

The Four Noble Truths About Marketing Your Resume

By Lancelot Larsen

When you submit your resume, yours will be one of many, stacked in a pile on your employer's desk. You'll want your resume to stand out, to be the one that catches the breath of your potential employer. To do so, you want to keep these four things in mind: Know Your Market, Be the Employer, Find Your Function-Accomplishment Balance, and Get Some Style. Knowing your market simply means that you will want to do some research with the company for which you are applying. By being the employer, you'll write your resume as if you were the one reading it. Finding the function-accomplishment balance is writing your resume in such a way that where you have worked blends perfectly with the impact it had on you. The style of your resume is also important. If you are bored with Times New Roman, trying using different fonts, such as: Garamond, Book Antiqua, or Palatino Linotype. Don't stray from these fonts, though. Also, never go below 10.5 font or above 12. You'll want your resume to be professional looking, but slightly different to catch the eye of your employer. By following these guidelines, your chances for getting hired will be greater.



You don't need an expert to convince you that 95% of resumes get skimmed and tossed aside. If you've looked for work long enough, you know it must be true. Since there will always be more applicants than jobs and the trend of rapid career shifting and changing is here to stay, it is not enough to simply send your resume with hopes that it will be read with a sprinkle of attention. You have to send a resume that will stop time. If your resume goes to an employer with a tall stack of conventional resumes in the morning, the only way to get that employer to give your resume the attention it deserves is to make it outstanding. In short, the way to attract an employer's attention to your resume is not to submit a list of what you have done, but a testament to who you are and what you can do. Sure, there are plenty of humorous resume stories about individuals who laminated their resume to a piece of wood or made their resume out of construction paper complete with skill-listings like "Operating a toaster-oven." In some cases, these creative measures did the trick, and the applicants did get the job. Ultimately, however, it's just as risky to implement these cute measures as it is to send a standard resume. Your chances of getting your resume read will certainly increase if you put your mind beyond the conventional thought process. Too often applicants spend too much time thinking about the "Who," the "What," and the "Where" and not enough on the "How" and the "Why." Most applicants limit their resume to where and when they worked, what they did, and what their title was. Actually, there is nothing wrong with that. Those are the basics. But if you want to go further with your resume, you also need to think about why these things should matter to the individual reading it and how those things have helped you to help them. Yes, it is enough to be born and work your way through life. But if you want to get more out of life than the basics, you will have to think beyond what you are doing now in order to move forward to where you want to be.

Before you start tapping away at your computer, keep these four actions in resume marketing in mind: *Know Your Market, Be the Employer, Find Your Function-Accomplishment Balance, and Get Some Style.*

Know the Market

It's equally as important to assess who is going to read your resume as it is to assess your career in one or two pages. Research the company and find out what service they provide and who they serve. Think about all the work

you have done thus far and base the details of your experiences from the standpoint of how you will facilitate that relationship. In the end, all work is service work. Sell yourself from how you will serve well.

Do not send the same resume to every employer. Even if it means changing but a word or two, it will serve your resume well to tailor it in some way for each submission. Use the same terminology as evidenced in the advertisement or job description. Emphasize certain keywords to attract the attention of an employer just skimming down your resume. Plan which keywords will be most attractive. The content of your resume should echo the requested qualifications of the job as much as reasonably possible.

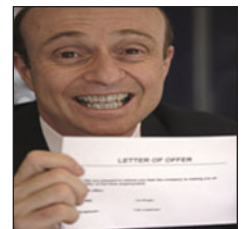
Professionals with 10 or 20 years of experience might want to consider adding a Summary of Qualifications section to the top of their resume. This would provide a snapshot of all your expertise and experience. A tidy Career Highlights section might work well also, where experience professionals can start off the resume with a few shining moments of glory throughout their career.

Be the Employer

Imagine being an employer and, on top of all your daily assignments, you also have a dozen or a hundred resumes to review for a position that needed to be filled last week. After a while, all of those resumes start to read alike—lists and lists of things a bunch of applicants did for some other people at some other place. The only question going through the mind of an employer is “What can these people do for me?” More often than not, that question is never addressed in resumes. By addressing it, you will stand out.

