



The Complete Guide To Resume Writing

By Louise Fletcher

About the Author



Louise Fletcher is the President of [Blue Sky Resumes](#), a leading career marketing company which she co-founded in 2002. She is also the Co-founder and Managing Editor of [Career Hub](#), a group blog which features advice, insights and job search strategies from many of the US's leading career experts.

Louise is a frequent contributor to online job search publications and her work is featured in numerous resume books. A recognized leader in cutting-edge job search techniques, Louise has helped 1,000s of professionals secure a better position through effective career marketing.

The Complete Guide to Resume Writing is the first in a planned series of books designed to give job seekers all the tools they need to succeed in today's competitive job market.

You can stay in touch with the very latest in resume writing and career marketing advice, by subscribing to Louise's blog at www.blueskyresumesblog.com.

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Introduction

The Purpose of this Book

This book is for everyone who is frustrated after sending out hundreds of résumés with little or no response. Everyone who is sick of feeling ignored. Everyone who has ever wondered if anyone has even seen their résumé.

If this is you, you're not alone – there are millions of résumés floating around in cyberspace. The job market is more competitive than ever and Internet job boards and computer résumé databases have made it harder than ever to stand out.

But there are people who never struggle for interviews, people whose résumé always gets a response. That's not because they're better than you – it's because their résumé is better than yours.

And that's why I wrote this book - to teach you how to write a résumé that grabs attention, generates interviews and makes interviewers like you before they've even met you.

The Background

This book has been a long time in the making.

Before starting my own résumé writing business, I spent 15 years working in HR. Over that time I hired thousands of people, from

entry-level to senior executives, and I saw why a select group of people succeeded in marketing themselves effectively while most failed to make the most of their skills and experience.

I also saw a dramatic shift in recruitment practices. When I started out, we advertised our vacancies in the newspaper, waited for responses to come in by mail, and then read each résumé to decide who to interview. On average we would receive 10-50 applications for each management position.

But when email replaced snail mail, and online ads replaced newspaper ads, everything changed. Job seekers suddenly had access to positions all across the country rather than just seeing the ones advertised in their local paper. And it became much easier to apply for a job. There's no need to buy stamps and envelopes and nice paper, and no need to line up in the post office. Instead, you just take a few seconds to press the 'send button.'

The result was a dramatic increase in the number of job applicants – sometimes we'd receive thousands of résumé submissions for a management position and many of them came from people who were either unqualified, or who lived too far away.

The end result of all this change was that we had much less time to review résumés, and much less patience when we did find the time.

And the truth is that most of the résumés we received were just plain awful. They didn't give us the right information, they didn't present it

effectively, and they didn't use the right keywords to show up in database searches. To be honest, résumés have always been bad, but it wasn't as much of a problem when there weren't so many of them flying around.

Seeing the opportunity to help people stand out among all these terrible résumés, I started my own résumé writing service. Using my knowledge of the hiring process, I was able to write résumés that appealed to HR managers, recruiters and hiring managers. As the business grew by word-of-mouth, the workload grew too much for me and I developed a system to train other writers to do the same.

I truly get satisfaction from my work. I love hearing from clients that they sent out their new résumé and immediately began to get phone calls. I love getting the emails telling me they landed a great new job, and thanking me for helping.

But there's one downside to what I do. Many people can't afford the fee for a professional résumé rewrite.

Over and over again, I saw people choosing lower priced services to save money, or using 'quick' online systems promising a great résumé in just a few minutes. I knew they would be disappointed with the results and it bothered me to think I couldn't help them make the future they deserved.

That's when I decided to write this book – to share my résumé writing system with anyone who needs help to get more interviews and better

job opportunities. It's the first time I have ever shared the secrets of my system with anyone, except the select few writers who work for me.

How the résumé writing system works

My résumé writing system is based on the premise that looking for a job is like marketing – only instead of selling a product, you are selling yourself.

Just as with marketing, you are trying to persuade strangers to pay attention to you. Just as with product marketing, you have to show them why they should care about you by showing them how they will benefit. And just as with product marketing, you only have a very short time to get attention and communicate your core message.

If you're a little uncomfortable with the idea of marketing yourself as you would market a product, you're not alone. Most of us were taught not to boast when we were children, so when we sit down to write a résumé, we feel awkward and unsure of how to present ourselves in the best possible light. Many people even get writer's block.

The resulting résumé is usually a stilted, lifeless document that doesn't represent the real person who wrote it.

My résumé writing system has been designed to help you avoid writer's block, overcome your modesty and write a compelling résumé that truly does represent the real you.

That's because we start by NOT writing a résumé.

That's right – a résumé writing system that doesn't involve writing a résumé! At least not at first.

In order to help you overcome writer's block, and develop the best possible content for your résumé, my system is broken into two major stages

Stage One: Résumé Preparation

At this stage, you are not focused on writing the actual résumé. You're not worrying about format, structure, font choice, spelling, grammar, or even how many pages you write. Instead, you're just focused on a series of exercises that will help you develop the content for your résumé.

