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How to Craft a **Standout** Marketing Résumé



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The Evolution of the Résumé

Changing times call for changing résumés

By Zach Brooke

“Mona Lisa.” “The Last Supper.” “Vitruvian Man.” The résumé. One of these things is not like the other. Yet all can be attributed to Leonardo da Vinci.

Even someone of Leonardo’s caliber needed a written collection of his background when, in 1482, he dashed off a summary of his skills to the Duke of Milan in hopes of securing an armament position. Eighteen years later a traveling English lord carried a handwritten letter of introduction, which he presented to acquaintances and called a résumé.

Written summations of work experience have persisted and evolved ever since, but you don’t have to go back to Leonardo’s time to unearth dramatic changes to curriculum vitae arrangement and presentation. It was a whole different ballgame as recently as 20 years ago.

“There’s been an obvious sea change since the mid-‘90s. Given that online résumé submission is now the norm, gone are the days of obsessing about the proper bond weight for the paper that a résumé should be printed on,” says career coach Chandlee Bryan.

With the changes in the physical medium of résumé submission, there has been an increased emphasis on visuals to help stand out among the deluge of applications each open position now receives after it’s posted online.

“There is certainly a heightened expectation that résumés should be visually captivating—especially when applying for creative positions in marketing,” Bryan says. “However, a visually captivating résumé used as a formal application for a position is only effective if it is decipherable by the software with which it is reviewed.”

Complicating the trend to create a more eye-catching résumé is the need to format a résumé in a way that can be read by modern résumé processing software that now serves as the initial screening process at many organizations. According to Bryan, who has worked with applicant tracking systems (ATS), these programs scan résumés for preset keywords, which can be missed if arranged in novel ways with unusual fonts.

“Through my training, I learned that there are only four fonts which can be read by all ATS systems: Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri and Helvetica,” says Bryan. “The ATS systems also cannot always read columns, tables or callouts. Therefore, I recommend that résumés intended for any online applications be formatted simply with a strong summary header at the beginning of the document.”

Once your résumé makes it to human filters, it’s become useful to be generous with hyperlinks to supplemental material, such as online work portfolios.

“Given that resumes are frequently seen online, links to a personal website, social media or published articles are also useful. If your employers are not household names, you could also link your employer names to the company website in case the reader wants more information,” says Caroline Ceniza-Levine, career expert at SixFigureStart.com.

“One of the most common issues I see on résumés is people listing their responsibilities, rather than their achievements, as supporting bullets under their employment history. Or, when they do share achievements, they often lack the specificity to make them impactful,” says Eden Abrahams, managing partner at Clear Path Executive Coaching. “Laszlo Bock, who leads people operations at Google, recommends a great formula for writing about accomplishments on résumés: Accomplished [X] as measured by [Y] by doing [Z].”

Abrahams offers the following comparison:

- Developed and oversaw implementation of several new online products to reinvigorate core brands.
- vs.
- Developed and oversaw implementation of several new online products to reinvigorate core brands after conducting a comprehensive global customer needs assessment, resulting in double-digit profit margin growth for five consecutive years.

Even though résumés have changed dramatically in recent years, there is one persistent misconception that remains, according to Abrahams: length.

“There continues to be an idea in many people’s heads, including people with a significant amount of experience, that they need to shoehorn everything onto a one-page résumé. That is not true,” Abrahams says. “When you factor in contact information, a summary, job history highlights, community or nonprofit involvement, publications or speaking engagements and other relevant information, it’s virtually impossible to get all of that onto a single page and still have any white space left (don’t omit that!). Today, two pages seems to be the default length, and three is not an uncommon length for senior executives.”

On top of that enduring fallacy, there is another unaltered truism of résumé writing according to career expert Beryl Greenberg. And that’s that it is foolish to assume there is an ironclad, one-size-fits-all approach to modern résumé writing.



The 4 Most Common Résumé Questions Answered

Advice from professional résumé writer Debra Wheatman

By Debra Wheatman

Q: What is the right page length for a résumé?

A: The answer to this question varies based on a candidate's job history. Your résumé length will be driven by the amount of relevant content, written as concisely as possible. We can generalize and say that most recent graduates with some work history will have a one-page résumé. An experienced candidate who has completed numerous projects and can boast a number of achievements will likely have a two-page résumé. Many scientists and academics will have multiple pages of data due to extensive patents, publications, presentations and posters. These people will have résumés that span many, many pages.

Q: Should I use bullets or a narrative format?

