d**evelop and **e**dit) to write a WOW resume *today!*

61. Don't fret about your resume being perfect. Who knows what's perfect? What's important is this – does your resume *work* and is it *effective*? If so, congratulations – you are the happy owner of a WOW resume!

© Billie Sucher 2006 – All rights reserved

=====

The Career Hub blog connects professional and executive job seekers with the best minds in career counseling, resume writing, personal branding and recruiting.

Check out the blog, subscribe to the feed, or ask for our daily emailed updates. www.careerhub.typepad.com



Janice Worthington, known as America's coach of champions, has been advising industry leaders for three decades. A 14-year former executive recruiter, Janice began empowering candidates in 1987. Her insights have garnered offers for C-level candidates in the most competitive arenas. With Master and Bachelor degrees in Journalism and multiple certifications, her career column is currently featured in American City Business Journals; she has been quoted in the Washington Post, Kiplinger's and Business Week. Her presentations appear in numerous career anthologies. She serves as "Your Career Coach" on CareerBoard.com. Web Site: www.worthingtoncareers.com

Résumé Disasters : Why So Many Executives Are Rejected

By Janice Worthington

I am befuddled at what happens to bright and talented executives when it comes time to create their résumés. They appear to go into a hypnotic trance and lose all sense of business acumen. This top-tier group directs corporations, divisions, regions and operations. Whatever are they thinking when job search time comes?

The marketers puzzle me most. With high-dollar budgets and well-paid creative staffs they lead the way in promoting the features and benefits of medical nutritionals, commercial office space and industrial fasteners. The sales executives also leave me in a quandary. Especially today, these folks know how hard they must work to get the customer to spend his precious dollar. They know their customers; they have analyzed their needs and appeal to the fact that their customers will be more than a step ahead if they buy. So they sell, sell, sell to capture long term customer commitment with full knowledge that if their marketing tools are not top notch, God forbid, the customer will buy from someone else.



It is from this strong product marketing hall of fame that unforgettable tag lines such as “Things Go Better With Coke,” “You Asked For It You Got It, Toyota,” and “Fair & Balanced News” have emerged. So forgive me if I ask, what happens to strategic selling and competitive marketing genius when it’s time for these executives and professionals to market themselves?

Make no mistake; if hundreds of thousands of job offers totaling millions of dollars have been lost because of free falling on interviews, the number of missed opportunities due to weak, pointless résumés is unfathomable. Something mystical and unknowingly self-defeating happens when Thomas Huddington, Executive Vice President becomes Joe candidate. As he leaves his element and thus his comfort zone, his sense and sensibility also stay behind. Here’s what he does to his résumé that sabotages his odds of response.

Joe candidate seeks the “fill in the blanks” approach. This is accomplished by using the Windows template or purchasing software online or at the local computer retailer. And Joe does, by the millions. He simply uses a canned form and inserts his information. With no regard to highlighting features and benefits like the good old days at the industrial fastener marketing department, he just adopts a herd mentality and fills in the blanks. He would never wear his neighbors’ contact lenses or take their prescription medication. What is he thinking?

Joe candidate employs inflexible rules of engagement. After 3 decades in the careers industry, I have yet to trace the source of several archaic urban legends including the one-page-only rule. This is the biggest nemesis résumé practitioners face. Each candidate’s level and amount of experience differs. We know that demonstrating candidate features and benefits is paramount in giving an employer a reason to take action. My firm produces no one-page résumés at the executive or six-figure income-level because we know



employers will not be motivated to respond to so little information in a candidate who has accomplished and requires so much.

Today's résumés must be more than hors' oeuvres to entice an employer. Employers invite fewer candidates to interview and will not call folks in to get to know them. Only after the getting-to-know-you content is provided on the résumé will a candidate receive an invitation. How does one accomplish that one page? We do more fat-free two and three-page résumés than ever. The secret is to win the employer's attention with keywords within the first thirty seconds while providing the option to read a history of revenue generating, profit enhancing, cost cutting achievements.

Joe candidate is oblivious to visual and verbal impressions. His Armani suit and designer leather briefcase demonstrate his impeccable taste. His watch and even his pen reflect the image he wishes to project. But for some reason his attention to detail precludes his print résumé. Before the reading begins, what does the employer see when he looks at an executive résumé? Is it visually symmetrical and well put together or is the information displayed in a helter-skelter fashion? Does it draw the employer's eye or is it just another piece of white, gray or ivory paper?

