**Strategies for Today’s Job Seekers - Resume Do(s)**

**LENGTH:**

* **Keep resumes fewer than 3 pages (ideally 2!)**. (Exceptions may be Scientists, Physicists, Doctors, Engineers/Programmers, and Lawyers due to scholarly works, programming languages, Patents, etc.)
* **Resumes typically go back 10-15 years** depending upon the length in each job (e.g., last job was 6 yrs.; prior job was 9 yrs.).Bear in mind that **if earlier career experience is relevant to your “target job**,” it **can be included** in a new section called **“OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE,”** but without dates!
* **Typically, 2 pages are acceptable** and suitable for those in the workforce 10+ years.
* Most individuals reviewing resumes spend approx. **6 seconds reviewing** a resume, although there are exceptions.

**ELEMENTS:**

* **“Branding Statement”:** Consider creating a short (**2-7 word max**, ideally) headline that captures/”frames” who you are professionally and has “punch!”:

(Reuven’s) “**More Than Just a Numbers Guy™” • “I make factories run better” • “An HR Managers Right Hand”**

* **Headline & Sub-Head:** Consider using to “frame” who you are professionally, but *only* if you are staying within the same profession and using the same skills as your most recent jobs**.**

**SENIOR MARKETING MANAGEMENT STTRATEGIST**

Strategic & Tactical Marketing • Market Development • Marketing Communications • PR • eMarketing/Analytics

**RESULTS-DRIVEN, COLLABORATIVE QUALITY ASSURANCE LEADER**

**MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS & PRODUCT ENGINEERING PROFESSIONAL**

**INNOVATIVE HORTICULTURE AND LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL**

**RESULTS-ORIENTED, CUSTOMER-FOCUSED OPERATIONS TEAM LEADER**

Resource Optimization ~ Superior Customer Service ~ Positive Business Outcomes

**SENIOR SALES MANAGEMENT & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE**

Cross-Industry Sales • Strategic Planning • Organizational and Team Development

• Business and Market Expansion • C-Level Relationship Management

* Consider using a **Summary of Experience** (aka, Career Summary or Summary) in lieu of (or in addition to) a “Career Objective.” Why? A career objective is typically “me” focused, while a summary of experience is “them” focused. Employers want to know what you can do for THEM. Career objectives are GENERALLY considered passé and tend to change each time you apply for a new job. You therefore run the risk of coming across indecisive, chameleon-like, insincere or desperate.

(**Note:** If your Objective states what you can contribute to the employer in addition to what you are seeking, that can be fine and may lend clarity and focus to your resume). A **Summary should be short, succinct, and compelling (It is also used to craft an “Elevator Pitch,” which is more benefit based):** (Example follows)

* **If relevant and desired, summarize (weave into your summary or bullet points) the number of years of experience** and industries you have worked served in on the top third of your **resume. (Break up years over 15, 20 or 25 depending upon job requirements to avoid coming across as old, too high-salaried, etc.)** You may also wish to eliminate mentioning your number of years of experience **ENTIRELY**.
	+ **Use numbers** which stand out more **rather than words**, even for the numbers, 1-9.
	+ **Hiring managers are comparing you against a “checklist”** or “wish list.” They want to know as quickly possible if you have experience in the industries that they are recruiting for and if you have the right mix of core competencies (skills, knowledge and experience). (If you don’t have the ***industry***experience they seek, and your resume is otherwise strong and matches up closely with their ideals), you may STILL end up in the “A” pile.”)
		- Dynamic, passionate, deadline-driven operations and administrative team leader with proven ability to successfully manage multiple projects. Self-starter with track record of sizing-up, prioritizing, organizing and executing on short- and long-term objectives to drive business and achieve customer enthusiasm evidenced by repeat and new business.