A: There are résumé formats that are proven to foster a comfortable and quick read. Often long paragraphs or long lists of bullets cause a reader to lose interest. It is better to start with a paragraph sharing the major responsibilities for each job, including staff count and amount of budget. The opening paragraph should be five to six lines. Follow that narrative

with a series of bullets. Up to seven bullets is ideal, so you keep the reader's attention. Bullets are reserved for the top accomplishments and should include measured results.

Q: Do I need to include all of my history?

A: No, it is not necessary, and in many cases, not a good idea to show your entire history. The current guideline is to show only 10 to 12 years of relevant history. Your recent history is of the most interest to the reader. Also, degrees and certifications that do not support or relate to your current goal should be omitted. Furthermore, when showing your recent history, present more detail about the current and most recent role and share fewer details as you go further back into your history.

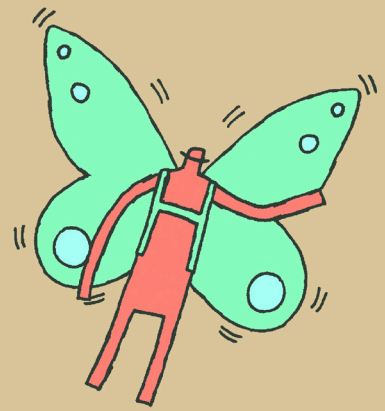
Q: Do I use numerals or spell out numbers?

A: You should write the number instead of spelling the word. Résumés are written to facilitate a quick read. Often a candidate will want the numbers to stand out on the page. Using the number instead of writing the word out will help draw the reader's attention to the actual number.

Five Steps to a Brand New Résumé

Candidates often seek ways to stand out from the competition. The best way to stand out is to show the unique value that you offer, in other words, your brand.

By Debra Wheatman



A brand-focused résumé will showcase your value relevant to the job opportunity and differentiate you from the others who may have similar skills and experience. Follow these five steps to create a brand-relevant résumé.

1

Begin with a poignant headline.

A headline on a résumé is akin to a blog or newspaper headline. It is a brief five- to seven-word statement that encapsulates your brand. A great headline example is, “International Patent Attorney with Expertise in Pharmaceuticals.” A headline should be free of fluff. In other words, omit phrases such as, “Results-oriented,” “self-motivated,” or “highly-talented.” Save the valuable headline space for keywords that define your brand.

2

Craft a personal profile.

The profile is also called a summary. This is a four- to six-line opening paragraph that puts your entire résumé into context. The “no-fluff” rule applies to the profile area too. Select your top skills and accomplishments to demonstrate your ability to excel in the target job. Consider adding an example in the profile to immediately engage your reader.

3

Curate your areas of expertise.

These are your top eight or ten job proficiencies. Skip soft skills such as “communication skills” and “leadership,” and list the major job functions in

4

Don’t forget community leadership.

Showing your recent history of community leadership serves two functions. First, it proves your abilities in areas such as team leadership, budget control, fundraising, public relations and more. If your brand lacks leadership expertise in your paid professional experience, volunteer roles can fill that skill gap. Second, the organizations that you support tell a story of your personal passions and your dedication to charities, youth organizations or civic associations.

5

Make your appearance a reflection of yourself.

Beyond content, the appearance of your résumé says a lot about you. If you want a traditional image, select a font such as Garamond, Book Antiqua or Cambria and keep to a black-and-white format. If you want to project a creative image, use a bit of color in the heading, border or category breaks. Fonts that project a modern, sophisticated look include Verdana, Calibri and Trebuchet. Just as your clothes project your image, your résumé appearance communicates your personal brand.

15 Ways to Describe Yourself on Your Résumé

The right language can set you apart from the competition and catch the eye of your next employer

Adapted from: “15 Ways to Describe Yourself in a Job Interview” by Ken Sundheim

When describing ourselves, we should approach our answers in an honest, candid manner, and even though some answers are laid out below, always ensure that you phrase these in your own words. Here are 15 ways to describe yourself on your résumé:

1 Revenue Generator

“I am confident in my abilities to produce, and while I prepare for the worst, I do the work necessary to tilt the odds so that the best will happen.”

2 Top Performer

“I want to be judged by individual performance, and I want to be rewarded for my efforts.”

3 Has a Vision for Success

“I seek to work for a successful company that has strong leadership and vision and that recognizes and rewards performers.”

4 Always Growing and Developing

“I am someone who is consistently growing themselves and who takes the time to continue learning even though it's not a direct requirement of the job.”

5 Goal-oriented

“I am modest, but hard-working, and I consistently set firm goals for myself. Once I've defined the benchmarks, I take the necessary steps to achieve those milestones.”