Many résumés scream "amateur," lacking focus and not providing any clue as to what the candidate is seeking or has to offer. They bore the reader with a "does this/does that" presentation and expect to impress an employer as distinctive. CEOs run companies and CPAs do financial statements. A résumé without achievements is like a report card without grades.

Joe candidate doesn't target his audience. The marketing strategies of a Kia Rio priced at \$9,455 are far different from Corvette Z06 starting at \$52,235. They both have transmissions, tires and steering wheels but because the priorities of their prospective buyers differ so greatly the tone of their ads are nothing alike.



Major corporations spend millions on advertising agencies to assure the intensive delivery of their competitive messages. Job search candidates need to pay far more attention to the competitive nature of this challenge when preparing to deliver the qualifications they have worked so long and hard to achieve. It's nothing less than tragic when a star performer suffers a first round elimination due to a weak presentation.

© Janice Worthington 2006 – All rights reserved

=====

The Career Hub blog connects professional and executive job seekers with the best minds in career counseling, resume writing, personal branding and recruiting.

Check out the blog, subscribe to the feed, or ask for our daily emailed updates. www.careerhub.typepad.com



Heather Mundell is a certified professional coach and founder of [Dream Big Coaching Services](#), a national life and career coaching business specializing in helping professionals to find career happiness and providing interview and job search coaching. Heather blends her extensive individual coaching experience with a background in corporate HR leadership to help her clients reach their full potential. She has published numerous articles online at major career sites such as [Jobbankusa.com](#), [CareerBuilder.com](#) and [AOL.com](#). Email Heather at heather@dreambigcoaching.com

Why You Should Hire a Professional Resume Writer

By Heather Mundell

My name is Heather Mundell, and I am not a professional resume writer.

I am, however, convinced that a professional resume writer will do a much better job of writing your resume than you, or your friend Jack who used to be a copy editor, or pretty much anyone else. Here's why.

Your resume is a crucial marketing communications document, the effectiveness of which will either get you an interview or leave you waiting on the sidewalk. You need a powerful resume to get the job that you want.

Your resume is not a chronological list of all your past jobs and job duties. It is not an historical record of everything you've done since college. It needs to attract the audience you want and highlight what that audience wants to see. It needs to communicate your brand and your value to your audience in a clear and compelling way. It needs to create excitement about you and differentiate you from the other job candidates in the big pile within seconds.

Do you know what your audience wants to see and how to write for that? Chances are this is not your expertise.



Even if you are a professional writer or a professional interviewer, you are probably not the best choice to write your own resume. Writing your own resume can be like cutting your own hair, giving yourself advice, or, yes I know this is a bit extreme, setting your own leg after you've broken it. In other words, having an outside professional's perspective on the job can make all the difference in how well that job is performed.

For example, many of us suffer from "accomplishment amnesia". We completely forget all the great things we've done very soon after we do them. The negatives compel our focus much more. Also we tend to discount as "no big deal" accomplishments that are in fact noteworthy. A professional resume writer understands what you should be bragging about better than you do and has no hesitation about horn tooting.

Skilled, savvy, professional resume writers know what kind of information they need from you to write a top-notch resume. Coming up with this information takes considerable time and effort on your part. However, this investment of your time not only strengthens your resume but prepares you for the interview process as well.

During job interviews you need to articulate examples of the challenges you have overcome, the results you have achieved, and the quantifiable impacts you've made on the organizations you have worked for. Working with a professional resume writer is excellent preparation for honing the message you want to get across to interviewers.

Having a well-crafted resume is essential. Good resume writing is a specialized skill that takes training, experience, a particular knowledge of recruiting and marketing, and plain ole' talent to do well. I didn't build my house myself, I don't fly myself across the country, and I don't repair my car myself because I don't have those skills.



I'm a career coach and a former human resources director, and I hired a professional resume writer. It was an investment in myself and my career that has paid for itself many times over.

If you choose an experienced, talented, professionally trained, certified resume writer, you will be amazed at the results!

© Heather Mundell – All rights reserved

=====

The Career Hub blog connects professional and executive job seekers with the best minds in career counseling, resume writing, personal branding and recruiting.

