

## Resume Writing – How to Write a Masterpiece of a Resume



**Caution:**  
Writing your resume is Step #3.  
To begin at the beginning, [click here](#).



Discover the career  
you were born to do.  
**The Pathfinder Career  
Choice Program.**

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### Part 1: RESUME WRITING – WRITE A RESUME THAT GENERATES RESULTS

This award-winning guide to resume writing will teach you to write a resume equal to one done by a top-notch professional writer. It offers examples, format choices, help writing the objective, the summary and other sections, as well as samples of excellent resume writing. It is the most trusted resume-writing guide on the planet, used by more than a million people each year.

Writing a great resume does not necessarily mean you should follow the rules you hear through the grapevine. It does not have to be one page or follow a specific resume format. Every resume is a one-of-a-kind marketing communication. It should be appropriate to your situation and do exactly what you want it to do. Instead of a bunch of rules and tips, we are going to cut to the chase in this brief guide and offer you the most basic principles of writing a highly effective resume.

**Who are we to be telling you how to write your resume?** As part of our career consulting practice, we have coached and advised Fortune 500 C.E.O.s, senior members of the last few presidential administrations, thousands of mid and early career professionals, artists, technical people and others in nearly every field of endeavor.

Our specialty at Rockport Institute [Career Change](#) is working with clients who want to choose or change to a new career, one they will love; work that makes full use of their talents, fits their personality, their values, and is also practical. Our staff has been commended for excellence by two U.S. presidents. Our first book, [The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change Your Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction and Success](#), was a top-10 national bestseller. That is our one and only specialty. If you think you may be in the wrong career, check out our website or read reviews of our books on amazon.com.

**Are you an executive or professional looking for an extraordinary, professionally written resume?** As authors of this, the world's most widely used, regularly updated guide to resume writing since 1995, we can connect you with the very best expert resume writers. Send us an [email](#). We'll get right back to you.

This guide is especially for people looking for a job in the United States. In the U.S., the rules of job hunting are much more relaxed than they are in Europe and Asia. You can do a lot more active personal marketing in your resume here. You may have to tone down our advice a few notches and use a more traditional, conservative format accepted in your field if you live elsewhere or are in law, academia or a technical engineering, computer or scientific field. But even when your presentation must fit a narrow set of rules, you can still use the principles we will present to make your presentation more effective than your competition's.

#### THE GOOD NEWS AND THE BAD

The good news is that, with a little extra effort, you can create a resume that makes you stand out as a superior candidate for a job you are seeking. Not one resume in a hundred follows the principles that stir the interest of prospective employers. So, even if you face fierce competition, with a well written resume you should be invited to interview more often than many people more qualified than you.

The bad news is that your present resume is probably much more inadequate than you now realize. You will have to learn how to think and write in a style that will be completely new to you.

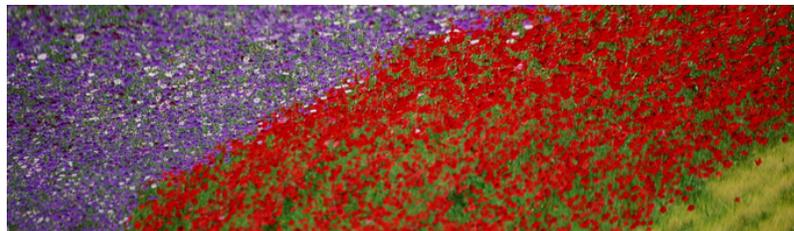
To understand what I mean, let's take a look at the purpose of your resume. Why do you have a resume in the first place? What is it supposed to do for you?

Here's an imaginary scenario. You apply for a job that seems absolutely perfect for you. You send your resume with a cover letter to the prospective employer. Plenty of other people think the job sounds great too and apply for the job. A few days later, the employer is staring at a pile of several hundred resumes. Several hundred? you ask. Isn't that an inflated number? Not really. A job offer often attracts between 100 and 1000 resumes these days, so you are facing a great deal of competition.

Back to the fantasy and the prospective employer staring at the huge stack of resumes: This person isn't any more excited about going through this pile of dry, boring documents than you would be. But they have to do it, so they dig in. After a few minutes, they are getting sleepy. They are not really focusing any more. Then, they run across your resume. As soon as they start reading it, they perk up. The more they read, the more interested, awake and turned on they become.

Most resumes in the pile have only gotten a quick glance. But yours gets read, from beginning to end. Then, it gets put on top of the tiny pile of resumes that make the first cut. These are the people who will be asked in to interview. In this mini resume writing guide, what we hope to do is to give you the basic tools to take this out of the realm of fantasy and into your everyday life.

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## THE NUMBER ONE PURPOSE OF A RESUME

The resume is a tool with one specific purpose: to win an interview. If it does what the fantasy resume did, it works. If it doesn't, it isn't an effective resume. A resume is an advertisement, nothing more, nothing less.

A great resume doesn't just tell them what you have done but makes the same assertion that all good ads do: **If you buy this product, you will get these specific, direct benefits. It presents you in the best light.** It convinces the employer that you have what it takes to be successful in this new position or career.

It is so pleasing to the eye that the reader is enticed to pick it up and read it. It "whets the appetite," stimulates interest in meeting you and learning more about you. It inspires the prospective employer to pick up the phone and ask you to come in for an interview.

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## OTHER POSSIBLE REASONS TO HAVE A RESUME

- To pass the employer's screening process (requisite educational level, number years' experience, etc.), to give basic facts which might favorably influence the employer (companies worked for, political affiliations, racial minority, etc.). To provide contact information: an up-to-date address and a telephone number (a telephone number which will always be answered during business hours).
- To establish you as a professional person with high standards and excellent writing skills, based on the fact that the resume is so well done (clear, well-organized, well-written, well-designed, of the highest professional grades of printing and paper). For persons in the art, advertising, marketing, or writing professions, the resume can serve as a sample of their skills.
- To have something to give to potential employers, your job-hunting contacts and professional references, to provide background information, to give out in "informational interviews" with the request for a critique (a concrete creative way to cultivate the support of this new person), to send a contact as an excuse for follow-up contact, and to keep in your briefcase to give to people you meet casually—as another form of "business card."
- To use as a covering piece or addendum to another form of job application, as part of a grant or contract proposal, as an accompaniment to graduate school or other application.
- To put in an employer's personnel files.
- To help you clarify your direction, qualifications, and strengths, boost your confidence, or to start the process of committing to a job or career change.

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## WHAT IT ISN'T

It is a mistake to think of your resume as a history of your past, as a personal statement or as some sort of self expression. Sure, most of the content of any resume is focused on your job history. But write from the intention to create interest, to persuade the employer to call you. If you write with that goal, your final product will be very different than if you write to inform or catalog your job history.

Most people write a resume because everyone knows that you have to have one to get a job. They write their resume grudgingly, to fulfill this obligation. Writing the resume is only slightly above filling out income tax forms in the hierarchy of worldly delights. If you realize that a great resume can be your ticket to getting exactly the job you want, you may be able to muster some genuine enthusiasm for creating a real masterpiece, rather than the feeble products most people turn out.

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## WHAT IF I'M NOT SURE OF MY JOB TARGET?

If you are hunting for a job but are not sure you are on a career path that is perfect for you, you are probably going to wind up doing something that doesn't fit you very well, that you are not going to find fulfilling, and that you will most likely leave within five years. Doesn't sound like much of a life to me. How about you? Are you willing to keep putting up with pinning your fate on the random turnings of the wheel?

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