6 Customer-focused

“I am someone who has a consultative selling style and who is concerned with the clients' needs, consistently asking questions to uncover what the client truly wants and meeting those requirements.”

7 Positive Self-Starter

“I am someone who thinks positively and who can execute on difficult tasks. I'm not an individual who needs to be micromanaged. Rather, when given a specific task, I can figure out the best ways to solve the problem in an autonomous manner.”

8 Leader

“I am a person who is able to control a situation rather than have a situation control me.”

9 Self-determined

“I am someone who has an unwavering resolve. I am determined to do well in my job and have a successful career as well as make the company I work for more competitive.”

10 Results-oriented and Pragmatic

“I have a need to produce results. I am the type of person to meet challenges head-on rather than sweep them under the rug and hope they go away. While I'm an optimistic person, I am also realistic about the current situation and how satisfactory or unsatisfactory it is.”

11 Driven to Excellence

“I am someone who has been able to not only meet my employer's expectations, but I would describe myself as a person who has consistently exceeded those markers.”

12 Accountable

“I take responsibility for my actions, and when things go wrong, I don't look to outside forces to blame, rather I'm someone who looks at where I can improve the next time.”

13 Resolute and Decisive

“I am someone who demonstrates an unwavering resolve to do whatever must be done to produce the best long-term results, no matter how difficult.”

14 Community-minded Team Player

“I am committed to building something larger and putting aside personal gain for the well-being of the group.”

15 Strong Personal Values

“I am someone who is mature, candid and who has integrity. Every day I work to improve myself and my skills.”

To do the best job describing yourself, you should know what kind of personality you have. Take the [AMA Personality Test](#) to find out.



Résumé Trends Worth Following

Most people think of fonts, graphic lines and other style elements when it comes to résumé trends. However, the significant trends in résumé writing are about the writing, itself.

By Debra Wheatman

Be ATS-ready.

Modern, contextualized résumé-scanning applications are used to examine keywords in the context of the entire document. Applicant tracking software (ATS) applications identify key information, including keywords within position titles, accomplishments, functions and education. The applications are able to parse words associated with the primary keywords and decipher their validity and relevance.

Weave keywords into the context of your résumé so that the words are noticed. Find potential keywords for each position by examining the requirements on the job posting. Additionally, there are some things to avoid so that the ATS application doesn't eliminate you. For example, skip the logo graphics because, in some cases, these graphics can cause your résumé to be booted by the ATS system. Another mistake to avoid is placing your name and contact information in the footer because footers and headers are invisible to many ATS systems.

Have multiple résumés.

One résumé was sufficient in the past, especially when candidates tended to stay on one career path. In today's world, a résumé is not just a history of your jobs and education. It's a marketing tool designed to present you for a particular role. Therefore, successful careerists create a master résumé and then customize it for each job opportunity.

Include a great headline.

It's common for a candidate to have a summary statement at the top of his résumé or CV. Many marketing professionals take it one step further and create a headline. The headline is placed just above the summary or profile section, and it expresses your personal brand in five to seven words. Of course, this short phrase should be particular to your target job so that you can showcase the value that you offer the target employer.

List accomplishments.

If you aren't presenting accomplishments with measured results in your résumé, you're spinning your wheels. The results that you delivered in your recent, relevant career history are the best indicator of your potential success in a future position. If you focus only on job functions (what you did), the interview invitation will go to the candidate who listed his/her achievements (what he/she accomplished). Take the time to show how you increased profit, enhanced customer loyalty or improved operations.

Unimaginative résumés merely listing a series of job descriptions are dinosaurs. Take some time to create a captivating résumé, and you'll soon see a rise in your interview request rate.

3 Things to Delete From Your Résumé

Remove these three elements to make your résumé ready for the modern job search

By Sima Dahl



Few people enjoy writing their own résumé, and rightly so. It's hard to take stock of your accomplishments, achievements and credentials; present them in a cohesive, quantifiable and persuasive manner; and subtly toot your own horn along the way.

To make the job a little easier, here are three things you can delete from your résumé today:

1. Objective Statement

Objective statements don't convey anything meaningful. Hiring managers and recruiters know you're looking for an opportunity to "contribute your marketing acumen to help grow the bottom line, blah blah blah." It goes without saying. Instead include a summary statement, or use your cover letter to spin your sales story—why you're perfect for the job at hand.

One notable exception is when you're trying to affect a significant career transition. In that case, an objective statement can help clue the reader in to how you see your skills transferring from one line of business or industry to another.

