

Strategic Resume Construction

By Johnny Blue Star



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When I graduated college at the University of Tulsa in Communications, for a brief time, I worked for a professional recruiting agency. In other words, I was a headhunter. There I learned a lot of their strategies for promoting their clientele. Not too long afterwards, I launched a business-to-business service agency, where I sold various services, including printing, typesetting, advertising, secretarial and resume services.

During this time, I studied books on resumes and job search services and I chose the very best techniques for drafting the most perfect documents for serious seekers for a job, for funding or grant-related purposes, or for inclusion in investor-oriented offerings or even curriculum vitas for professional academic or scientific vocations. After that, before I started this freelance writing business, I worked in Internet marketing, advertising, public relations, radio producing/hosting, film producing screenwriting and trade brokering. I continue to work on proprietary projects related to film producing and broadcasting.

I have personally dealt with hundreds of business owners, CEO's and managers for the past thirty years. All of these types of activities have given me a unique perspective on what business owners want from their employees and how to deliver a product in a cogent, state-of-the-art way that will put your resume on the top of dozens of others.

.CHECKLIST

I. Assessment

- a. If you had a choice- and money wasn't the main issue- what would you choose to do with your life?
- b. How do you feel about whatever you are doing to earn money now? Happy, bored, trapped, excited?
- c. Have you found the right profit-making niche for yourself whether it is self-employment or working for others?

d. Do you want to stay in your particular job and perhaps be promoted or leave for another job?

e. Do you have any vocational aspirations that are nagging you, but you have not really thought about them in detail?

f. If you have a vocation or a new job in mind, do you know what kind of experience and training you need to fulfill that goal?

g. Do you know where the opportunities are in your chosen field?

II. PREPARATION

a. Depending what your job is- no matter how exciting, exotic or lucrative it might be, you may be better prepared if you talk extensively with those who are actually involved in that type of work. Also, if there is training involved, vocational schools, colleges or universities or organizations that hold seminars and training for certifications- are other areas that you might look into. Look before you leap!

a. Some jobs take extensive training and/or experience. If you have made a decision, now you need to begin following a plan of action to acquire what you need to do the job. This plan requires looking into costs and timing for education as well as content- as well as supporting yourself while you are being educated- through grants, loans, part time jobs or all of these efforts.

III. THE JOB SEARCH

a. Be Pro-active- even there are no job descriptions around that appeal to you. When you are ready to embark on the job search, there are certain considerations that will put you ahead.

1. The fact that a job is not advertised does not mean it does not exist as a possibility. Sometimes hiring is largely internal, but if there are holes, they may advertise, but not immediately. If your presence as a candidate is already known, you could be hired before they put out a job description.

2. People are not hired for their background- although background is a key consideration. They are hired because of chemistry, bonding, a feeling of liking the person- those types of subjective factors. Never ever think that background information is enough but also never importance as a foundation for a specific job.

3. Don't wait on the right job description to pop up. Make an analysis of the field you're in, the location you want to work in and the salary you need- and then proactively see what the best candidates are for you. Obviously, the field is different for a graphic designer, a vocation that has a large population and a person who specializes in designing medical equipment, which has an essentially much smaller and highly

specialized population. If the list of opportunities is big, narrow the list down to 10 or 20 choices. If the list is small, then there will not be much trouble in establishing your priorities.

4. If you want to find a job- before there is a job description- or even if there is one- you need to find the person who actually hires in that department. If you can- and it is not always possible, you want to avoid going through human resources. You want to talk directly to the owner and manager- and this, including your research to identify that person, can be done on the phone – best choice- or through the Internet – second choice.

5. Use a recruiter- if your field allows it. In most cases, recruiters don't charge you for their services and the right ones can be exceptionally knowledgeable about employment opportunities and they will even act as your personal sales manager. The problem with this is that they need to be trustworthy, knowledgeable about their field and dedicated to your success. It would always be best to use a recruiter who has done well for a friend and associate or has a very large reputation in the industry.

6. Post your resume online in Monster, The Ladders or other types of websites that specifically focus on presenting your talents to the world.

7. Put your resume on your own personal branding site (your_name.com) and develop your profile with the highlights of your resume on various social and business networking sites. You could even be recruited without looking for a job.

8. Use social networking to promote yourself or to look for a job by contacting potential employers or recruiters in your network.

b. If you find a job and a good job description that fits your needs and your developed abilities, you could have struck gold.

1. Look for job listings on websites of specific companies that interest you, job boards, social and business networks; online and off line newspapers; local TV and radio stations that might have postings on their websites- like KSL.com.

2. Why is a good job description gold? Because a lot of candidates, even if they are qualified, will not necessarily have the tools and knowledge to present themselves properly. This gives you a competitive edge and you need whatever you can get in a difficult job market.

3. When you embark on your campaign to get a job from a particular employer, advertised or not, never put out or distribute a resume prior to talking to someone on the phone or in person if you can avoid it. Why? Because, as mentioned before, bonding is an essential ingredient in hiring and a resume is a piece of paper promoting you- that might spark an interest- but it does not present you- as a living person- to the employer. It is therefore better to talk to or be interviewed first before presenting a resume which

will be put on a tall stack of other resumes in which only a certain number will be interviewed. Let your conversation be your ticket to an interview, whenever possible.

c. How do you prepare a resume?

Customize. Customize. Customize. Here is the structure I use:

I believe that resumes are fundamentally strategic documents. They are meant to strategically support your job search. They are not the only or most important part of your journey to new employment. The interview is, to me, clearly the decisive moment. However, often you need a resume to get there- and almost always you need a resume to document your background to other critical people in the hiring chain who you may never meet you until your hired.

Here is my preferred structure for a resume:

1. Qualifications are subtly placed in the entire top half of the first page so that the candidate's job suitability stands out for the applicable position.
2. The order of the resume is designed to emphasize these desirable characteristics.
3. The resume is designed to be easily customizable for specific positions according to a specific strategy I communicate to my clients. This strategy is also deployed in a job interview, where the resume is a backend support tool.
4. The background section defines succinctly all the bold areas of qualification and achievement.
5. The skills section comprehensively describes the skills, highlighting those for the generally desired position and or the specific job in question.
6. Job history descriptions are divided into two different areas. One, a complete description of the position with the appropriate buzzwords. Two, bulleted and often mathematically measurable achievements in that description.
7. Full contact information is given for the candidate and for each job plus, whenever possible, a supervisory or peer associate reference for each position.
8. A reference document with full contact information accompanies the resume with the cover letter.
9. Any specific information based on job descriptions, current trends in a specific industry and "inside" knowledge is used to focus on what the employer actually wants.

d. How do you deal with the interview?

1. Dress for the occasion. But think first- how they would like you to dress.
2. Be as honest and candid as possible. Don't dodge or avoid questions about any problems on other jobs, but be careful to phrase things in a way that will not put you in a poor light. Don't make up things that will embarrass you when they find that they are untrue. But also be careful about being negative about things that have happened in the past. Be tactful and careful.
3. Prepare in advance to answer any questions that you think may come up. Practice with your wife, friend or a sympathetic business associate. Sometimes you can even hire someone to help create a mock interview.
4. Be business-like but be prepared to be casual and informal if the occasion comes up. Don't bring up non-work oriented subjects unless they do. But realize that those types of conversations can be very important to be hired. For instance, if the manager loves mountain biking and so do you, that is a bonding element. If someone on the interview team has read a business book that you have read, you might say something about your experience.
5. Be sure to leave your resume if they don't have one.
6. Write a thank you note.
7. If you are not contacted shortly, follow-through carefully and concisely.

