



WHY SHOULD I INTERVIEW YOU?

There's a great line in the movie *Wall Street* when Gordon Gecko (played by Michael Douglas) first meets Bud Fox (played by Charlie Sheen) *Gecko says to Fox: "This is the kid, calls me 59 days in a row, wants to be a player. There might be a picture of you in the dictionary under "persistence" kid. So tell me 'Why should I be listening to YOU?'"* It's exactly what you don't want an interviewer to think when they read your resume. I've been amazed at the level of sameness that I've seen lately in resumes and I realize that resumes are a misunderstood tool.

The purpose of the resume is to get you an interview. It's your SuperBowl ad, your one shot to generate enough interest in you as a unique, special candidate that the employer feels they must meet you in person without delay. It must demonstrate to the reviewer your specific qualifications for the role you are being considered for and, more importantly, offer concrete evidence of why you are worthy of being listened to. I review hundreds of resumes each month where the candidate doesn't get that basic point. Most resumes I see are basic, boring, slapped-together recitations of identical sameness causing me to numb out from the repetitiveness. Prospective employers are looking for The One, not More of The Same.

I saw a resume last week where the candidate spent half of her resume outlining her experience as a professional ballroom dancer and lighting consultant and less than 10 lines on the exact experience that makes her an exceptional relationship professional ideally suited for her objective as a junior level IR professional. Likewise, 10 minutes into a call with a candidate who was applying for a partner level role at a healthcare venture firm, I asked him why his resume listed only industrial and manufacturing deals. He told me he had assumed we would talk about his specific industry experience and deals during our call. We almost didn't have a call, because the resume he sent me didn't fit the opportunity he wanted to talk about. I interviewed him because a mutual acquaintance made the introduction and I was being courteous. He has all the time in the world to look for a job since he is unemployed and yet he sent me a "stock" resume and still hasn't sent me the updated resume I asked for.

Let's cut to the chase – your resume needs to make the reader want to meet you. Your resume needs to make it clear why you are THE person for the role they're trying to fill. It must be precisely tailored to "pop" for the very position you want in the specific firm you are sending it to. In a market like this, you cannot afford to be lax in presenting yourself in generic terms if you want to stand out among the masses of candidates vying for jobs. Too many resumes recite prior job responsibilities in rote language "focused on public and private investments in healthcare across the capital structure" or "developed investment thesis, structured, evaluated and negotiated transactions" YAWN!

In this competitive job market, firms will only meet and hire the most talented people who can bring something special to the table. If you make your resume look like everyone else's, that's what you'll look like – everyone else. There isn't a single employer in the industry that doesn't know what an Analyst at an investment bank does. Instead of just listing the mechanics of your job, your resume needs to demonstrate your uniqueness, what makes you the one they can't let get away.

This applies whether you are a junior or seasoned professional. With the volume of available talent out there, why should any recruiter or hiring manager spend any time meeting you?

In the book “Blink” best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell provides numerous examples of how people “thin-slice information” and make snap judgments in under a minute. Your resume will get an average of 45 seconds of attention before someone who can decide your fate on this job search quest has formed an opinion about whether you are in or out. On our website (www.pinnaclegroup.com) we have tools to help you make your resume shine, so you pass the initial thin-slice. If you pass that initial opinion forming stage, then your resume gets a second more detailed scan looking for target phrases that show you can add something special to the team. These must be active words demonstrating achievements. (Raised \$200M in limited partner commitments. Sourced 6 proprietary deals. Achieved 10X return. Identified key operational improvements resulting in \$10M cost savings.) Don't bury your achievements and the things that make you unique in the third bullet of your plain vanilla job description.

What's that? Did you just say that you didn't do anything special or unique that makes you stand out from the others who have done the same job? Then what makes you think you deserve an interview with a firm in this highly focused, competitive industry where every firm's slogan is “We're unique from our competition.” If you haven't yet done something that makes you a highly talented, in-demand candidate that can make a difference to your future employer, you need to figure out what DOES make you different and why an employer should hire you. Just another guy on the team isn't going to cut it in this market.

I've said it before: Recruiting is like dating. Everyone wants to be with someone special. No one posts a personal ad, seeking “plain vanilla nobody without conversational skills, hobbies or spark.” They write personal ads with lines like “*If you like Pina Coladas ...*” and expect to get responses like “*Yes, I like Pina Coladas, and getting caught in the rain; I'm not much into health food, I am into champagne.*” Likewise, employers in this competitive market don't look for “another transactional guy who can take up space and collect a paycheck.” You need to offer all that an employer wants AND add something that makes you special. So don't be “just another transactional guy” or “just another analyst”. Figure out what makes you special, what should knock the socks off the next person who reads your resume because you are the only one who can do the very thing that will make a difference in their business success.

You are special, you are unique. It's up to you to figure out what you have that no other candidate has and to find a concise way to communicate it to employers who want what you can add to their team. Or you need to find a different career where you can add some real value to your new employer in a different industry. The reality is no employers are looking for someone who can simply fill space and be like everyone else.

Years ago, I participated in a creative workshop that required me to create my personal mantra of meaning – in 6 words or less. It was amazing to boil down my personal philosophy of life into such few words. But, it made it easy to remember and it forced me to distill my view of what my life is about and what my purpose is.

We used that same tool in deciphering what our firm's mission was about, what makes us different from the other firms in our niche. It forced us to drop all the jargon recruiters like to use. I skip those lazy overused terms like ... proprietary database ... solid rolodex of contacts ... interview and negotiation skills ... value added services ... We know what hiring firms want is the one absolutely unique, hard to find candidate who makes their firm able to outshine, outsmart, outperform their competitors.

That's why our motto at Pinnacle Group, and our unique focus of recruiting is easy:
Building businesses, one career, one relationship at a time.

Try boiling your unique skill down to 10 or fewer words. It will help you to focus on what firms you should be targeting in your search and how to make yourself stand out by framing the pieces of your resume to support those 10 words. Send me your personal 10 word branding slogan and your carefully tailored resume and let's see if they match!

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