2. References Available Upon Request

This also goes without saying. Prep your references prior to starting a job search and have their contact information and other pertinent details typed up and ready to deliver in a moment's notice.

3. Redundant Phrases

If you performed similar tasks at multiple jobs, they should not be repeated over and over under each job you've held. If nothing else, it makes for a boring read. Instead, pull those talents up to the top of your résumé under a headline called Key Skills, Professional Profile, or perhaps simply Expertise.

Now that you've streamlined, what do you do with all that white space? Consider adding any of these sections:

- Technical / Special Skills
- Honors / Awards
- Professional Associations
- Relevant Community Service
- Publications
- Presentations
- Licenses / Accreditations
- Military History

As more hiring managers use applicant tracking systems to screen and manage résumés, it is more important than ever to ensure your cover letter and résumé include the keywords reflected in the job description. This means that you're likely going to make slight edits to nearly every résumé you send. Be sure to use an intuitive naming convention so you can remember which résumé you sent for which job.

Not sure if your résumé is up to snuff? Ask a trusted advisor, recruiter or certified résumé coach to critique it for you. Be forewarned: you'll likely get a different opinion for every person you ask. However, there is one thing we all agree on however: no typos, ever.

An illustration of a man in a suit and glasses falling backwards down a set of stairs. The stairs are white with black treads and lead upwards from the bottom right towards the top left. The man is in mid-air, with his arms outstretched and a briefcase on the ground below him. The background is a textured, reddish-brown color.

Three Tips on Keeping Your Résumé Up to Date

Ensure your résumé is ready whether you've been thinking of changing jobs for a while or responding to unexpected circumstances

By Debra Wheatman

1. Track your accomplishments.

It can be challenging to remember achievements from a few years ago. You probably know what you did in general terms, but the measured results may be tough to recall. Keep a folder where you can store e-mails, reports and performance evaluations that document your achievements and the statistics. It only takes a few seconds to tuck this data into a safe place for review at a later date. When it is time to update your résumé, you will be glad you saved those documents.

2. Keep your LinkedIn profile current.

Your LinkedIn profile is much easier to update and maintain than your résumé. You don't have to be concerned about the appearance or spacing. You can quickly drop in a few lines about a recent project or new certification. Also, you are probably on your LinkedIn profile page at least once every week or two. Each time you are on LinkedIn, it is a reminder to add important new accomplishments.

3. Refresh your résumé twice annually.

Waiting one or two—or more—years to update your résumé can be a large endeavor. The thought of such an effort can cause you to delay until you absolutely need a résumé. Rather than wait that long, update your résumé at least twice annually. Follow this checklist when performing your refresh:

- Have your career goals changed?
- Do you have a new position, new employer, new award or new degree to add?
- What are your top accomplishments since your last update? Can you add a measured result for the accomplishment?
- Is your résumé style and format current?

You will have a better chance of career success if you are prepared for all scenarios, including layoffs. Be prepared by having your résumé plan, which will ensure that you have your critical information in place and an updated résumé ready to use.

Finding the ‘Backdoor’ to Get Your Résumé in Front of Hiring Managers

With a little time and detective work, you can give yourself an advantage over nearly the entire applicant pool. Here’s how.

By Kurt Kirton

Applying for work online has vastly improved the ease with which you can apply for jobs, while at the same time making it harder to distinguish yourself when every person with an internet connection has the same access to job postings that you do. There is a way to get a leg up on other applicants, however, if you’re willing to hunt for it.

Use LinkedIn to find the hiring manager for the position, and e-mail a brief note with your résumé and cover letter attached.

Sometimes this is a great bypass of the HR screening process. Sometimes it’s a good double hit, showing initiative, interest and thoroughness if, for instance, it’s a small company or division with no in-house HR department.

As you peruse LinkedIn, if you see you have a close colleague who works at the company, you can use them as a backdoor entrance. If you don’t know anyone, look to see if the person you choose has worked anywhere you have before. That makes a great introduction in the beginning of your e-mail. If you can’t find anyone who might be at a hiring manager level, send it to someone in the same department as the job opening.

Naturally, most people want to help. But you should make it easy for them to do so. Think about when someone who’s in transition asks for your help. Be polite but specific with your request. For example, I asked a former coworker to 1) put in a good word for me at his current company and 2) forward my résumé and cover letter after I applied online. This is the standard backdoor message I work from:

Dear _____,

After having seen the posting for the _____ position you are seeking to fill, I just applied via _____ (method). In addition, I wanted to make sure my résumé and cover letter are seen by someone in the _____ department. If you are not the hiring manager for this position, I would appreciate it if you would forward this e-mail to that person. Thank you very much for your time and help.

