

7 Secrets of Response – Generating Executive Resumes

Your
Resume is
Your Best
Salesperson

A truly effective executive resume is a response-generating sales tool that is compelling, distinctive in appearance, and consistent in finding its way to the top of the resume stack.



**EXECUTIVE
RESUME**

Career Results Since 1991

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ARE READY TO MAKE THAT NEXT MOVE IN YOUR CAREER?

Whether you are looking for a better career option, or just plain looking for a job due to loss or layoff, you have arrived at a critical crossroads. At this moment, the success you seek relies on a unique formula of drive, preparation, and execution. If these three elements can come together appropriately, your next great career awaits. How you arrive at this convergence, however, is a decision that only you can make.

WHICH PATH WILL YOU TAKE?

Before setting out on this journey, the question that each of us has to ask is, “Can I do this on my own or should I seek help?” Bottom line, do you feel confident that you have the skills and time to prepare all of the necessary job search materials? Or, would it be practical and effective to seek the help of career professionals to handle some of this workload and possibly even help you understand any new job search tips that you may not be aware of? After all, if you have not searched for a job or switch a career in the last 5-10 year, you need to be acutely aware – lots of things have changed since last time you searched and some changes have been very drastic!

It is common for most people to initially choose to set out on this journey on their own. Firstly, initiating a career change or a job search is a highly confidential matter and can be a very lonely venture, particularly at an executive level. Also, as a senior professional in a product or service industry, it is hard to justify paying someone to write your resume or prepare your materials when you feel that you should be perfectly capable of doing this on your own. It is human nature.

But like the products or services in your industry, you need to be able to clearly communicate your value and ROI in order to be successful in selling your brand to potential employers. Additionally, at a more senior or executive level, communicating your personal brand at-a-glance becomes critical. All this calls for a strong business and marketing plan for a product that we will call “PROJECT: YOU”.

And like business and marketing plans in your organization, you need to identify the best way(s) to execute them in the fastest and most efficient manner. This requires an honest assessment and self-acknowledgment of your professional strengths and weaknesses to determine whether or not you can drive and complete this project on your own with right quality output, or if you need to consult with or access additional resources.

GIVE US 10 MINUTES AND WE WILL SAVE YOU DAYS OR EVEN WEEKS

Whichever path you are considering, we simply ask you to give us an extra 10 minutes of your time. In the next few pages, we have compiled a list of critical items that you should carefully consider before you make a final decision. Whether you seek assistance in your career pursuit or if you are a do-it-yourselfer (DIY), our goal is that this information can provide some helpful insights and/or actionable advice to help you shave days or weeks off your job search.

Sound fair? Then let's get started.

HOW LONG SHOULD A JOB SEARCH TAKE?

Did you know that finding a new job can typically expect to take up to 3 to 9 months and an average of 12 months for more senior executives? It is also not out of the question for it take up to 18 months, especially if you are pursuing a 6 figure salary position. And, this only refers to the actual “search” phase of the job search of the process. The initial preparation time to actually begin the new job search for do-it-yourselfers (DIYs) could easily take solid 100+ hours to build a new resume, create or update social media profiles (such as LinkedIn), and prepare other career marketing materials. Depending on your work schedule or other commitments, that 100+ prep hours can easily stretch into several weeks or, if you are really busy and travelling, even a couple months.

ARE YOU READY TO DEVOTE THE TIME NECESSARY?

One of the first things that you need to realize is that the job search preparation and execution process takes time. Sure, you want a new, better job, or actually a career making move and you are excited to take on the world. But it is important to be realistic and perhaps even brutally honest about the time commitment necessary to make this happen. Forbes Magazine published an [article](#) outlining 5 critical steps to finding a new job fast:

1. **Review Your Resources**
2. **Fine Tune Your Resume & Branding**
3. **Expand Your Network**
4. **Hone Your Interview Skills**
5. **Compete Aggressively**

Sounds easy, right? But be careful. The first two steps can be more time-consuming than you think. Let's examine how long it should take to accomplish these on your own.

If you are a do-it-yourself (DIY) job seeker with 15 years of work experience, you are likely to spend between 100-115 hours of work preparing your initial job search materials. And, the more years of work experience you have, the longer it might take. Rather than trying to create new resume from scratch (which feel like it would take even longer), it is common for DIY job seekers to seek out online sample resume and materials to replicate. But even this shortcut may take more time than you would realize. Don't believe us? Let's do the math!

Finding and Preparing a New Template

According to limited survey, conducted by Executive Resume, DIY job seekers, on average, experienced the following when preparing or updating their resume.

