

130 Water Street
New York, NY 10005
TEL:(212) 968-1200
www.pinnaclegroup.com



PO Box 2800, #265
Carefree, AZ 85377
TEL:(480) 488-4490
FAX:(480) 488-5009

USING YOUR RESUME TO GET AN EDGE ON THE MARKET

The resume serves one single purpose – to get you an interview! Your resume should generate interest in you and make the person reviewing your resume want to see you to learn more.

In preparing your resume, you should ask yourself two questions:

- Question 1 - What do I want to do in my next position?
- Question 2 - What have I already done that will show my ability to do the answer to Question 1?

You have to know the answer to Question 1 before you begin to prepare your resume. Otherwise, if you begin your resume only by listing what you have done before, you will miss the importance of how what you have done relates to what you want to be doing next.

In this current recruiting environment, a prospective employer wants to know how what you have done prepares you to do what they need for you to do. The employer should not have to guess how your previous experience demonstrates your suitability for the role they want to fill. And, you shouldn't assume that the person reviewing your resume can see the relevance of your past experience. Use action words to ensure that you are uniquely qualified for the position for which you are applying. Make your resume unique – note I didn't say unusual! You don't want to be stuck in a job where every person is an interchangeable cog in a wheel – so don't make your resume look like everyone else's who has held that position before you.

This article will help you get inside the head of the recruiter or HR person who is reviewing your resume, so you can make your resume stand out and serve its sole purpose – to get you an interview!

THE BASICS

Here are some basics as you begin the process.

The perfect resume doesn't exceed 1 page, tells the reviewer how to reach you, what you've done that's relevant, what education you've attained and identifies specific activities, honors, skills that you possess that make you uniquely qualified for this position. More specifically on format, in the sections below.

There are 5 things an employer looks for when screening candidates from a resume:

1. Analytical ability
2. Intellect
3. Leadership potential (eg partnership potential)
4. Communication skills
5. Results

Your resume has 3 ways to demonstrate these things to the prospective employer:

1. Specific skills
2. Transactional experience
3. Academic accomplishments

Many candidates say to us “I do better in person than on paper.” The bottom line is that unless your resume shows that you have the things an employer is looking for, you won’t get the interview and you won’t get the offer if you don’t get the interview!

The purpose of your resume is to market your background and experience to a firm or company by communicating your goals and objectives as well as your value. In a competitive job market, your resume has to both stand out above the rest and balance a degree of professionalism. Your resume is your calling card and your chance to sell yourself to a potential buyer. It not only tells your story, but it is also a representation of your how you carry yourself professionally as well as your ability to succeed. No employer will be interested in hiring someone to persuade and influence others if he or she can’t even sell him or herself!

There are as many opinions out there on how to write a resume as there are stars in the universe. For example, some may say that a resume should be only be a single page to guarantee the employer will digest all the information, while others claim that a couple more pages helps a resume stand apart from others. Others argue over the purposes of having a clear-cut objective, or a summary of skills as marketing strategies. While sorting out the good advice from the bad advice may be complex, the best way to write a resume is to first understand that writing a resume is strategic. It must be carefully planned and well thought-out. It must be organized, concise, specific to the position you are applying for, and it must have a little personal flavor (but not fluff). We have found here at Pinnacle Group that a single page resume is the best approach – it offers the interviewer a good overview of your background and your skills without being overwhelming.

Your resume gets approximately 45 seconds of review time for the interviewer to decide whether to look at it in depth. Just in case you didn’t know, when someone first sees your resume, they don’t actually read your entire resume. They scan it to get an impression of who you are and what you offer to them. If they see something that piques their interest, then they read your entire resume and make a decision whether to meet you. If the first brief scan of your resume doesn’t catch their interest, then your resume is

set aside – the interviewer doesn't read the entire resume just to talk themselves into seeing you. For that reason, it's essential that your resume make loud and clear what you offer that makes you the ideal candidate for the specific position for which you've applied. You want to catch the interviewer's attention in the first few seconds that your resume gets. For that reason, the important, relevant information needs to be right up front on your resume. If it's on page 2, then it's not likely to be seen. And, for that reason, we don't think a page 2 is even necessary. Often a candidate will say that because they're a senior candidate or have done many things, a multiple page resume is necessary. Our view is that it's what you've done most recently that will get an employer excited about you – not what you did 10 years ago. While it might be helpful, supporting information, if your recent experience isn't relevant, it will be hard for them to get excited about your long ago past.