Sincerely,

Then, make the e-mail subject line something like, “Hi, (recipient’s name), could you help?” Most people like to help—especially when it doesn’t take too much time or is not that difficult. Including the recipient’s first name will help avoid any suspicions your e-mail is spam.

When you can’t find anyone to e-mail, there’s no general e-mail address listed on the website and you don’t want to call, here’s another idea:

If the company has a contact page with fields to fill in, do this: With most browsers, right-click, and choose “View Page Source” to reveal the html code. Then, press Ctrl + F to search for “@.” This may show you the general e-mail address. (<https://www.thegeneral.com/about/contact/> is a good example where this technique works). Then you can e-mail your backdoor message with attachments.

Sometimes, as with Craigslist job postings, you won’t know the company at all. In this case, don’t fret about not being able to use the backdoor method. Just use your spreadsheet to keep up with the e-mail address you applied to, and e-mail your follow-up to the same address.

If you’re concerned about the legality of these methods, know this: After checking with several HR professionals, I found that most companies do have a reporting stipulation that requires them to have accurate demographics of those who apply for positions, and HR usually expects applicants to come through them.

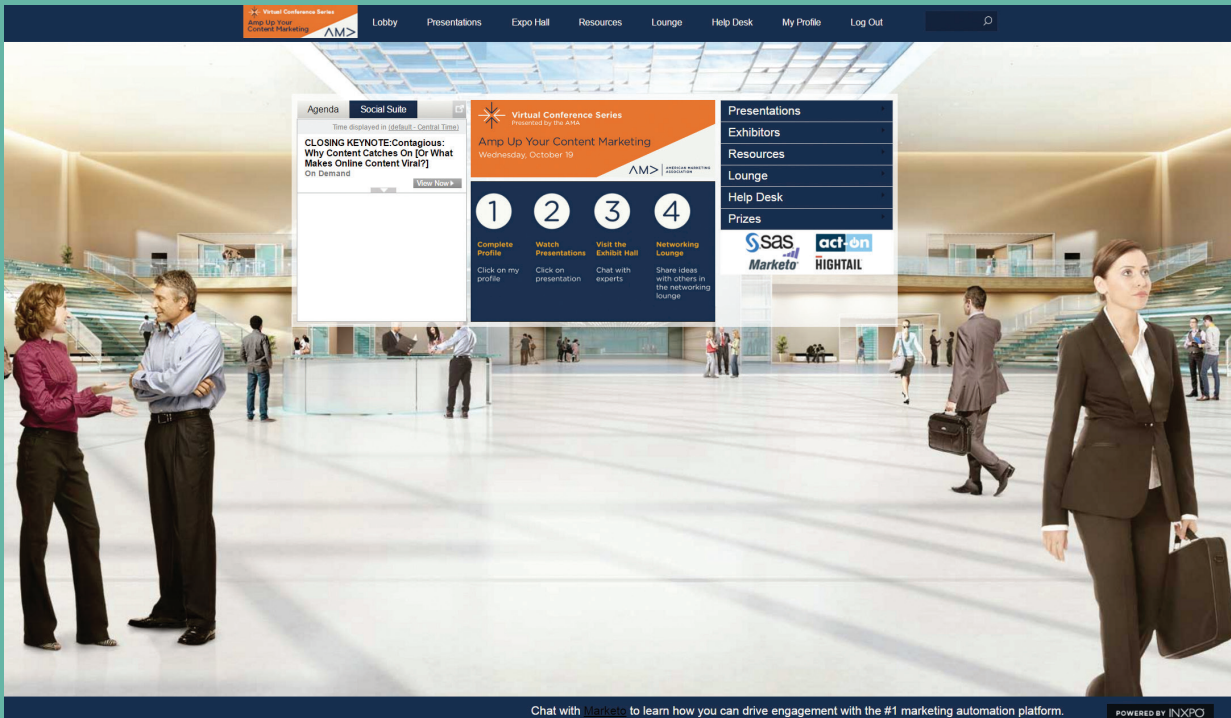
Although some companies have more stringent policies regarding what should happen when a manager or employee receives your résumé, you should absolutely use a backdoor method after you apply the traditional way. As long as you are also applying through the “front door,” there shouldn’t be any cause for concern about fairness or regulations.

If you are fortunate enough to get your résumé in front of the hiring manager for a position you want, it could only be to your benefit. If the hiring manager is impressed and wants to hire you, HR is unlikely to hinder the process.



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