

Get
the
Job



Outdated Sections

Resumes have evolved with the employment market. From formats and font sizes to page length and contact information, advice about formatting your resume seems to change with the season.

One thing is for sure: Effective resumes don't look like they used to. Sections that used to work for resumes 15 or even 10 years ago simply don't anymore. So print out your resume and see if you're due for an update.

THE OBJECTIVE

Resumes used to start with objective statements. And they all read something like this: "To secure a position that will further my professional opportunities." That doesn't cut it anymore. Recruiters and hiring managers are looking for something — anything — that conveys why you are the perfect person for the job.

Why? Because their livelihoods are on the line. Four out of 10 employers surveyed by CareerBuilder state that a bad hire will cost them at least \$25,000 over the course of a year. It's estimated that, for small businesses, where employees are expected to do many different jobs, the cost can be closer to \$190,000 per year.

That's why employers are looking for more than a non-descript objective statement out of their prospective hires.

Instead, replace the objective with a personal branding



statement. This can be three to four sentences that tell and sell your story.

Be sure to include industry-specific keywords that will help your resume pass through applicant tracking systems that companies use to screen incoming applications.

THE REFERENCES

Another statement that does nothing more than take up valuable resume real estate: "References available upon request." Recruiters and hiring managers assume that you'll be able to produce three to five people who can validate your experience and key skills. That

step generally happens after the employer has had a chance to bring you in for an interview.

That being said, references are not completely obsolete. They are actually required for many government, science and higher education positions. Read your target job

description closely to find out if references are required for your application.

If so, create a separate page devoted solely to your references. Just make sure the page is in the same format and overall design as your resume. This helps give your documents a cohesive look and feel.

The Perfect Job Search

Does your job search look something like this? Post a resume on a major job board and let the recruiters come to you. If so, you may be in for a surprise when interest is a little less than you anticipated.



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The best job searches utilize a diversified approach, much like how you're advised to spread out your financial investments across various stocks, bonds and other vehicles. By doing so, you can keep your options open while making strong, cross-industry connections.

A DIVERSIFIED APPROACH

You are a product on the employment marketplace. Here's how you should market yourself:

- Post your job on major job boards and networking sites. Search them for specific positions in your area or geographical points of interest.

Fill out online applications and send direct emails to hiring managers if their addresses are given. Be proactive, not pushy.

- Think back to past employers, managers or peers with whom you built strong connections. Email them your resume and let them know you're on the market. Even if you're

not particularly interested in working for a past company, it never hurts to reconnect with former colleagues.

- Hit the town. Attend local job fair events. Take advantage of outplacement companies. Depending on your need for a new job, exhaust all avenues in your search.

THINK POSITIVE

If you're unemployed, emotions may be running high. Will you find a

job in time to maintain your standard of living? Will the right opening become available?

Remember, the most important aspect of the perfect job search is staying positive. Lean on friends and family members for support. Join online or community-based job groups focused on finding great job opportunities for their members.

The average search can last a couple of months. Stick to the grind and you will soon find yourself happily employed.

Tell Stories

Why should we hire you? What is your greatest strength? Your greatest weakness? The job interview has long featured the same questions posed to potential hires. Don't answer with the same old responses.

The main goal during an interview is to make yourself stand out from other prospective candidates. And there is one proven way to do so: Tell stories. No, not knock-knock-jokes or your favorite family story about your Uncle Joe.

Hiring managers want to hear stories about how you have saved your past employers money or improved their processes. They want honest anecdotes of how you made professional mistakes in the past and what you did to correct them.

Research by the Stanford Graduate School of Business found that stories are up to 22 times more memorable than facts alone. The human brain is more active when listening to a story. And keeping a hiring manager engaged during your interview is the ultimate goal.

STRUCTURE YOUR STORY

Being able to tell a good story requires preparation and practice — lots of it. Choose two or three of your signature achievements, as well as two or three of your most important learning moments. Now sit down at your computer and type away. Record what kinds of challenges you overcame,

what you learned and what actually transpired from your efforts.

Specific numbers will be less important here than your passion in describing key projects or programs. You want the hiring manager to connect with your story. So

make sure it has a strong beginning, middle and end. And keep the overall story short — less than one minute if possible.

Once you have your stories down on paper, recreate them in verbal form and practice, practice, practice.

SINCERE, NOT SCRIPTED

More important than the message of your story is the way you deliver it. Keep your audience members invested in your story by maintaining solid eye contact and involving them in the conversation.

And avoid sounding like a

robot. Use your public speaking skills to truly sell your story. Speak calmly and listen carefully to any questions. Hiring managers are trained to ask strong follow-up questions, so be ready to elaborate on any specific aspect of your story.



Teachers

Teachers have long been the backbone of our communities, guiding our young people to success. Elementary teachers, in particular, are there during students' critical growth stages.

Even as the education system as a whole continues to see funding challenges, now is still a great time to join the field.

Kindergarten and elementary school teachers must have at least a bachelor's degree. In addition, public school teachers must have a state-issued certification or license. Overall, you can achieve these credentials in about four years.

PAY & CAREER PROJECTION

The median annual wage for kindergarten teachers was \$50,120 in 2012, the last time the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics recorded such information.

The bureau also estimates that the employment rate of kindergarten and elementary school teachers is projected to grow 12 percent from 2012 to 2022, about as fast as the average for all occupations.



