



Traditional or "old style" resumes no longer work.
With 30 million resumes in circulation ... and the Internet so dominant as a recruiting tool... you must alter your approach.



5 Make sure you have superior resumes

Using multiple resumes can bring you much greater response.

This chapter could by itself significantly alter the results of your job search.

Here's why I say this. Over the last 10 years we have prepared professional resumes for corporate presidents, top non-profit executives, VPs, directors, and officers of both small and large companies. And in recent years, we expanded our work to cover all professionals seeking from \$50,000 to \$500,000 plus. During this period we learned what really works and what doesn't. In this discussion I will share this with you.

To appreciate the importance of truly superior resumes, let's first talk a little bit about the intense competition, and why it has devastated so many talented people. And keep in mind that when you look for a new job, you are reduced to how you look on paper.

Today, the number of resumes in circulation exceeds the imagination. GE receives 800,000 resumes a year... but they only hire about 4,000 people. That's 1 out of every 200! Other well-known firms say they get over 1,000 resumes for every opening.

And, when it comes to submitting your resume to an attractive ad... you should know that employers are now getting from 300 to more than 1,200 candidates. Leading recruiters, like Korn Ferry and Heidrick and Struggles, now claim to receive more than 1,500 resumes a work day... 30,000 each month.

Just how good is your resume?

While many professionals still use traditional resumes, with this amount of competition, the fact is they don't work very well anymore. The reason is that most of these resumes have one or more of the six major resume weaknesses... that can restrict job hunting success. So, let's start by having you assess your current resume... to see if it has these weaknesses.

1 Does your resume look like others?

Your resume must start by projecting an outstanding image... one that sets you apart. It must be eye-catching... not ordinary, plain vanilla and flat.

2 Does your resume reveal liabilities?

Even top executives can find themselves continually derailed... because of the negative information they made available... without realizing it.

What kind of negative information do people reveal? The fact that they have one-company or single-industry experience... they have changed jobs too often... age... not having the right educational credentials... their career may have peaked... or they are unemployed, and so forth. All of these liabilities and many others can be neutralized with the right type of presentation.

3 Third, does your resume sell transferable skills?

Or, does it just sell your history and experience? Selling skills is an absolute necessity if you want to expand your

market... change industries... join a growth firm... appeal to venture capitalists... or impress CEOs and other key decision makers. You need to communicate "in-demand" skills that employers want. It's enormously important.

4 Does your resume show how you can contribute?

Or does it, like millions of traditional resumes, force the reader to try to figure out how to use you? If so, you won't get many calls.

Why? Because people simply won't take the time to study resumes. They'll put it in the "no pile"... or toss it. Your resume has just 20 seconds to make your case... and get people to read further... or better yet... call you! If it doesn't do this, you won't even get in the game.

Resumes need to be balanced, conveying a feeling for what you can do. They need to be more future oriented... not focusing exclusively on the past... and where you've been.

5 Is your resume scanning ready?

Scanning software has forever changed the selection process. Most organizations only keep the best 5% of resumes they receive... and scan just the first page into their databases. So, if you are using a two-page resume for making initial contact... it's never going to make the cut! When employers and recruiters are looking for someone, they simply input key words... bring up matching resumes... and review them. That determines who gets interviewed!

6 Is your resume dynamic, fast moving and a strong selling document?

In today's market, every line must inspire the reader... being boring doesn't work! The words you select need to have some reasonable punch, substance and sparkle. Your resume needs to be interesting and compelling. Remember, there are a lot of excellent competitors out there... and the worst thing you can do is undersell yourself.

Now, if you don't have the right answer for each one of these six questions... you'll be setting yourself up for a long and disheartening search... and a significant loss of self-confidence... regardless of how marketable you are.

**So how does your resume stack up?
Is it superior... good... or just average?**

About 1 in 13 job seekers have superior resumes.

Introducing a new and much more effective... **resume presentation approach**... one where you make use of 3 different resumes, which you use in different situations.



Our recommended approach

After analyzing every resume style... we developed a new approach—one where people are equipped with three different styles of superior resumes... materials that meet all of the concerns we've mentioned.

Why does having several resumes give you a major advantage? The answer is... that each one is targeted for a different application... and each is what we call an "A" resume. When you have an "A" resume, it's not likely to be just two times more effective than a "B" resume—it's more likely to be 20 to 25 times more effective. Plus... you have the advantage of having more tailored materials for the three most common situations where you will be submitting resumes.

When we prepare an introductory resume... for people to get the very best results, we also always follow 7 key rules.

- **The resume must be one page**
- **Preferred jobs must be listed first**
- **The top third must be a summary**
- **Liabilities must be neutralized**
- **Transferable skills must be sold**
- **A first-class image must be presented**
- **Resumes must be scanning-ready with relevant key words**

Keep in mind that a good resume has to cover the past, but it is really all about your future. So now let's look at the three different resumes you should have available before you begin your search.

A universal resume

The most essential is a universal resume—a one-page document that will be your introductory resume. Most people mistakenly believe that they need to tell their whole story in their initial resume. The reality is that

you get better results when your initial resume is interesting, with a feeling of action—but short!