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* Format a **“Breadth of Experience,” “Core Strengths,”** or **“Core Competencies”** section as bulletized key words.
* Consider adding a **“Highlighted Achievements”** section. This tends to be more succinct/mirrors an executive summary style of communication also known as a “reverse funnel.” **Bulletize your key strengths in a bulleted list or bulleted columns.** \* .



* Consider a **“Selected Achievements or “Highlighted Accomplishments** section. Use 3-5 key achievements. These can be work done at professional or volunteer organizations if the demonstrated skills or results are related to your target position. The best ones show quantitative or qualitative results (e.g., % increase or $ sold or saved), and suggest benefits/advantages that RESONATE TO MOST READERS. **This is recommended when changing careers or re-entering job market. (See samples on ECC “Top Third of Resume” Tool)**

**NOTE: For any responsibility, regardless of what section you place it in, develop a qualitative or quantitative, achievement-based bullet. Use the “CAR” method by developing a CHALLENGE, ACTION, and RESULT story, but on your resume, you ONLY state the ACTION and RESULT. Doing so answers the question: Why was what I did important and/or how did I achieve this?**

**CRITICAL POINTS:**

1. A resume should be your answer to the laws of **SUPPLY & DEMAND**. Can you SUPPLY what today’s market is DEMANDING, and does your resume prove it?
2. The BEST resumes (and cover letters) address business **PAIN & GAIN**. Each bullet should show how you SOLVED a business problem (addressed a PAIN) or provided a benefit/advantage, or competitive edge (GAIN). Streamlining a process (reducing “man hours” or eliminating unnecessary steps are GAINS. Organizing a stockroom can result in less time looking for something, improved sales, etc.)

**Selected achievements**

* + Consistently met strict daily contractual content deadlines and circumvented penalties for 20-year period.
	+ Led teams with acute focus on delivering high quality deliverables and superior customer service. Drove $2 - 4 million annually in business.
	+ Coached, motivated, mentored, developed and cross-trained employees resulting in highly-stable workforce: achieved a minimum employee turnover rate of < 5% over 8 years.
	+ Continually monitored and proactively kept pace with industry demands and requirements by remaining technology-forward and evolving methods of producing and distributing electronic content.

**FORMAT**

* **Put your best “stuff” on the top third of your resume.** That’s prime real estate for your most compelling attributes, experience, skills and achievements. (AKA, “front loading”)
* **Research your industry’s or job function’s keywords:** This means that relevant buzz words/terms that employers are seeking (willing to pay for) relative to your skills, industry, credentials, etc. should be positioned in this section. They can also be stated elsewhere if you feel there is a need to elaborate, but at a minimum, should be mentioned at the top. (e.g.**, www,wordle.net, www.ToCloud.com OR www.tagcrowd.com**)
* **Put your name and at least one form of contact information (contact phone number and email address) on every page of your resume and other job seeker documents** (Such as your reference list, bio, a compiled document containing LinkedIn recommendation, etc.)
* **You can add this info in small, gray type at the very bottom or your resume, so that it does not visually compete with the black text on your documents (Use Symbol bullets: INSERT SYMBOL (pick a bullet):**

**Marissa E. Marsala** •  **858-xxx-xxxx** • **email@gmail.com (Pg. 2 of 2)**

* **Use white or subtle, colored paper** (light gray, light blue, ivory, and of course, white).
* **Paper Quality:** Be sure to **AT LEAST use 24 lb. or 32 lb. paper** or heavier paper that communicates “quality.”
* **In general, avoid functional resumes.** Most hiring authorities like traditional formats, are accustomed to where to look for information. Using a functional resume typically camouflages flaws or voids, and hiring authorities know this and are suspect. These types of resumes often raise more questions than they answer.