Because the pressure of writing the résumé is gone, you will find this process easier than you thought. You will also gain confidence as you answer my questions and begin to realize just how much you have to offer future employers.

You will work through a series of exercises designed to help you:

- define your job targets
- understand the needs of your target market
- draft content and develop ideas that will form the basis of your résumé

The exercises are based on my proprietary client résumé worksheets and also on the training I give my own professional résumé writers.

At the end of this stage, you will have all the raw content you need for your résumé.

Stage Two: Résumé Writing

Once you have developed all your content, you will find this stage much easier than you imagined. You will know what message you want to convey and you will have written everything you need. Now you will simply edit, polish and format the information until you have a highly effective marketing document that generates interest and dramatically increases your job search success.

During Stage two, I'll show you how to create a winning résumé. You will:

- Develop a résumé profile that communicates your value proposition.
- Write concise, context-filled job descriptions that set the scene.
- Edit your accomplishment stories into concise, action-packed bullet points that make employers excited to meet you.
- Choose a résumé structure and format that highlights your strongest selling points (and downplays any weaknesses).

- Create various versions of your résumé so that everyone can view it no matter what computer system they are using.

Once your résumé is complete, we'll also cover adapting it to suit different situations and you'll be able to assess your new résumé using my proprietary résumé evaluation questionnaire.

Your copy of the résumé writing system also includes:

- a copy of my résumé preparation questionnaire. You are free to use this questionnaire for your preparation work, or to write notes in some other format if you prefer. The questionnaire follows the structure of this book should you choose to use it. Honestly, what matters is the thought that goes into the work, not which method to use to keep track of your information.
- 20 MS Word résumé templates. The résumés are also included at the end of this book as samples, but the templates are provided so that you can use one of our formats if you choose to.
- A free guide to my cover letter writing system which gives you all the information you need to create cover letters that complement the marketing message of your résumé.
- A free Job Search Strategy Guide, to ensure that your new résumé is put to the best possible use.

Résumé Dos and Don'ts

This section of the book is optional reading. If you would like to get started, you can just skip to page 32 and get started on preparing for your new résumé.

But if you're like me, and you like to do some warm-up exercises before you start working out, here are some résumé do's and don'ts based on the things I've learned about hiring, looking for a job and writing a résumé.

DO: Accentuate the Positive

When you start to work on your résumé, you may start to hear voices in your head. These voices will be talking about *you*.

They'll be questioning whether the things you're writing are really all that impressive. They'll be whispering that other people went to a better school than you, or got a degree when you didn't get one, or worked for more high-profile companies. Don't listen to them!

Recently I worked with a senior executive client named Matt Davies who was hearing those kind of voices. Like many people in this tough job market, Matt was looking for a job for the very first time in his thirty-year career.

Prior to losing his job as CEO of a software developer, Matt had been recruited from one job to the next by former colleagues and

managers, or by executive recruiters. Then his company was acquired in a hostile takeover and Matt found himself out of work.

He became my résumé client after he had written and rewritten his résumé dozens of times without success. When we spoke, he was feeling extremely insecure. He had been out of work for five months and was beginning to feel that he would never work again. “There are just too many problems with my background,” he said.

Matt explained that he had held a variety of positions (CFO, COO, CEO) in many different industries, and he worried that potential employers would see him as a ‘job hopper’. In addition, he was sure that his lack of an MBA was hurting his job search.

I asked Matt to put aside his concerns for an hour or so, and just talk to me about his career history. I was extremely impressed with what I heard. In each one of his positions, Matt had come into a troubled situation and had quickly zeroed in on the company's core business problem. Within months, he had developed a strategy to expand market share and grow revenues.

This had happened regardless of his title and regardless of the industry. And the results spoke for themselves - dramatic turnarounds, double-digit sales increases, companies saved from bankruptcy ... Matt had built an impressive track record of success.

As we worked through the process of creating his new résumé, Matt came to recognize that his breadth of experience wasn't a weakness

but a strength. Of the missing MBA, he told me, “I guess it won’t matter much after they see what I can do for them.”

Matt’s right and the same applies to you.

No-one has a perfect résumé – all of your competitors have issues to overcome (they’ve been with one company “too long” or they haven’t been with the company “long enough”; they don’t have a degree or they have too many degrees and worry about being “over-qualified”; they have only worked in one industry or they’ve worked in too many industries; They’re “too young” or they’re “too old” – the list goes on.

Imagine Bill Gates sitting down to write his résumé. Would he worry that he never finished college? Would he wonder who would hire a guy who’s never had a boss? Perhaps he’d be concerned that he has only ever worked in one company. Of course, none of those things would stop people from hiring Bill Gates because the positives more than outweigh the negatives.