Remember, your resume is your calling card, not your biography! It should only have the information that's relevant to showing the interviewer that you can do the job for which you've applied. The interviewer doesn't need to know your entire history, only that which is relevant. Sometimes a candidate will ask "Isn't that deceitful to not disclose my entire employment history?" Our answer is that it is deceitful if you **conceal** your employment history in the interview process, but that the purpose of the resume is to **highlight and reveal** your relevant experience so the interviewer can meet you and learn more about you. Read on for more tips on what "works" in resumes.

Organization is extremely important if your resume is to get any attention. Think of yourself as the employer sifting through hundreds of resumes just to find one qualified candidate. Rarely is your resume the only one a recruiter will see. It's usually one of several the interviewer is comparing. If, on the next resume in sequence, the interviewer has to do any work just to figure out where the important information about a candidate is, that resume is going in the trash. That being said, the last thing you want is to cut and paste together a mix of information like a scrapbook.

Start with the basics. It, of course, needs your full contact information (believe it or not it is too often forgotten). And, the contact information you use must be current and professional. Use the name to which you respond. If the only one who calls you Samuel is your grandmother or bill collectors, everyone else calls you "Sam" – put Sam on your resume. Otherwise, when the interviewer calls and asks for "Samuel" you'll have an awkward pause where you'll ask "Who's calling please?" thinking that you need to screen the call. Use the name you answer to – it's not a government document, it's your resume! Use a current address, not a PO Box. These are financial services firms and how likely would you be to entrust your firm's financial resources to someone using a PO Box! Use phone numbers and email addresses at which you can be reached – ones you check frequently and that are professional. If you list a phone number or email address you don't check often – you will miss opportunities. Not promptly returning a prospective employer's call or email inviting you to interview is a certain way to miss an opportunity. Similarly, be certain that the voicemail message on the phone number they call is a professional one, not a jokester message like "Hey it's Sam, you know what to do!" or

your children's voices which leave the caller uncertain whether you'll receive the message. I once called a candidate to schedule an interview and his wife gave me the third degree as if she thought I might be calling for less than pure reasons. Be certain that the number you leave is one that will give the interviewer confidence in you as a candidate. A word of advice on email addresses – this is the time to use a simple, straightforward email address. Please don't use either your current work email or a humorous personal email address – either of these send the wrong message. Using your work email has several disadvantages – it signifies that you're using your current work time to look for another job (and says to your future employer that you'd do the same thing) and leaves you vulnerable to missing future contacts if you leave your current work abruptly (how likely is it that your former employer will forward a job offer to you after you've left?). Those “cutesy” email addresses (toohotforyou@hotmail.com; jesuslovesme@yahoo.com, etc.) are inappropriate. Create a simple email sarah.james@gmail.com to use for your job search and that you will regularly check. Your resume is your calling card and an image of professionalism counts.

Next, you need to select a format. Choose a format that makes sense for your background and objectives. Chronological organizations are the most common format, and the tried and true method if you want to play it safe and make the resume easy for an interviewer to use. Your most recent experience should be what the interviewer sees first. If you are a recent graduate and not yet employed, your education is first; otherwise, your experience should be the first part of your resume. See [here](#) for examples of pre and post MBA resumes. Functional organizations are risky because they are sometimes vague in detail and time, but for employers looking for senior candidates with specific skill sets, they can be helpful. Once you've chosen a format, don't be overly concerned with the fonts or the graphics... find something that you like and that makes sense for you professionally. If you would like a review of your resume and suggestions, please schedule a telephone consultation through the link on our website at www.pinnaclegroup.com and we'll be happy to help you find a format that will help you get traction.

Always keep your resume detailed but concise. It matters less how many pages your resume is than if it gets to the point when it needs to get to the point. No employer is going to read a six page resume that never gets to the point. On the other hand, if your resume hardly fills up a page, you likely haven't put enough explanation into additional skills and experience that is pertinent to your next career move. For those of you who have only had one relevant experience, don't create fluff to fill up your resume. One relevant opportunity is better than filling the page with things that make the interviewer wonder why you've told them that information or which makes them question whether you're the right person for them.

