



Tweaking a Traditional Resume for a Tough Job Market

Actually, one might think that there is no need for an interview when there is a stellar resume in place and formally submitted to recruiters. But everyone knows that there is no recruitment without an interview, or a series of interviews. So, what does that all-important document called the resume actually signify? Why cannot recruiters offer jobs simply based on resumes? Why is an interview required even though the recruiter has received a cover letter and a resume of the candidate? Knowing the answers to these questions would help you to clearly understand the different roles of resumes and interviews in a recruitment process, and in turn, it would help you to develop better resumes, as well as be more prepared and respond better at interviews. And all this crucial knowledge can be acquired if you understand the answer to a single question – why do recruiters disregard resumes, and in which matters do they hold a resume is insufficient to answer their queries.

The traditional resume is distrusted and held insufficient for recruitment purposes for the following reasons:

- It is historical rather than future-oriented (Stokes Jr., 1997)
- It does not adequately address the strategic human resource needs of the organization or how the candidate would measure up to them (O'Sullivan, 2002; Winchester, 1999; Stokes Jr., 1997)
- It does not adequately capture the career expectations of the individual (Winchester, 1999; Bandura, 1997; Otte & Kahnweiler, 1995; Boivie, 1993)
- It emphasizes credentials and job descriptions rather than performance and accomplishments (Canter, 1998)
- It fails to address issues of employee sensitivity to the dynamically competitive marketplace (Portanova, 1995)
- It fails to demonstrate the preparations to satisfy the required human resources needs of the organization (Portanova, 1995)
- It is too formally structured to provide any meaningful differentiation between candidates (Holley, Higgins & Speights. 1988)
- It is limiting of creative self-expression (Duffus, 2002)
- It mostly fails to demonstrate the competitive advantage of a candidate to be considered for an interview over others (Duffus, 2002)
- It provides too little scope to properly emphasize accomplishments (Duffus, 2002)
- It is only an unreliable prescreening tool used due to lack of alternatives (Duffus, 2002)

So, what is the answer short of an interview? The answer is to embellish the traditional resume so that it clearly addresses those issues for which recruiters disregard it as an effective instrument for screening.



To start off, you can always outline in brief your personal career strategy plan within a short paragraph with suitable subheading, so that a recruiter does not visualize the job application only as a sheet of historical documentation. The need can be addressed either through the cover letter or by a short paragraph within the resume, or by a separate attachment with the resume titled as personal career plan. This strategy is especially effective in a turbulent job market. (Otte & Kahnweiler, 1995)

Next, your resume needs to be tweaked after researching the job position and the needs of the company required to be fulfilled by a person in that position. Your opening paragraph should clearly mention one or two lines that address the issue and assure the recruiters that you are what they are looking for.

Create a separate statement of work accomplishments and attach it to the resume. When creating the records of your work accomplishment try to emphasize on those points that match the requirements of the recruiters and assure them that you can fit the bill.

At least, creating a resume in this manner would help to differentiate you from others and greatly increase your chances of getting a job. Don't take my word for it. Try it and find the difference for yourself.

Sources:

Lee R. Duffus, "The Personal Strategic Plan: a Tool for Career Planning and Advancement," *International Journal of Management* 21.2 (2004)