Write your resume as if the employer will examine every detail, but never think that an employer will read your resume top to bottom. In other words, expect the reality, but prepare for the ideal. Do the thinking for the employer. Write everything you think the employer wants to read at first glance. The employer will not take the time to piece together how your work history will transfer to the company. You have to take the time yourself to present your skills and experience in a way that the employer will “get” immediately.

Engage in specifics and only emphasize what is necessary. You don't need to list everything you've ever done. Write the facts, but be selective. If you worked at Disneyland for 10 years and want to manage a bank, play up your customer service skills and skip the parts about doubling as Goofy or cleaning up after the horses in the parades. If you've been out of school for a while, that should be last on your resume. If you just got out of school and don't have a lot of experience, place your education at the top and use the relevant details of your schooling to attract attention.



Find Your Function-Accomplishment Balance

Reciting the order of your places of employment and your function therein is one story. Telling all your accomplishments throughout your work history is another story. And it's hard to tell which story which employers will prefer. The goal is to find an effective balance in writing what you did while working and what impact it had where you worked. Since most applicants don't include accomplishments in their resumes, it will be an advantage

if you do. Determining the balance in reciting your past functions with showcasing your crowning achievements is a challenge, but one well worth considering.

Sub-bullets

This is your definitive answer. Bullets are the best way to convey your duties at various present and past positions. Four or five is ideal for most cases. If you find that you need more, consider grouping like duties under one bullet (i.e. drafting official documents can be paired with writing professional articles for the company newsletter) or editing so as to highlight only that which is relevant to the job you seek. Then use sub-bullets to call attention to any noteworthy achievement you would like the employer to know about. If you increased revenue by a certain percent, put that in a sub-bullet. Even if you won employee of the month several times in one year, state that information in a sub-bullet.

Just remember when using sub-bullets (and bullets as well), start at the top and work your way down to the bottom. Always be willing to sacrifice standing information for outstanding information. Treat your resume like a piece of prime journalism. Start with the best, hard-hitting facts at the top.

Get Some Style

Sometimes well-qualified applicants are denied consideration for a position as a result of poor design—appearing unprofessional at the interview or communicating their worth ineffectively. The same applies to resumes. Even if the information is spectacular in a resume, it can just as easily get the brush off simply because of the look of it. Sometimes applicants with a lack of significant work experience get their resumes a better share of notice just because it is designed well.

- Always use the correct fonts. Times New Roman is the classic, but might be overused. For variety, consider Garamond, Book Antiqua, and Palatino Linotype. But stick with one of these four. Never go below 10.5 in size (or above 12). If the employer has to squint or hold your resume afar, your resume will probably not be read at all. Bullets and borders are optional. Bullets, however, make the resume more organized. Avoid long paragraphs.
- Always change the position of certain details from one submission to another. Your resume is like merchandising. Place up front that which you think the employer will want to see first and foremost. If the employer prefers someone who speaks Russian (and you happen to be fluent), add a language section at the bottom of the resume or include it in the Summary of Qualifications section at the top. If you have two jobs at the moment in nursing and editing a small medical journal, place your nursing job first if you are going to take another position somewhere else; place your editing job first if you are transitioning into the media industry.
- Always use action verbs—and in great variety. Avoid using first-person pronouns beforehand. Do not start a bullet with the same verb more than once under one place of employment.

- Always check grammar and spelling yourself. Spell-check programs won't always save you when two properly spelled words have even slightly different meanings (effect/affect).
- Always use high-quality, white, ivory, or cream-colored paper, maybe a very light gray. You can use a very, very light blue or green to make it stand out from all the white paper, but keep in mind that it might backfire if the employer reading it is more traditional. Also make sure that the paper you select will photocopy well. More than likely, your resume will be photocopied.

No matter how you want to make and use your resume to help you along the path to success, always remember that, in the end, it is you who will get your next position, not your resume. You will have to do your homework; you will have to deliver class-act communication abilities; and you will have to ace the interview. Your resume only shows you are worthy of enrollment. You yourself will have to take the tests and prove your ambition and your worth.