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**CONTENT & OPTIMIZING YOUR RESUME:**

* **Keywords ARE key:**
* First and foremost, **use prospective employer’s keywords found in posting**!!! Do not paraphrase unless you have listed their terminology at least once. (You may need more than 1 resume if you have 2 or more target roles you are pursuing. Still, you should ONLY have 1 LinkedIn account, so you will need to find a way to attract employers to your page and keep them engaged.)
* **Use word cloud technology**, but also leverage these ways to KEY-IN on KEY WORDS:
* Consult **Google Adwords**.
* **Target 5 or more LinkedIn profiles** of those who have the job you want, and see what keywords they have used.
	+ Go on [www.Indeed.com](http://www.Indeed.com) or other job site and type your target job and location in the 2 blank fields. Then, copy and paste the job descriptions of **5 JOB POSTINGS** and follow the instructions above to do a word cloud analysis.
	+ Go on [www.Indeed.com](http://www.Indeed.com) and instead, click on “FIND RESUMES.” Type the title and location of your target job and location in the blank fields. Then copy and paste **5 RESUMES** into a word cloud to evaluate what your fellow job seekers are using in their resumes. Then “borrow” some keywords/terms if you possess those credentials.
* **Verbs:**
	+ **Usage: Pick the ones that are precise and the most powerful.** (See ECC **“Verbs Matter”** List or go to ASK.com and click on jobs/careers section.)
	+ **Verb Tense:** Use the active tense (e.g., “write” or “conduct”) for current tasks and the past tense (e.g., “wrote” or “conducted”) for former tasks or one-time or completed achievements.
	+ **Verb Selection:** Pick verbs that CLEARLY, ACCURATELEY, and COMPLETELY describe your skills and add power. (e.g., Executive verbs such as transformed, re-engineered, re-invigorated, overhauled, etc.)
	+ **Use multiple verbs** in the same bullet to add dimension to each ask and paint a picture of who you are professionally. **(Refer to ECC “Verbs Matter” List)**
* **Be consistent:** 2001-2004 vs. 2001 − 2004, California vs. CA, font sizes, font types, treatment (bold, italics, upper case, bullet types) spacing, etc.
	+ **Use parallel bullets:** Start with a verb (or preface with an adverb). Use active tense and past tense for previous or one-time tasks (typically, “ed” tense). Avoid gerunds “ing” tense when beginning bullets.
* **Spell check and proofread your resume and all submission, including emails!**
* You are making an impression, even in your email. Take the time to spell check and also check content and context. Strategies include:
	+ **Proofread backwards *aloud*** in addition to doing a **spell check** and **read aloud normally (forward),** enunciating each syllable.
	+ If possible, **have others check your communications**, especially when you are applying for jobs for which writing abilities are critical.
	+ **Set documents aside and review after doing something else** **or wait a day to do so**, if possible.

**OTHER TRICKY RESUME ISSUES: HOW TO HANDLE GAPS IN SERVICE:**

If you are **returning to the workforce**, more and more, job seekers are including the period of unemployment in chronological order as if it was a job. In some cases it is! Examples:

* Planned sabbatical to travel internationally: 10/2015 – 9/2016
* Family Leave to care for a relative: 6/2014 – 8/2016
* Family sabbatical: Handling parent’s estate: 5/2014 – 6/2016

If you have **taken time off to attend school and have recently gotten a new degree or certification**: List that at the top of your resume (“front and center”) to demonstrate your commitment to your target role. (If you attended school but ALSO worked concurrently, state this on your resume, as this will be viewed as a plus!)

**PROMOTION/MARKETING YOURSELF**

* **Mail resumes for those jobs you are most excited by, *in addition to* applying in the prescribed manner.**
* **For companies with lobby hours, drop off your resume; dress professionally to make the best impression.**



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**Strategies for Today’s Job Seekers - Don’t(s)**

* **In general, do not try to be all things to all people on your resume.**
	+ There is a temptation to “settle” and apply for any jobs for which you might reasonably apply your skills.
	+ Instead, be true to your passions and be as selective as possible while still remaining flexible.
	+ This may seem like a contradiction, but consider this: You will be better able to sell yourself, your skills and your abilities and will come across far more passionately if you are excited about a job.

