

Resume Writing - When to Invest in a Professional Coach

When do you use professional resume writing services over the DIY approach? At the risk of sounding evasive the answer is, “It depends.” The individual and the circumstances drive the decision to write one’s own resume or use a professional service.

Professional resume services don’t come cheap so most job hunters go the DIY route, but you should consider spending money on a professional service when your situation resembles one of the following.

Rambling Writer

A tome today is sure to be recycled into tomorrow’s newspaper. Many persons cannot summarize their activities and accomplishments into clear and concise statements and insist on listing the minutia of everything they ever did in their entire life.

Fast Tracker

While you could most likely sell yourself to a lateral position, or the next level, a professional service may help highlight your readiness when targeting more senior roles where you otherwise might not be considered.

Career Switcher

A thirty year CPA veteran looking to switch professions may need guidance in downplaying the degree of accounting concentration and bringing out the transferable skills s/he has to offer, and also in writing a cover letter accentuating the positives of the career switch.

Technical Guru

Persons in highly specialized professions often benefit from having a professional writer turn technical jargon, which no one but the writer typically understands, into terms that are recognizable and understandable by others.

“Successfully analyzed, designed, configured, developed, tested, and implemented the RDBMS Hexagram system in our Center of Excellence Department on a UNIX-based platform, conforming to SQL-92 and ADO.NET standards, using the SSADM method, resulting in yada, yada, yada.”

Uh, okay. Remember, the first place your resume lands is usually on a recruiter’s desk; that screener is not a database guru...s/he is a human resources professional charged with short listing hundreds of

Unless you were born rich, hugely successful, or lucky in the lottery, you depend on your job for income. So why do most people write their own resumes instead of investing in a professional coach? We wouldn’t think twice about investing \$500 to earn \$100,000 in the market, but why do we think differently when it comes to investing \$500 to land a \$100,000 job? Here are eight situations when you should consider investing money in a professional resume writing service.

resumes to a mere few. In addition to highlighting technical skills, your resume must also convey good communication skills - you will have the opportunity to have the technical discussion with the right people, but you have to get there first.

Returning Worker

Professional resume services can help persons who have been out of work for a while present employment gaps (such as a stay-at-home child raiser or returning student) in salable terms.

Lifer

Workers who have neither updated their resumes nor gone on interviews since their first day of employment some twenty years ago may need a writing coach.

Baby Boomer

Professional services can help bring out little things on senior resumes that offset age. Fifty is still young, but try finding a thirty-something hiring manager who subscribes to that belief.

Prevailing advice is to omit personal information, but a professional coach may suggest adding a few personal tidbits against conventional wisdom.

- ▶ Do you run marathons in a respectable number of hours? (The average finishing time for marathons is 4 ½ hours for men and 5 hours for women.)
- ▶ Do you participate on annual 50 mile charity bike-a-thons?
- ▶ Do you coach a youth sports team?

A professional coach will also help you scrub outdated phrasing.

- ▶ Are you ending with, “*References Available Upon Request?*” This is a definite senior flag.
- ▶ Are you using obsolete terminology? You may have a terrific career accomplishment based on MRP (Materials Requirement Planning), but this was superseded by ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning), and later by EAS (Enterprise Application Suite). Highlighting your experience by working in the latest terminology will show that you are experienced AND up-to-date, making you a more attractive candidate.

Dead Ender

Finally, if you did go the DIY route and are not landing interviews, maybe it is time to have a paid professional critique your resume.



Most of us are too close to ourselves and our work to read our resumes through the eyes of a detached recruiter or hiring manager. We all think we stand out, and I know this may come as a shock to some, but the reality is that we aren't always perceived in that same light by others.

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