So, when you embark on a job search, DO NOT worry about what you *don't have*, *didn't do*, *haven't* experienced. Eliminate negative thoughts, silence those voices and focus on the positive aspects of the same information.

Never worked for anyone else? Then you've never had to be told what to do. Held positions in many different industries? That means you're capable of success in any field. Don't have an MBA? Well, look what you've accomplished without one!

Your target companies want to hire winners – by accentuating the positive, you can show them that’s exactly what you are. So, as you work on your résumé preparation, I want you to turn every negative into a positive.

DON'T: Lie or Exaggerate on Your Résumé

Accentuating the positive means putting a positive spin on your background – shining a light on those things you want people to see and pushing the other stuff into a dark corner. It *doesn't* mean you should be dishonest.

Never, NEVER lie on your résumé.

You will probably be caught in your lie during the interview process, and if not, you may well be caught at some time in the future. If that happens, you will likely be fired.

Recently I came across a website advertising an instructional book on how to lie on your résumé. An actual book. Being sold for money! It may as well be called “How to Risk Ruining Everything.”

Tell the truth on your résumé. There are lots of fabulous things about you – more than enough to make up for any perceived flaws or issues.

Do: Invest Time and Energy in Your Résumé

Before you bought this book, you probably looked at lots of books and online systems promising you an ‘easy’ or ‘quick’ solution to your need for a new résumé. I’m sorry to say that anyone promising this is not leveling with you.

It’s certainly possible to write a résumé quickly and easily. It’s possible to do anything easily and quickly if you’re willing to do it badly!

If you want a résumé that sells you to potential employers, that makes the most of your unique skills and abilities, and that communicates what’s truly special about you so that employers pick up the phone to schedule interviews, you’ll have to put in some effort.

There are no short-cuts – but there is a tried and tested formula. And that’s what I can give to you. My step-by-step system for writing a résumé that sells.

And really, why wouldn’t you want to put some time and effort into **the most important document you’ll ever write?**

Does that sound like an overstatement? Consider this:

- Your résumé **determines whether you get interviews**
- **It represents you** to people who have no idea who you are, but who have the power to determine your future.
- It often **determines interview questions.**
- It **establishes your economic worth** in the minds of potential employers.

- It **stays on your personnel file** for future managers to review.

Your résumé quite literally determines your future.

Given all this, it's worth investing some time in creating a document that truly sets you apart.

DON'T: "Use Résumé-speak"

Many résumés are written in a very stilted, overly formal voice. Don't be tempted to use big words that you wouldn't normally use in real life.

Your reader is busy and hassled and doesn't want to try and figure out what you're saying, so write your résumé using simple, easily understood words. If you are in a highly technical profession, use layman's terms where possible so that an HR manager or recruiter can understand what you're saying.

DO: Appreciate What You've Accomplished

As you work through the preparation process, you will notice that your confidence is increased as you realize your unique value to employers. You will gain a new appreciation for yourself and for what you bring to potential employers.

Looking for a job can be a tough process, and I want you to review your notes regularly as you conduct your search because they will help

boost your confidence on days when things don't go as you had hoped.

DON'T: Use company jargon

People who work for technology companies are often the worst offenders at this. I think technology companies have a specialized term for everything, including eating lunch!

The problem is that outsiders can't understand what the résumé says. So avoid any acronyms or terms used only in your company and not in general. If you're not sure have friends or relatives read the résumé and point out words or phrases they don't understand.

DO: Use Your Résumé Prep for More than Your Résumé

You'll see that the résumé preparation process is a great help in preparing for interviews. As you develop your résumé content, you will also be developing a series of stories and anecdotes that will be very useful to you in interviews.

You will also have a much clearer sense of how to answer the dreaded question 'why should we hire you?'

DO: Answer the WITF question

Résumés that get results have one thing in common – they answer the employer's key question: *what's in it for me?*

Think about the manager who opens your email and starts to read your résumé. In all likelihood, she is overworked and understaffed. She's probably working to tight deadlines and she desperately wants to hire that extra person to make her life easier.

So when she looks at your résumé, she wants to know one thing: *how you will make her life easier?*

This is the case whether you are a senior-level executive, a professional, or an entry-level employee just starting out. No matter what your experience-level, the manager will want to know: *What's in it for me?*

Most résumés don't answer this question effectively at all. Instead they are usually a straightforward listing of positions held and responsibilities undertaken.

And this means that every résumé the hiring manager opens looks like every other résumé she received for the same position. Her job is to try and figure out which ones she should read in more detail, but it's tough because no one is making it easy for her.

Sometimes she makes the right choice and sometimes she doesn't. Her 'no' pile definitely contains people she would have interviewed, had she known how good they were.

Your new résumé is going to answer that key question: *what's in it for me?*

Thanks for reading!

If you'd like to get started on creating a resume that delivers results, order now!

“The Complete Guide to Resume Writing”
Inside Secrets from a Professional Resume Writer



Find out More

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