**CONTENT:**

* If you are using more than 1 resume, **keep a log of which versions were sent to whom**. Avoid more than 3 versions of resume. Try to limit to 1 or 2 versions, if possible and customize the closest version to match the posting.
* **Avoid using “Responsible for” and instead, begin each bullet with a verb (or adverbs followed by a verb)**

 **(e.g., “Proactively implemented”) Note: Rather than state, “Successfully implemented” why not just state specifically HOW you implemented it and PROVE that it was successful? Proof points are ACHIEVEMENT BASED AND ARE FAR MORE POWERFUL THAN “FLUFFY” ADVERBS like “Successfully” or “Effectively.”**

* **Avoid using weak or unclear verbs subject to interpretation** such as “handled” and “prepared**”** (unless, for example, you are an accountant/tax preparer or food preparer).
* **(Especially for experienced individuals), as a general rule, do NOT include dates from college or universities** (some recent grads or those who are changing careers and have recently gotten a degree or new credential include these dates which may help them).
	+ Some career coaches ***also*** recommend removing all dates associated with job tenure, ***but I do not subscribe to this***, as I have been on both sides of the desk.
	+ Omitting this information does not come across as forthcoming, and the absence of this information may raise suspicion and questions causing many in hiring capacities to simply pass, rather than take the time to investigate or “take the chance.”
* **In general, do not include more than 15 years of prior experience.**
	+ **Most candidates only include the last 10-12** years (up to 15 years is typical), as experience beyond this period seems dated and irrelevant. The last 2 jobs will carry the most weight, generally.
	+ Reference checking is that much more difficult the further one goes back.
	+ Only include experience beyond this period if it is ***highly*** relevant (as it will support your target job goal).
	+ If necessary, **create a category** heading such as **“Other Relevant Experience.”** You may opt to omit dates and instead, simply document the company name, your title, and what you achieved.

**FORMAT:**

* **Avoid underlining:** It is considered passé on resumes and websites. I suggest no more than 2 font types, but you can vary style to emphasize/set off items from other text such as all upper case/caps, italicized print or small caps.
* **Avoid fancy fonts that are difficult to read/decipher and are infrequently use** (Some convert into unreadable symbols when they are transmitted or opened)
* **Avoid using “Track Changes”** but if you use it, once you accept ALL changes, TURN OFF this function, as sometimes, edits are visible after documents are transmitted or opened. (Some job seekers copy and paste the final text in a NEW document as an added precaution to ensure that when it is transmitted/opened, the track changes function is not activated.)
* **Avoid sending PDFs to recruiters** as they like to insert their company information inside your resume before presenting you to a client, and many do not know how to “outsmart” a PDF to do this. Send WORD documents.
* **When uploading to online ATS application programs, avoid formats that are not laid out chronologically** as many resume parsing software programs insert your information in the wrong boxes.
* **Do Not Use Tables!** Most Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) like Taleo are unable to parse out words from tables, rendering those words void/missing unless they appear elsewhere! (Same with headers and footers)

**FILE NAMING CONVENTIONS:**

* **File Names: Do not create career document file names that include words like “updated,” “new version,” “ver 9,” etc. (Incorporate your name in all file names. Dates are useful, as well.).**
* **Keep document names general, simple and professional, and** do not let on that you have ***other*** versions.

Include your name and if desired, a month and year to easily identify how recent your resume is. For example,

“MarissaMarsala\_resume\_Aug2018.”

**PROMOTION/MARKETING YOURSELF**

* **Do not include more than 3 documents when submitting initially, unless specifically asked to.**  Exceptions may include writing samples or references, if these are being requested.
* **In general, unless it makes good business sense (e.g., If bio is requested, do NOT include a photo).**
* **And last but not least, no “fibbing!”** Be honest and authentic about your background. Do not “dumb down” a resume (e.g., omit that you have a PhD) as an employer may dismiss you in the future for falsifying your application.

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