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MAIN DUTIES

Not sure if you're cut out for early education? Here is a detailed look at primary job duties, as defined by the Bureau.

- Plan lessons that teach students subjects, such as reading and math, and skills, such as studying and communicating

with others;

- Assess students to evaluate their abilities, strengths and weaknesses;
- Teach lessons they have planned to an entire class of students or to smaller groups;
- Grade students' assignments to monitor their prog-

ress'

- Communicate with parents about their child's progress;
- Work with students individually to help them overcome specific learning challenges;
- Prepare students for standardized tests required by the state;

- Develop and enforce classroom rules to teach children proper behavior; and
- Supervise children outside of the classroom — for example, during lunchtime or recess.

Look into the early education programs within your col-

lege or university to find out how to get started. Ask if they have any referral-based opportunities that will allow you to be placed for certain internships or student-teaching experiences. Making connections early in your career can lead to job growth.

Network the Right Way

It's not what you know but who you know. So goes the old saying. In the world of job hunting, that principle seems to hold true. Networking can help catapult your career to new levels.

And the best thing about networking? It's free. Building relationships takes only the investment of your time. Whether online or in person, meeting new people can unlock doors to career opportunities that may not have been on your radar.

ONLINE NETWORKING

To find new connections, start with your old ones. You can use various networking sites to find prior connections who may be able to introduce you to decision-makers within your preferred companies.

Online networking sites have made this easier than ever before. Send out a personalized message to a former connection to re-establish the relationship. Endorse their skills online and write recommendations for their pages. These gestures are professional courtesies that can lead to partnerships down the line.

IN-PERSON NETWORKING

Even though technology has streamlined the networking process, there is no substitute for face-to-face relationship-building. Arrange in-person meetings with people you'd like to network with. Offer to catch up over coffee or



lunch, remembering that you don't want to be seen as a burden on your connection's time.

Professional associations or trade groups are great for widening your network of connections. They give you access to

other professionals who may work for or have contacts within companies you want to join. Many are even job-specific, helping you get directly to the people with major influence within your industry.

Your college or university's alumni associations offer another way to make professional connections. You can start by contacting your alma mater's alumni relations office to join the group and gain

access to any online member databases.

Remember, networking works both ways. Be sure to introduce new connections to people you know to help them in their own careers.

Update Early & Often

Many people wait until there is a job opportunity on the table to update their resume. A position hits their target job board and they're off to the races, filling their documents with as much information as possible.

This leads to a sloppy compilation of roles and achievements — what you can remember of them.

It doesn't have to be this way. Locate the various versions of your resume today and put them in one place. Also compile other key documents that can include:

- College transcripts;
- Performance reviews;
- College transcripts;
- Professional development certifications; and
- Personality test results.

Once they're in one folder on your computer or external hard drive, you will have easier access to them for updating purposes.

KNOW WHAT TO UPDATE

Think about your past 10 to 15 years of career experience. Try to come up with your personal brand. If you were on a shelf at a grocery store, how would the back of your package read?

Start by typing a paragraph on your current role. Think of your daily activities. Are you a software developer designing new products for major clients? What goes into that role? Be as specific as possible. List all of the keywords related to your position, such as agile



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methodology, project life cycle, risk assessments, quality assurance, cross-functional collaboration, etc.

Also type out some accomplishments. What have you done to make an impact? To save your company money? To

make your company money?

MAKE THE UPDATES

You should be adding new details to your resume as they come along. Once you finish a project and see some measur-

able results, list the details on your resume. It's much easier to add information as it's fresh in your brain as opposed to recalling projects from years ago.

Keep things as concise as possible, remembering that

hiring managers are spending less than 30 seconds on their initial review of your resume. Even if the project you worked on was complicated with many moving parts, describe it in a few sentences for maximum impact.

Get Coached

Just like a professional athlete trains every day to be the best player at his or her position, you should prepare yourself for career success. This can mean different things for workers in varying fields.

The main goal is to brush up on defining and marketing your personal brand.

You may know what you bring to the table, but if you can't explain it to a recruiter or hiring manager, you're less likely than a more prepared candidate to get the job. A professional career coach can walk you through identifying and developing your key strengths and then guide you through the process of spreading the word.

WHY GET COACHED?

U.S. workers had an average job tenure of 4.6 years in 2012, the last year for which figures are available. That's up from 3.7 years in 2002 and 3.5 in 1983, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This means workers are entering the employment market less frequently, maybe creating some rustiness in interviewing, relationship building and networking skills.

A professional career coach can help you target and overcome your weaknesses. The outside perspective that a coach brings can help uncover marketable strengths that you may not have previously considered.

A coach can also serve as a great source of motivation, holding you accountable for updating your resume, attending career fairs or networking with the right groups. You may find that hiring a coach gives you a whole new outlook on searching for and securing new work.

HOW TO CHOOSE A COACH

The professional coaching industry is active. A simple online search will identify numerous coaches with varying levels of experience and certifications. The first step to career improvement is finding one who can legitimately help you.

Doing so will involve a little homework on your part. Just like choosing a car technician, a physician or home contractor, it's up to you to vet and verify your potential coach. Ask for qualifications and customer testimonials.

Review your prospective coach's website and see how he markets himself. If he doesn't do an effective job of quickly explaining his value, how can you trust him to make your shine?

