

## What Are You Selling & Why Should I Buy...?

That's the primary question that most employers, recruiters or hiring managers think about when reviewing a resume. If your resume does not answer that question with measurable proof, then you need to revamp your search efforts including reviewing the purpose and quality of your resume. Even with all the changes noticed in the job market over the years such as the use of personal websites, fancy web pages, e-portfolios and/or professional blogs, it still comes down to that one piece of paper

Think back to your most recent days, weeks or months - how you've submitted numerous resumes a day yet have heard nothing. You know that your past performance has been great, and through no fault of your own, you were still downsized. You are wondering when that next paycheck will arrive, so you put together your resume, or hire someone to do so. However, if your resume doesn't differentiate you from at least a hundred other candidates doing the same thing for the same position, you will not even be considered. Even with a very powerful and informative resume, the competition out there is so intense that it's hard to make yourself known, much less provide you with the opportunity to portray your own unique brand and employment value.

**Rethink the purpose of your resume.**

**Sell a product – YOU.**

The use of the internet for job searching has been both a blessing and a curse. You may think that postings receive only resumes from those truly experienced and qualified for that one position. Frequently, job boards and career sites are inundated with candidates applying for every single job available, even if they aren't qualified. They are desperate for work and that desperation shows in their job search, and because of that employers are finding it even more difficult to find that diamond in the rough.

Your need to rethink the purpose of today's resume, the goal of which should be to sell a product - and that product is YOU. Recall all the advertisements you've see on television or in other media outlets and try to discern what makes you purchase one brand over another. There are several different brands of tissue, dish soap, hotdogs or any number of products. Why do you choose one over the other? Is it price, convenience, taste/feel, packaging, shape, size or product claims?

For an employer, it's a bit more complicated. They have their own needs and many of those include looking for the "product" that can save money, increase revenue, expand market share, open new territories, enhance operations, automate functions, boost productivity and most importantly, improve their overall bottom line. If you cannot "show them the money" through your proven ability to contribute, you won't be considered and will be waiting a very long time for that desired interview.

Hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars, are spent on creating a product and its associated brand image before effectively selling that product to make a profit. Without proper planning, the product won't be produced correctly, and even if it makes it to production, it will likely fail against other products that benefited from more effective preparation, innovation and marketing. When a product becomes truly successful, it is primarily based on its demonstrated ability to produce the desired results.

The biggest mistake I see in resumes today (other than typos, grammatical errors and an undesirable impression of hasty preparation) is the lack of focus on one's achievements and/or the inability to promote a unique professional brand. If you're a stellar salesperson, for example, someone who routinely produces strong results, the reader is still going to wonder what makes you different from hundreds of others with equally impressive achievements.

- ▶ Did you devise innovative marketing programs?
- ▶ Were you able to cultivate and maintain strong customer relationships?
- ▶ Did you find creative methods of opening new territories previously impenetrable?
- ▶ Were you able to gain entry into a customer with a history of not taking on new products? And if so, how did you do it?

Your resume needs to address these strengths, not just the numbers.

The same strategy should be employed for any industry. There needs to be a reason - actually several reasons - for that hiring manager to call YOU. They need to clearly see that you are the one to come in and solve their problems, turn results around and/or drive new opportunities. No matter what industry you are in, if you can't prove that you have the ability to make measurable contributions, the reader will not be interested. If you don't care enough to present the strongest image of yourself, why would an employer think you are deserving of their significant time and monetary investment required for an interview?

Yes, everyone is anxious to get back to work and/or find a more lucrative career. But without the proper planning, any job search can stall fast. You DO need the best resume possible, you do need to devote a big chunk of time to searching even though it's frustrating, you do need to perform the (sometimes dreaded) networking, you do have to keep detailed records for follow up and you have to make sure that what you are offering is better than what everyone else is selling. And that is truly the bottom line.



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