This resume must be suitable for key word scanning, have short paragraphs, and be compelling. It must be headlined by a job title listing (e.g., Director of Marketing) that an employer might have available. Remember, your resume is an ad... *not an epitaph!* **Our research staff randomly selected 2,000 resumes, and less than 20% made the type of position and level they were seeking... immediately apparent.**

An “Internet (or electronic)” resume

This second resume needs to be shorter and to the point... usually no more than two-thirds of one page. It is surprising how few devote any thought to the way their resumes appear at the receiving end of an email transmission. When you are online, less is more. All you want is a positive response.

A “quick-response” resume

This third resume makes it easy for you to respond quickly to emerging situations you read about. It positions the text on the right-hand side of the page so you can write handwritten notes and dispatch a resume without a cover letter. Clients consistently tell us that executives respond well to their notes, which cited events that were signals of emerging jobs.

Other guidelines

- Highly marketable achievers should have a resume that immediately sets them apart from average performers, memorably and convincingly.
- Anyone unemployed should have a resume that emphasizes achievements over dates... shows momentum,

how they made contributions... and why they are a key solution to an employer’s needs.

- Those whose achievements are less than stellar... need to show how they can contribute in specific ways, in a dramatic manner, while emphasizing personal factors and transferable skills.
- Those whose employers have not fared well... despite their individual contributions... need to tell compelling stories that will separate their value from the fortunes of their employer.
- Those with a checkered career, or too many jobs, or who have age concerns... need to find a way to minimize liabilities... while emphasizing selected positives... so they can avoid being put on the defensive.
- Can some people use more than 3 resumes? Yes. Leave-behind resumes... after you have been interviewed... should be longer and more revealing. Provide them when people want to know more about you.

An “interview” resume

An interview resume is 2 to 3 pages. It is for presentation during or after interviews when employers want to know more. It is designed to intentionally reveal more about you. Since it reveals more about your industry experiences, it could keep you from getting in the door... if used as an introductory resume. However, once you’ve been interviewed, this summary can be a more compelling sales document. If you are a senior executive who has an executive biography, you would not need this additional “leave-behind” resume.

**Your resumes define your “personal brand”
... they must differentiate you from the competition.**

An executive biography

An executive biography is a 3 to 5 page narrative document, written in a third-person style. It uses interesting stories, rich in detail, and is favored by top recruiters and C-level executives. **Today, these are the “Mercedes**

of presentations,” and they are strictly for those seeking \$150,000 to 1 million dollars and above. Having a biography has become standard fare for anyone seeking high income positions.

Originally called a “bio-narrative” resume by some, the executive biography can be extremely powerful. It is essential for those competing for C-level jobs, or who expect to be hired with the approval of a C-level executive.

Decision makers often forward resumes to others to get consensus. And sometimes, you never meet the top people, but nevertheless they will often review your resume. The offer depends on a “thumbs up” from the resume presentation.

A “biography” communicates a total feeling about you and your skills. And, it will also say that you are an interesting person... that you can do certain things extremely well... that you have excellent personal qualities... and create a feeling that you are not like everyone else.

To prepare a biography, be patient enough to do several drafts. Typically, they are 3 to 5 pages in length. However, when your final biography hits the marketplace, it *can easily have 300% to 500% more impact* than something else you might have turned out.

“Top recruiters... people who get assignments to fill the most prestigious jobs in America... rewrite resumes before showing them to their corporate clients. 3 to 5 page executive biographies are what they create. //”

Customized marketing letters

Certain people who must avoid revealing liabilities must rely on personalized letters, but they need to be extremely focused and highly motivating. Customized letters, tailored to the needs of organizations, can be powerful and highly effective. For many they can be more effective than resumes. But, you must customize your appeal to each audience. The letters people may require during the course of a job search can include the following 12 letters for different occasions:

- For responding to openings
- For contacting recruiters
- For contacting venture capitalists
- For responding to emerging jobs
- For direct contact with employers
- For third-party letters to employers
- For contacting directors of associations
- For networking associates and friends
- For networking alumni
- For networking influential people
- For setting up potential references
- For following up your interviews

Cover letters you use should be interesting and brief. The key rule here is to get to the point and make sure it's good. **Letter resumes** are stand-alone letters that you will forward without a resume. They are valuable when you want to tailor the description of your credentials and avoid revealing any liabilities. They are always recommended for people who wish to change careers or industries. **Remember, the letters are advertisements for you.**

“Promise, large promise, is the soul of an advertisement.” —Samuel Johnson

Handwritten memos are fast and easy to send off, plus executives are used to them. If you have a superior resume that is on target for your audience, attaching such notes can work very well. Obviously, the content is critically important. Notes that emphasize what you can do, as well as the results you can bring, are ideal.

“ Sending people introductory letters, often called letter resumes... can be more effective than sending a cover letter and resume. But, they need to be highly compelling. //

Before writing your letters, have a clear picture of what you want to say. To avoid being disorganized, **the opening** should demonstrate your interest (knowledge of the firm, its industry, etc.) and explain your reason for writing. **The body** should deal with your best selling points and convey benefits. Then it should enlarge upon your selling points, citing related achievements. **The closing** should restate interest, confirm your desire for an interview, and say when you will follow up. Keep it simple. Letters are skimmed, not analyzed.