1. **Searching (8 hours)** - Searching shopping multiple sites for resume samples can consume up to 8 hours to find your "perfect" sample
2. **Replicating (10 hours)** - Replicating chosen sample resumes can cause frustrations that result in consuming up to 10 hours or work reformatting and tweaking design templates
3. **Populating (4 hours)** - Once you have your new resume template in place, simply populating the resume fields with starting information from your current resume can result in up to 4 hours of work.

After approximately 2-3 two full days' work, respondents are typically excited about the visual and cosmetic improvements, but their resume likely still requires extensive writing. Using the new resume template, DIY job seekers believe that they can successfully complete their resume in 2-3 hours by merely using the sample fields. But, without a strong assessment of your real strengths and weaknesses and value that you can offer a potential employer (as discussed in the introduction), you will fail to convey and promote your brand. It is the CONTENT that's most critical element of your resume. And it's a strong brand content that's most difficult to create on your own, especially for a more senior professional and, especially, for an executive. [If you want to learn what makes for a strong CONTENT and STRCUTURE in an executive resume and how critical is the role that self-quantification and numbers play in all this, feel free to download our complimentary "10 Secrets of Effective Executive Resume" whitepaper here].

Refining and Reviewing Your Brand

Your resume is your one and only chance to capture a potential employer's attention, so if you plan to do it yourself, it is important not to rush this part of the process. To make your greatest impression possible you should plan on executing the following activities

Inventory Your Career (8-12 hours) – Think back through your career highlights and struggles and begin to assemble impactful data that you can use to demonstrate your value.

1. **Create Your First Draft (40-60 hours)** – Start applying your inventory notes into the new template, carefully considering how to appropriately position each experience in support your value proposition.
2. **Refinement (5-6 hours)** – With a solid draft completed, get out the red pen and start editing down until you have very concise and impactful features highlights. You only get
3. **Personalization (4-6 hours)** – If you are pursuing a particular job, you should take your polished resume and begin shaping it to respond to requirements.
4. **Peer Reviews - if possible (1-2 hours)** – If possible, have as many individuals review and comments on your resume as possible. Feedback is crucial here.
5. **Finalization – (2-3 Hours)** – Almost there! Take all feedback and apply as you deem appropriate.

After the completion of these steps, you should have a newly shaped resume in approximately 100-115 hours, the equivalent of approximately 2.5 weeks or more of a full time job. Here is a question – how many uninterrupted hours a week can you allocate to this and, therefore, how long would this task stretch out to be in calendar time?

Assessing the Benefit

If you know that writing your resume on your own may take 100-115 hours, you need to determine whether it is worth it or not. Sure, the advantage of taking a DIY approach can save you the upfront expense of hiring a professional writer, which might mean saving you up to \$1,500. But have you fully thought the disadvantages? There are three questions you should ask yourself.

1. **Will You Find the Time to Do this Yourself (and Do You Even Want To)?** - If you are currently employed, you are likely spending at least 45-50 hours a week supporting your job and may struggle to find the necessary personal hours to dedicate to this process. If you are currently unemployed, you may have the personal hours, but may be struggling to find the motivation to work on your resume. In either circumstance you need to be honest with yourself about your commitment level to complete.
2. **Is the Cost Saved Worth More Than the Time Lost?** - The bottom line...is the \$1,500 saved by taking a DIY approach worth more to you than the use of your time elsewhere? If you are currently employed, is your personal time (or extra time you could spend at your job) worth more? If you are currently unemployed, is two weeks of preparing your resume instead of searching jobs and networking worth more than the cost?
3. **Will this guarantee success?** - Lastly, even if you find the time to work on your resume and get it exactly where you want it, can you be sure that your resume will be successful? Do you know how to circumvent all the screening technologies and processes that can prevent your resume from even getting into the hands of an actual hiring manager? If you do not, you might want to review the next chapter.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT DISQUALIFIES 75% OF SUBMITTED RESUMES?

At many companies, Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) can work against you, rejecting as many as 75% of resumes before they even reach a hiring manager's desk. In fact, overall, 98% of job seekers are eliminated during resume screening, with only the top 2% of candidates making it to an interview. Do you know how to beat the system?

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINES TO GET TO THE RECRUITER

As you realize by now, there are real and significant time commitments that need to be considered when drafting your own job search materials. Many are willing to make this commitment, and this is a fair decision. After all, none of us are above putting in a little work.

Where confidence begins to wane is in the realization of how employers are using new and evolving technologies and processes to screen resumes. The bottom line...it is possible for a well-crafted resume from even the most qualified candidate to be eliminated by automated systems before it hits human eyes. Sounds like the beginning of a Terminator movie, right? It's truly not that ominous. But the real truth is that unless you know the intricacies of these evolving screening processes, it can be difficult to know how to shape your resume to combat these machines.

