

Your Resume: A Marketing Tool

By Emily Sanderson

A resume is the first impression of an applicant that a potential employer gets, and to ensure a positive effect on that employer you must dazzle them with the real you. To do this you must use real emotion and show your real qualities. However, a resume does not represent your whole self; you must be prepared to make your positive traits desirable in the interview. In your resume be prepared to state specific characteristics that will refer to the job in an appealing format, do not refer to qualities that have no relevance to the position you are applying for.



I studied journalism as an undergraduate, a field that emphasizes identifying the audience to which one is speaking when writing a piece. For example, many local newspapers throughout the country are written to a fifth-grade-level audience, but the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times* write to a much more advanced level of education. Not only do such newspapers use bigger words and more complicated sentence structures, but the content of their articles is geared not just to inform but to provide information for individuals to build upon and to apply to concepts discussed in their own businesses or communities.

The field of marketing takes identifying an audience to the next level. Advertising, a subset of marketing, can actually raise hairs on the backs of necks, get blood pumping faster, and enlarge the pupils of eyes. There are laws against encoding subliminal messages into advertising and marketing materials, but we have all seen mattress commercials that led us to doze into ethereal whirls of comfort — even if it was just for 30 seconds. But perhaps reclined in our not-so-comfortable chairs or sofas after a long day's work, we are receptive to the messages of such a commercial, especially if we are in the market for a new mattress.

Could a resume trigger such strong emotion in a potential employer? That's what we hope for. Potential employers live in the same world we do — although they probably read the *Wall Street Journal* over the *Daily Gazette*, they see commercials on TV, and hear them on the radio, and they have gotten jaded over the years just like the rest of us. They want to know that the characteristics promised by someone or something will actually deliver upon investment, and this is especially true in reviewing resumes. They are looking for subtle signals throughout the resume which will give them a better idea that the candidate is for real.

We hold a significant amount of emotion regarding the documents we maintain called resumes. But remember: your resume is only a communication device and not your identity or a measure of your worth. The job of your resume is to get you a first interview. It is in that interview and subsequent visits that both candidate and potential employer will be able to determine a fit.

Many potential employers go through many resumes, and many resumes are biographies or snapshots of individuals' careers instead of being geared to the specific needs of a potential employer. A resume is a vehicle through which an initial match can be discovered between a candidate (you) and a potential employer. Especially if you are making a career change, your goal should be figuring out, first, what experience and skills you have that potential employers are looking for and, second, how to present that information in the most attractive and easy-to-process form possible.



Some of the information you would include in a career-focused resume may not be in your present, more general resume, so take the time to review all of the skills you have gained from different work environments, and package these skills in a way that will emphasize them through the use of a chronologically or functionally formatted resume, a statement of qualifications, and a strategically written cover letter.

First impressions can be everything in a resume, and if we exhibit confidence and charm, often a slight punctuation error will be overlooked. Confidence can be won when we know what skills and experience we have that make us marketable and we also know how to relay that information in an effective manner. Some of us are stronger in speaking with people than in producing a document with the same information, and others of us are just the opposite. Take advantage of job coaching and resume writing services to assist you in your career search.