Check out the blog, subscribe to the feed, or ask for our daily emailed updates. www.careerhub.typepad.com



Paul Copcutt is the successful personal brand coach for professionals who are struggling with an action plan and the confidence to land the six figure job they deserve. His clients become "Square Pegs" who stand out above the competition by getting noticed for the right reasons to be hired for the jobs they've always wanted. A Certified Personal Brand Strategist and specialist for Higher Bracket.ca, Canada's only \$100k+ job board, also top global Career & Training contributor to the Knowledge Forum at Marketing Profs.com and an active member of the Career Professionals of Canada.

Often quoted in The Globe & Mail he is an invited national speaker on the subject of personal branding and has appeared on Report on Business TV. Web site: www.personalbrandstrategist.com

How personal branding can be used to create more than a resume

by Paul Copcutt

"The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated"
Mark Twain

And the often reported impending end of the resume have also proven to be exaggerations. The resume as a career marketing document certainly has its place and while with the advent of more technology the death of the resume is being predicted it will likely be a long time before we see the resume disappearing or being replaced. However the traditional job search either active or passive is changing and with that the approach and the documents used need to change as well.

It has been often quoted and for many years that the vast majority of positions are being filled through referrals and networking, certainly in the current world of talent shortage employee referrals is a rapidly growing source of new hires for many companies – as high as 50% in some cases.

For the job seeker this form of finding their next job, referrals or networking, can be very alien and approaching this using methods last used a number of years ago may not be the best way to secure interest in skills and experience.



This is especially relevant if the employee or referrer has little or no understanding of the opportunities or how the job seeker might fit in.

The job seeker is grateful for the introduction and blindly hands over or sends their resume by email for passing on down the line and immediately loses much of the control of how they position themselves and are being perceived. They might not even have the name of the hiring manager or contact for handling their application and now have diminished their chances of having much influence in the process.

Anyone in mid-career with at least 10 years of professional experience is easily capable of supplying enough information to write a 3-6 page resume – not the accepted format – rather than a 1-2 page targeted resume. The trouble is that if a company is hiring for a number of positions and is accepting referrals, the job seeker based on their experience might be suitable for more than one role, but their generic resume is a potential barrier to their being considered.

That's where the use of personal branding can come in, being used to create different career marketing documents as the door openers, giving the job seeker time and hopefully greater knowledge to follow up with a targeted resume once specifics of a position or openings are known.

Some of the key elements of personal branding are to understand yourself from both an internal and external perspective. Being able to identify and communicate key strengths and differentiating attributes can really be used to the job seekers advantage in creating powerful career documents that make people take notice, but do not give away all the information in one go.

The Brand Skills Sheet

In personal branding work and through the use of specific personal branding assessments you are able to identify what your peers and colleagues,



managers and even friends and clients perceive as your key brand skills. Then you can take the time to create your brand stories around how you have used those brand skills in specific job situations with measurable results. This becomes a sort of brag sheet that gives the reader a real flavor for who you are, what you might bring to their company and how you have been successful in the past. The best predictor of future success is past accomplishments.

The Branded Bio

Now using the feedback about differentiating attributes and strengths and merging that with a high level view of your work experience you can craft a one page branded biography that again gives the reader a good sense of who you are, where you have been and what you have done without the pre-conceptions of how long you were at company XYZ or why you took a drop in job title after leaving company ABC etc.

Brand Testimonials

An added bonus to the equation is that with the personal branding assessment feedback come comments from the people who you have chosen to respond. The assessment itself is anonymous to allow for honest and objective feedback, but the comments are still un-attributable testimonials and the positive ones can be used to inject in to the Brand Skills Sheet to highlight specific experiences of the skill in action and a third party's reaction.

The Skills Sheet and Bio can prove to be very useful documents that allow the job seeker to still be proactive and responsive to a request for more information but still give them control over information specifics that can be saved for the tailored and targeted resume at the next stage of the conversation or process.

The content created in the skills and bio sheets can also be used as copy or structure for on line profiles on networking sites, even in the resume posting



sections of job boards and certainly in any other type of web presence such as portfolios or blogs.

These two documents should be the two that any job seeker reaches for in a networking or referral situation, or indeed anywhere that a specific role is not evident or has been posted or advertised. The resume certainly has its place, is just a little further down the application process.

© Paul Copcutt 2006 – All rights reserved

=====

The Career Hub blog connects professional and executive job seekers with the best minds in career counseling, resume writing, personal branding and recruiting.

Check out the blog, subscribe to the feed, or ask for our daily emailed updates. www.careerhub.typepad.com