So, let's look at the obstacle course ahead of you so that you know what stands in your way.

Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)

To help manage the growing numbers of job-seeker candidates applying for available jobs, employers are increasingly turning to applicant tracking systems (ATS) that automate the resume screening process. In fact, recent statistics have shown that as many as 75% of large companies, and close to 60 percent of mid-sized businesses, are now using applicant tracking systems to review and rank resumes before a recruiter sees them. But if you do not know what this is, let's define it.

An ATS is a software application that enables the electronic handling of resumes, similar to customer relationship management systems, but designed for recruitment tracking purposes. Essentially, it automates the filtering of submitted resumes and “scores” or ranks each based on employer defined criteria such as keywords, skills, former employers, years of experience and schools attended. Highest scoring resumes may move on to a hiring manager’s desk, while others may be removed from the application process altogether.

As an example, employers establish certain keywords they are looking for from applicant resumes. If the ATS system finds a resume match of 80% or more against those keywords, it is common for that resume to be sent upward to a hiring manager. Anything less than 80% may not make it to the second level of review, demonstrating the true challenge and necessity to optimize resumes for ATS screening. Even more disconcerting is the fact that, given it’s somewhat unique layout and structure, an executive level resume has a bigger chance of being stuck while being parsed within ATS and, therefore, never even make it to the keyword matching phase. It might simply get stuck and deleted by the ATS.

You may think that this is unfair, but put yourself into the shoes of the hiring organization. An association named Interview Success Formula, compiled information from various sources, including the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Glassdoor.com, CNN, TheUnderCoverRecruiter.com, and *The Wall Street Journal*, among others, for a report that estimated, on average, that there are approximately 118 applicants for every job posted. However, some organizations have estimated the number of applications they get for a job posting at 400 applicants for each entry level job, 300 for each mid-level job, and around 150 for senior level positions. Some of the more popular executive level positions on LinkedIn get 200-400 applications. If organizations are receiving over 100 resume per job, there is simply no time to do an effective review. Take for example, Microsoft, who reportedly receives 50,000 resumes weekly. The amount of time and effort it would be to review these manually makes it simply not feasible.

“...as many as 75% of large companies, and close to 60 percent of mid-sized businesses, are now using applicant tracking systems.”

EVEN IF YOU BEAT THE MACHINES, CAN YOU PASS THE EYE TEST?

If you are fortunate to by-pass the ATS hurdle, did you know that recruiters only spend an average of 6.25 seconds visually reviewing applicant resumes to determine whether or not to discard the resume or to move it into a possible interview pile? Do you know what key items recruiters are looking for?

CATCH THE EYE OF THE RECRUITER

If you are fortunate to land your resume into a recruiter's hands, you still need to get the recruiter to visually identify the "right" information quickly and clearly before they will escalate it to interview status.

Historically, recruiters claimed to spend approximately 4-5 minutes thoroughly reviewing each resume that they receive. A study from TheLadders.com, however, recently demonstrated that, in fact, recruiters only spend an average of 6.25 seconds scanning each resume. Of that time, 80% is spent looking specifically at:

- **Name** - Your name address and contact information tells a recruiter more than you think. When you think about it, this information immediately communicates distinctions (such as CPA) to demonstrate your qualifications. Another is location, location, location. For some recruiters, your current residence and/or distance from the company may play a hand in consideration.
- **Current Title/Company (and Current Position, Start and End Dates)** - What better way to demonstrate your value than to boldly advertise the company or employer you have been supporting in your role? If you are coming from a competing company, or a premier company within your market space, the criticality of this information in attracting recruiter attention can become even more magnified.
- **Previous Title/Company (and Previous Position, Start and End Dates)** - Your past roles provide recruiters with insight into how you have (ideally) continued to grow your professional career and work experience over time. Your time at each position may also provide insight into career tendencies and set recruiter expectations on your dependability for the organization.
- **Education** - Obviously, recruiters want to ensure that you have the required education. Additionally, recruiters may give preference to candidates from top tier schools.

The remaining 20% was spent looking for specific keywords that matched the job posted. But while they read keywords, recruiters were found to have based their decisions on those six initial pieces of data.

If you are wondering how this data was captured, it was through innovative eye-tracking technologies that measure either the point of gaze (where one is looking) or the motion of an eye relative to the head across, in this instance, a resume layout. Basically, it uses technology to capture eye movements, recording and analyzing where and how long a person focuses on certain areas of the resumes as information is processed.

HOW DO PROFESSIONALLY WRITTEN RESUMES STACK UP?

A study from TheLadders.com claims that when asked to rank résumés they reviewed, recruiters gave professionally rewritten ones a 60% higher score than amateur résumés. The recruiters surveyed said the professionally written samples were 40% better organized and readable than those written by applicants themselves.