Your resumes and the important “preselling” role

People face immense competition at every stage of their search. This competition will not only affect your ability to get your credentials viewed... but when you are invited for an interview, there are likely to be five to ten other qualified people under consideration.

So, your resumes need to be written with an eye toward reducing interview pressure... by preselling you. The ideal reaction when you meet someone should be *“Paul, I was really looking forward to meeting you. I have the feeling you can really help.”*

20 letter writing commandments

- 1 Use the name of the person or firm in the letter.
- 2 Letters are warmer if you use pronouns like “I” or “we.”
- 3 Good letters are fast moving. They read like you speak.
- 4 Always be enthusiastic.
- 5 If you have related industry experience, mention it early.
- 6 Communicate potential benefits.
- 7 Use short sentences, preferably 3 to 4 line paragraphs.
- 8 Don’t oversell. “If this guy is so good, why the hard sell?”
- 9 Never begin a letter by asking for a job.
- 10 When answering ads, tailor responses to requirements.
- 11 When possible, offer to share some beneficial “ideas.”
- 12 Avoid income or why you are looking.
- 13 Use action words and brief descriptions.
- 14 Sign letters with your full name.
- 15 Edit your letters and read them out loud. If you lose your breath, the sentences are too long.
- 16 Commit yourself to a follow-up.
- 17 When writing to employers who have been undergoing change, cite the opportunities implied by your information that relate to your experience.
- 18 If you are addressing an influential person, recognize their position in a complimentary manner and be brief.
- 19 Having a third party send your letters can be powerful. Their statements can act as a strong endorsement. You don’t have to be a close friend to ask for third-party assistance. Just make it easy for the third party to assist. Offer to prepare a letter for their signature.
- 20 Follow-up letters must show continued enthusiasm.

What people say about these resumes

■ *“Your approach is unique in many respects. However, my experience was that the creative materials were the key. From the minute my universal resume was done, my confidence was lifted. Essentially, it was the resumes that allowed me to go from zero activity, to all the discussions I could reasonably schedule.”*

■ *“I’ve become president of a \$300 million firm. The work put into my marketing materials paid off. Adjectives would not adequately convey my admiration for the biography concept. My job came through the Korn/Ferry office in Washington, D.C., and my bio set me apart from several other accomplished candidates.”*

■ *“You are clearly into what works, and seem to be years ahead in your field. I used each of your three recommended resumes. They all played their role.”*

■ *“Your resume concept expanded my potential in the job market by a very significant level. There are many things you do, but with 25 years of experience, I realize now that I never really told my story properly. My resumes were the key to my success.”*

■ *“In recent years, I had a string of short-term experiences. The difficulties with my employers were completely unforeseeable when I accepted the positions. The materials I used finally did the job of communicating these recent experiences, and they compensated for my concerns about my age.”*

■ *“I’ve always taken pride in my writing. But, I had to overcome the mental barrier of admitting that I couldn’t quite get it done on my own. The reality is that the depth of research coming out of your career history form and marketability profile made a major difference. Your written materials were interesting and quick-moving... far better than anything I have ever done. Very impressive!”*

■ *“I used three of your recommended resumes in presenting my credentials. Each managed to tell my story and achievements with both integrity and power. Several people I interviewed with (who see hundreds of resumes daily) commented on how compelling my documents were.”*

■ *“I think that your three resume approach was the key to my success. I won’t say they made my campaign a slam dunk, but each one looked great and made me come across as very professional. All of the materials I used were received well by senior executives with whom I met.”*

■ *“Your approach to resumes was a great help. Each of the three documents were primary drivers in helping me produce a stream of calls throughout the 90 days I was in the market.”*

30 million resumes are in circulation. Is that competition... or what?


Did you know that Northrop Grumman's technology division receives over 720,000 resumes a year... for about 3,600 openings? IBM, Intel and Microsoft get more than 1,000 resumes for every opening.

There is an enormous amount of misinformation about resumes. Articles in many newspapers and several dozen books contain advice that has little to do with reality.

In this market, it's simply not enough to have an average or even slightly better than average resume. And, to make the most of each situation, you will want to use multiple resumes—for different purposes. Does any major marketer use just one advertisement?

You need nothing less than great materials. Nothing is more critical to your success.

*"The only sin is mediocrity."
—Martha Graham*



#5 RECAP

Use multiple resumes for greater response

After analyzing every resume format and style, we've developed a three resume approach for use in your job search.

When you use a multiple resume concept and distribute enough materials, you will lift your response by several times above what you might have otherwise achieved.

Quick summary action steps for a superior resume

We professionally write all required resumes for our clients. On your own, restructure your resume to follow the same rules our staff uses when they professionally write a client's materials. Then, create a 2/3 page electronic resume to be used on the Internet. Last, create a version where the left margin is wide enough to permit a handwritten note. Check all versions against the criteria mentioned. For letters, follow our "20 commandments."