The best way to keep your resume concise is to decide what information is important. This will most likely depend on the industry and the company or firm to whom you are interested in submitting a resume. Focus on the most recent education or experience more than the last, since recent experience is most relevant. Don't add an irrelevant

position you had working a cash drawer at the mall to pay for college when you now have two years of experience in your field. It is ok to have one position on your resume. What matters most to an employer is what work you did while you were there that will demonstrate that you will succeed in your next role.

Never add fluff or use words that you don't fully have the ownership over. Too much fluff can make you look unfocused or unprofessional. Plus, if you don't fully understand what you are saying about yourself, they will see right through it and, most likely, put you aside. Also, don't try to cram in things that don't matter. When a candidate stretches the margins to the max or uses tiny font, just to "get it all in one page" it sends the message to the interviewer that the candidate can't tell what's important and is unable to convey information in a concise, analytical way. It's better to only put in what's relevant. No one reads a resume that is too verbose or creates eye strain.

Every time you send a resume out, your resume should have been shaped and shifted for that specific position and that specific employer. I hear you groaning right now about how much work that is! Remember, this is your career. You can create a generic resume that is all things to all people and hope that someone who receives it does the work to figure out why you are the person they want to interview, and you can wonder why you aren't getting traction in your search. Or you can take your job search seriously and make your resume sing to the position you're applying for so the interviewer sees immediately why you are the right person for the job and wants to bring you in right away. The option you choose will really make a difference in your search. That may mean you have different resumes for each type of opportunity you are interested in. Do your research about the company before you apply. Your objective and/or summary should reflect what the company is looking for, so that they will recognize you as a match. Sending a resume to a private equity firm when the objective on your resume says you want to utilize your skills as a trader will get you nowhere and fast! Pay attention to the specifics of the opportunity for which you are applying and everything you know about the employer. The company or firm may have an interesting focus that you have some experience in (even if it is limited) and they might be impressed to see that on your resume. If there are additional responsibilities that you have experience with that fit, your resume should reflect it. I know, it's work! But from that work, you will have greater likelihood of reaping the rewards; without it, you're one of the pack hoping to be recognized and brought in for an interview.

Your resume also needs to have a personal touch at the end. Many people choose an "Additional Information" section to list a few personal things, and that is generally beneficial in terms of landing a position that would be a good cultural fit.

When creating a personal section, however, you must think of your resume as a professional "personal ad". People generally put the most appealing information on a personal ad hoping to land a hot date. For your resume, likewise, an interesting point or two about you helps the interviewer to relate to you. In a personal ad, for example, you might put in a cute line (or an attempt at one) to make your ad stand out. Maybe you

describe your physical attributes, describe personality traits or list activities you enjoy. No one ever reveals information about their one-night stand in Las Vegas or their collection of Star Wars action figures, and for good reason. In how many personal ads does someone talk about their irrational fear of string? Now, when crafting your resume, remember this is your **professional** personal ad, so if it's unnerving or too peculiar, don't put it in. You should help them to get a sense of who you are and what you're like, but remember what you list sends a message about you. Saying your hobby is "reading" is boring – how about saying the most recent book you read that interested you? Or "travel" – how nebulous! What about listing the two most interesting cities or countries you visited and that you traveled by bicycle or camel? Alternatively, saying you like spending your free time with your 3 children might come across as sending the unwritten message that you won't plan to work late. Listing political or religious affiliations on your resume send other subtle messages that might work for or against you depending upon the interviewer's slant, think about what you list and why you're telling the interviewer that information.

No need to waste that final line, "References Available Upon Request". We all assume you can and will provide references, so use that line for something important about why you're the perfect fit for this position.

If you think about your resume as the opening to a conversation, a way to engage the interviewer in a dialogue, instead of your biography or the whole conversation, you'll see that it opens many more doors for you. You open the conversation with your resume as an introduction to things you both have in common and offer a glimpse of why continuing the conversation will be beneficial to you both through an interview.

We'll look forward to being helpful to you in your search. If you need help shaping your resume, let us know and we'll be glad to help you craft one that will help you get those dialogues going or help you focus your search on the sectors of the industry that will be more interested in you as a conversation partner.
