

THE TOP 1/3 of Your Resume!

A long holiday weekend is a good chance to think about strategy. Here's a good one:

If I ripped off the top third of your resume and handed it to a complete stranger...

...would they be able to tell me what you wanted to do with the rest of your life?

If the answer is no, then you should consider updating your resume strategy.

You see, the top 1/3 of your resume should be a professional summary that expresses quickly and succinctly what you're looking to do next by showcasing the abilities that will get you there.

HR professionals, hiring managers, executive recruiters: they're all pressed for time these days and they can't try to guess what you're looking for.

A "professional summary" at the top of your resume lists the **relevant** accomplishments, qualifications and proficiencies for the job you would like to get, and is an important part of helping people understand you and what role they should consider hiring you for.

The biggest temptation is to list **all** your past accomplishments. Avoid it.

Nobody wants to read your "ingredients" label -- the comprehensive listing of everything and anything that you contain.

Would you market Coke Zero by putting Phosphoric Acid, Potassium Benzoate and Potassium Citrate in the same size font on the label as "great Coke taste, zero calories"? No, because you'd want to emphasize the most important things, rather than distract people with irrelevant information.

So don't make it tough on your audience. **Use the top-third of your resume to list the skills, capabilities and talents relevant to your next job.**

You also need to have **one** resume. This has been the best advice for a long time, but it's even more so in our digitally-connected social media world.

I know all the arguments for multiple resumes. You want to tailor it to the position. You want to target a particular firm. You want to emphasize this here and that there.

My experience over the last decade suggests:

- They're not paying that much attention. As our own research has shown, small changes in word emphasis are lost on the typical resume reviewer. They spend 6 seconds doing a first review of your resume. Get the big picture right, and good things follow. Waste time wordsmithing and you'll frustrate yourself.
- You're not that good of a writer. Perhaps a great writer could communicate these subtle nuances, if she had enough experience with the audience, the material, and the intended effect. That great writer is probably not you. Focus your efforts on where you can make the most impact.
- Even if you are a good writer, you're too close to yourself, and too far from understanding the market for professionals like you, to craft the right message. Your target audience has reviewed dozens of resumes for this very position, and perhaps hundreds or thousands for positions like it. As a result, your audience has a much more nuanced and subtle feel for what the market looks like and which experiences and backgrounds are big advantages or disadvantages. It's simply unlikely that even a great writer is going to guess correctly what each particular reviewer wants to see most. You are far better off getting a single resume "most right" and investing the rest of your search time elsewhere.

In addition to these points, which remain as valid and true as ever, there's a new, important one:

Your online presence needs to back up your paper resume and be consistent with your off-line job goals.

You've got profiles, pages that show up in Google searches, and a social media presence that looks the

same to your audience regardless of which resume you give them. It is important that your online and offline presences provide one consistent story.

If the two look dissimilar, or, even worse, conflict in small or important ways, you set yourself apart as an unserious or potentially untruthful candidate. Nothing will get you not hired faster than untruths.

It is highly unlikely that you're a skillful enough writer and editor to make one social presence support two or more competing resumes. So you need to have one resume.

One presence, one theme, one summary, one coherent career goal...

One resume to rule them all.

And that, my dear Readers, is something to put in your pipe and smoke on this Memorial Day weekend.

Have a great week!

I'm rooting for you,



Marc Cenedella, Founder

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