Make Your Resume Stand Out!

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Years ago we were taught to write our resumes in a very stiff, formal way. Many career placement offices and career advisors still teach people to describe themselves like this:

*Results-oriented professional with a bottom-line orientation. Motivated self-starter experienced in leading cross-functional teams.*

This is a horrible way to talk about yourself. I'm looking at you right now through the screen, and the last thing I'd ever call you is a Results-oriented professional.

That could be anybody! You might as well say "I breathe oxygen." That would be better than using the standard, fall-asleepy traditional resume language.

Your resume has to stand out. A hiring manager is going to see more than one resume when he or she has a job opening to fill.

I don't want you to throw your resume into any automated applicant tracking systems.

I want you to send your resume directly to your hiring manager at his or her desk. That's the first way you're going to get his or her attention.

If you're not sure how to do that,[here are the steps to follow.](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140212174211-52594-how-to-reach-your-hiring-manager-directly?utm_campaign=buffer&utm_medium=social&utm_content=bufferf6299&utm_source=twitter%2Ecom)

Once your hiring manager opens the envelope with your resume and Pain Letter inside, your goal is for him or her read your Pain Letter, then flip it over to see your Human-Voiced Resume just behind it.

Now you're telling your story. Your future boss is reading, and while s/he's reading a smile is spreading across the boss's face.

"This person could help me!" s/he thinks. The boss reaches for the phone and dials your number. "I got your letter," s/he says. "Do you have a little time to talk?"

This is the scenario we're shooting for. It's totally different from the standard job-search slog, the depressing march to a soul-crushing ride through the Black Hole corporate or institutional recruiting machine. Who needs that nonsense? Not you!

Here are five painless ways to make your resume stand out. Your non-traditional means of approach through the mail rather than the Applicant Tracking System is a great start, but your resume has to live up to the promise that you made when you asked your hiring manager to open that envelope.

It has to sing your song!

**Use "I" In Your Resume**

Your resume is a marketing vehicle. Of course you're going to use the word "I" in it!

You're writing about yourself, so it's perfectly appropriate to use the word "I" a few times. Which statement is more compelling?:

*Motivated self-starter with a bottom-line orientation*

Or

*I'm a PR Manager whose mission is to get up-and-coming businesses the national publicity they deserve.*

**Add a Summary That Tells Your Story**

A lot of resumes give you the resume-owner's name and contact details, then dive right into their career history. That's a bad move, because when you leave out the Summary at the top of your resume, you force the reader to figure out what you're all about and what you're looking to do next.

That isn't always obvious from the list of your past jobs.

Give us a Summary that frames your experience and your career plans for the reader's benefit, like this:

*Ever since I covered business stories for my college newspaper, I've been a zealot for business story-telling and its power in shaping audience behavior. As a PR pro I've gotten my clients and employers covered by CNN, USA Today and the Chicago Tribune.*

See how much power and heft your Human-Voiced Resume Summary conveys? Don't begin your job search without it!

**Frame Your Employers**

I feel bad for job-seekers when I see resumes day after day that list employer names, job titles and dates without any other contextual information that would help the person reading the resume -- me, for instance -- understand what the role was all about. We need to know more than just the company name.

How big is the firm? Maybe we've never heard of it. What industry are they in?

You're going to frame every past employer in your Human-Voiced Resume, like this:

***Acme Explosives, Phoenix, Arizona***

*Operations Manager 2005 - 2010*

*Acme is a family-owned stick dynamite manufacturer with $10M/year in annual sales.*

Now that we know who Acme Explosives is, we can imagine what the Operations Manager role would entail. Context, relevance and meaning are the keys to a Human-Voiced Resume -- after the human voice in your resume, of course!

**Frame Your Mission**

Now you've told us about the employer. Your next step is to tell us about your mission in the job. We don't care about your tasks and day-to-day responsibilities. We can extrapolate those things from the job title.

Here's how we'll frame your Operations Manager role at Acme:

***Acme Explosives, Phoenix, Arizona***

*Operations Manager 2005 - 2010*

*Acme is a family-owned stick dynamite manufacturer with $10M/year in annual sales. I was hired to bring in just-in-time manufacturing and a supply chain strategy to support Acme's e-commerce launch once modular, shippable stick dynamite products were approved by UPS and the USPS.*

What do we have now? We have a story! That's what you want in your Human-Voiced Resume. The smart folks at Acme developed a stick dynamite product that ships in pieces and gets assembled on site. It can't blow up in the mail truck. That's a good thing!

Now Acme wants to dive into e-commerce, and can we blame them? They hire our Operations Manager to put the whole show together. That's the story! You can tell a story the same way in your resume.

Now, all we need to do is add some powerful bullets to tell the reader of your Human-Voiced Resume how you came, saw and conquered.

**Give Us Dragon-Slaying Stories**

We call those bullet-stories Dragon-Slaying Stories, because in each one, you're going to tell your resume's reader -- your hiring manager, that is -- how you slew (or tamed) a particular dragon.

*I was hired to bring in just-in-time manufacturing and supply chain strategy to support Acme's e-commerce launch once modular, shippable stick dynamite products were approved by UPS and the USPS.*

* *For our e-commerce launch, I set up fourteen regional distribution centers with bonded warehouse partners to hit two-day delivery anywhere in the continental U.S.*
* *Within a year of our launch we increased sales 45% and profits 86% over the previous year.*
* *To staff our expansion, I hired and trained four supervisors and 55 team members -- the Dynamite Squad. At our one-year mark we had one percent turnover, no accidents and a staff appreciation dinner for the Squad and their families.*

Is this Operations Manager just anybody? Heck no -- and neither are you!

Bring out your power in your resume, by putting a human voice in it and using stories to bring your awesomeness across on the page. It's a new day. The Human Workplace is already here.

Step into it by branding yourself a person with a past, an individual worldview and your own spin on the work you do. I promise you'll be happy with the results!

**Human-Voiced Resume Questions and Answers**

**Will my Human-Voiced Resume get through keyword-searching systems?**

Maybe, but that is not its purpose. Your Human-Voiced Resume was written for your hiring manager, not for a machine. Forget the automated recruiting sites and learn how to reach your own hiring manager directly at his or her desk. You'll send your Human-Voiced Resume in an envelope to your manager -- in this case, the VP of Operations who ended up hiring our awesome Operations Manager!

**Isn't a Human-Voiced Resume a space-hog? I want to keep my resume to two pages!**

That is a common concern. When we humanize resumes for our clients, they are almost always shorter than the zombie resumes they replace. You don't need many Dragon-Slaying Stories to show the reader (not tell!) how you ruled at each job you had.

**When everybody starts sending Pain Letters and Human-Voiced Resumes to their hiring manager through the mail, won't this method become less effective?**

I couldn't tell you. but that is the last thing you need to worry about right now. Only a tiny sub-set of the job-seeking population has the mojo right now to step outside the velvet ropes and try something new in their job search. Why not be one of those people?