WHAT THE PROS KNOW

So the question remains. Do you tackle the development of your brand and resume on your own, or do you ask for help to one extent or another? As we have outlined, there are many considerations around time and costs that must be taken into consideration. But most important is whether or not you believe you have the appropriate skills and insight to develop a winning resume. After all, if your resume isn't written to score well through the automated screening process, no amount of dedicated cost or time spent will make a difference.

Using a professional resume writer service does make that difference. This is not to discount that fact that many individuals can and have succeeded on their own. But, a recent study by the www.ladders.com, demonstrated that a professionally written can make you 38% more likely to be contacted by recruiters, 31% more likely to get an interview, and 40% more likely to get the job. The reason for this success can be attributed to many factors.

They Know the Technologies

Professional writers know and understand the latest recruitment technologies. Whether this means understanding how to overcome ATS system screening, utilizing evolving digital platforms (i.e. digital resumes), or packaging and refining social career profiles, professional writers who know their business, can quickly and effectively help job seekers gain new opportunities.

They Know the Audience

Professional writers know the audience for your resume. You may think that your resume needs to gain the attention of the hiring manager. But in fact, it needs to attract the attention of multiple audiences at one time. The parties involved in screening resumes may include screeners, recruiters, hiring managers, and/or many more hands, all that need to recognize your value from one document.

"... a professionally written can make you 38% more likely to be contacted by recruiters, 31% more likely to get an interview, and 40% more likely to get the job."

Professional writers are typically experienced and familiar with what employers will be looking for, how they will be looking at it, and why an employer may or may not choose it amongst other candidates. This experience many times comes from past careers as human resource professionals and recruiters, or from years of personal backgrounds in various industries and vertical markets. It is this experience that guides the writers to better understand how to shape your resume and how to help you develop a strategy for success.

They Are Less Biased and Know How to Deliver a Neutral Third-Party View

Professional writers can help you to deliver an honest and unbiased reflection of your value. If you are individual who finds it difficult to discuss or write about yourself, professional writers offer the opportunity to ensure that your resume highlights your greatest achievements. Conversely, professional writers can also ensure that you accurately and truthfully present your experiences or abilities.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

WHAT THE PROS KNOW

Today's job seeker faces growing complexities in their job search and even more competition from a growing pool of qualified applicants. Your resume is your brand, and it represents your opportunity to make your best first impression. To make that impression, you can choose to take that endeavor all on your own, or to seek help. The choice is yours.

There is no question that many can, and have, successfully developed their own resume and job search materials. As outlined in this paper, the do-it-yourself (DIY) job seeker can easily find information to reference, samples to replicate, and a network of individuals to connect with. The decision is whether you have the time and understanding to beat the obstacles outlined in the former chapters.

One the biggest reasons that job seekers seek out professional writers is to let them do what they do best...write impactful resumes that get results. After all, if you know nothing of car repair, would you hire a mechanic to repair a faulty fuel pump or try to do it yourself? The means to do it yourself are there. You can buy a mechanic's manual, you can access online repair videos, etc. But my guess is that most surveyed would say that the cost to have a mechanic fix that pump is well worth the time saved, the avoidance of having to get hands dirty, and peace of mind that the work has been done correctly. If this speaks true of you, why wouldn't you treat your career brand and job seeking efforts as important as a fuel pump repair?

NEED HELP DEVELOPING AN IMPACTFUL RESUME?

Let Executive Resume be your preferred partner. Whether you are looking for assistance in developing your resume and job search materials, or simply need some quick-start help to get you moving, Call 888-564-4448 (toll free) to set up a confidential 30 minute complimentary phone consultation. You can also visit us at www.executiveresume.com to learn more about our services, including our industry-leading ["You Write, We Help"](#) DIY offerings, or to see executive resume samples of our work



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Career Results Since 1991

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN.

This paper has discussed how to Review Your Resources and Fine Tune Your Resume and Branding. If you wish to continue to learn more, [click here](#) to explore the following:

1. In "10 Secrets of Effective Executive Resumes" whitepaper, you can quickly learn what makes for a resume that SELLS (not tells)
2. Our "7 Tips for Selecting Executive Resume Writing Firm" can help you quickly narrow down from 1000+ resume writing firms to the one that's right for you.
3. Other whitepapers in the making are taking on the following topics:
 - a) Expand your Network, Hone your Interview Skills, and Compete Aggressively.
 - b) Getting The Most Value from Your Resume Writing Firm provides a first-hand account of the experience of working with a professional resume writer to develop an impactful resume.

To register for advanced copies of these papers, please email us at info@executiveresume.com. Thank you!

