

The EM Guide to Effective Resumes

By Michael Redd

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Michael Redd
editor@theempoweredmanager.com

The eBook Nook
<http://www.theempoweredmanager.com>

Ask a dozen people on the street what a resume is and what it's for, and most of them will tell you that it is a list of your accomplishments designed to get you a job. Ask us here at The Empowered Manager, and you'll get a very different answer.

In fact, the number one reason why resumes fail is because the people that write them fail to recognize the simple fact that effective resume writing has little to do with getting you a job -- at least not directly. It has to do with getting you recognized, so that you can get an interview so that you have a chance to get a job.

Even in a booming economy, employers seeking to fill a job opening are faced with the dilemma of having to sort through dozens of potential applicants to fill the position. Not only can the number be daunting, but the fact that most of the people who apply for a given job are unknown to the hiring manager means that the ability to differentiate each applicant is limited. Making the right decision is crucial, since the costs of hiring mistakes can be very high. Yet it is impossible in most situations to grant a personal interview to every applicant, as there is simply not enough time or resources available to do so. So how does one make a good decision as to which candidates to interview?

That is where the resume comes in. It provides a snapshot of the candidate that an employer can use to screen potential hires to ensure that they meet the minimum requirements of a job opening. It can also be a rough predictor of what a candidate may bring to the job once hired. The resume is similar to an application in that it provides some basic information about the candidate including work and education history, but it goes much further. An application prompts you for answers to specific questions relevant to the employer: where you live, where you went to school, and what previous jobs you have held. A well-crafted resume, on the other hand, paints a picture of who you are, what you have learned, and what you have done to contribute to the success of your former employers -- as well as what you may be expected to contribute to a future position. This information will be used to differentiate you from other potential candidates and win you an interview. That is where the real work begins.

Clearly then, the resume is an important step towards landing that perfect job, but it is just that -- a step. However, many people fail to realize this because they fail to realize what the resume is actually for. As a result, many people tend to overcompensate when they create them. They choose to fill the page with a detailed list of their accomplishments and accreditations in the hope that an exhaustive list of deeds will prove that they are the best choice for the job. They hope then that the interview will be a mere formality, but this is rarely the case. More often, the key details that

the hiring manager is looking for get lost in the process. Thus, by substituting the resume for the interview, the applicant wastes the single biggest opportunity to make that first impression that can actually open the door to their success.

Unfortunately, the problem is not an uncommon one in the business world. There is a natural tendency to want to say less with more -- and this is definitely one of those situations where it is better to say less. The sheer volume of resumes submitted for a single position is likely to be huge, sometimes hundreds or even thousands for a lucrative position. By definition, it is impossible for someone to literally read through each one, even if they wanted to, which you can be sure they probably don't. Think about it. How many times have you scanned every word of every letter, e-mail, or fax you receive in a day? You may want to consider your answer, or else consider EM's Guide to Effective Time Management to gain back those precious lost moments in your day!

We here at The Empowered Manager are all about helping you to realize success and as such have developed a rock solid process for crafting a winning resume that will get you more interviews and higher salaries. Having a solid resume is a good first step to realizing that success. Whether you are a newly graduated student just entering the workforce, or a seasoned veteran looking to "tune up" or reposition yourself in your company or in the marketplace, our process will provide you with do-it-yourself strategies for crafting a winning resume. By following the steps in order, you will learn how to market yourself in the best light no matter what your circumstances. Each section will present you with the foundational principles of The Empowered Manager's Resume Model, complete with tasks and outputs designed to help you build the perfect resume as you read along. By working through the model step by step, the final output will be a better resume that will increase your chances of success in your job search.

Our model has been designed using established techniques and the real world experience of our Team. In the EM Resume Model, you will construct your resume using the following steps, in order:

1. Define Your Message: Detail your skills, accomplishments, activities and education and know what you bring to the table.
2. Target Your Audience: Gain an understanding of the job you are seeking, as well as the people who could potentially offer it to you.
3. Introduce Yourself: Craft an outstanding introduction through your Contact Information, Objective Statement, and Summary of Qualifications.
4. Choose Your Messenger: Choose the best resume type to get your message across.
5. Craft Your Message: Using the outputs from previous steps, present your expertise and support it with significant evidence of your accomplishments.
6. Deliver Your Message: Get recognized and win that all-important interview.

You will notice that the majority of what you will be working on during this process has to do with your message. This makes sense because when crafting a resume, you are literally engaged in a one-way dialogue with a potential employer. As you will learn in future chapters, the manner in which you communicate your message makes all the difference in how your resume is received. As such, you will take great care in putting it together.

By working our process, you will be able to use and to understand the techniques the experts use to produce an outstanding product, using tips such as:

- How to recognize and emphasize your strengths
- How to recognize and de-emphasize your opportunities
- Picking the right type of resume to get your picture across
- Crafting a perfect Introduction
- Crafting effective statements of your expertise
- Crafting effective evidence of your expertise
- How to link your strengths to an employer's needs
- How to quantify your accomplishments
- Using "power words" or "action words" to transform your resume

And much more. Using the above tips will help you significantly. If you still need more help, visit our website and we'll give you some. So sit back, relax, and dust off your favorite pen or word processor. It's time to make a great first impression.

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