

# Your Resume

## A ticket to opportunity; insurance against a lengthy transition

Mike Deblieux

**As** an HR professional, the most important resumé you will ever look at is the one with your name on it. It is your ticket to the next step on your career ladder. It is your insurance policy against a layoff, a bankruptcy or a merger. There are two things you need to remember about your resumé. First, you never know when you are going to need it. It should always be up-to-date and ready to go. Second, your resumé needs to make you look great, not just good, to your next employers in their terms, not yours. In other words, you need to tell them what you have done to prepare yourself for their opening in words that make sense to them.

### Research the format of your resumé

You can find the words that make sense to your next employers by studying a few

ads for a job like the one you want to get. Look for the action words in each ad. Make a list of them. You will quickly see some common words. Here's an example based on three HR Manager ads:

**Scan down the columns.** Notice the words in bold. They create some common themes that tell you what typical employers are looking for in a potential HR Manager's resumé. For example, the word 'manage' appears four times. 'Communicate' is used twice, so is 'compliance'. 'Initiative,' 'innovative' and 'promote' are each used once, but all together they imply creativity as a sought-after skill. If HR Manager is the next step in your career, those key words—manage, communicate, compliance and creativity—are the outline for your resumé. You should use them to describe your current and previous positions. For example:

- Managed recruitment program by...
- Led project management team to develop communication tools to explain...
- Conducted annual HR audit to assure compliance with...
- Created innovative pre-employment job shadow program to...

When you use words from typical ads as a guideline for describing your experience, you help your potential employers to see why you are the one they should invite for an interview.

### Keep a career experience chart

Your next challenge is to come up with specific examples of your work that show you have experience doing the things your next boss needs you to do. It is a huge mistake to wait until you are in transition to do this.

You need to assume that you are always in transition.

You need to keep a catalogue of your important projects and accomplishments as they happen. It should be based on the key words you listed from your sample ads. You can list your key words in one column and your experiences next to them like the sample on the next page.

You should keep this chart in a file on your computer. You should refer to it and update it often. You don't need long, complicated notes. You just need thought generators that will help you write your resumé. You will also be able to use this chart as a study sheet

#### JOB POSTING #1

**Implementing HR policies**  
**Manage** staffing, employee relations, wage and salary administration, benefit administration, safety and employee services.  
**Strong communication skills.**  
**Must take initiative to achieve goals beyond what is required.**

#### JOB POSTING #2

**Guides and directs HR function for assigned internal clients.**  
**Ensures that strategies, plans and practices relating to employees are fair, clearly communicated and consistent with corporate policies and in compliance with laws.**  
**Must possess a proven track record in developing innovative, effective HR strategies.**

#### JOB POSTING #3

**Manage various day-to-day activities of the department.**  
**Oversee and manage corporate recruitment program.**  
**Investigate and resolve employee complaints.**  
**Advise managers with performance and pay issues.**  
**Monitor company programs to assure legal compliance.**  
**Direct and maintain various activities to promote employee morale.**

KEY WORDS	EXPERIENCE EXAMPLE
Manage	January, 2001 New plant recruitment
Communicate	June, 2003 Prepared script for executive team presentation to staff on pay raises
Compliance	March, 2002 Sexual harassment training for all employees
Creativity	November, 2004 Staff "recess" project to build morale

to prepare for your next interview.

You should find time every six months to compare your career experience chart to your resumé. If your newer examples do a better job of explaining your strengths than your old ones, you should update your resumé with them. In this way your resumé is always up-to-date. You don't have to panic yourself into writing it when that next opportunity comes knocking.

**Write your resumé in the language of your next boss**

Most resúmes are too general. They don't give you enough information to tell if the candidate is qualified or not. Here's an example from an actual resumé:

- Mediated satisfactory resolution of problems between management and disgruntled employee.

That sounds good, doesn't it? And it sounds like the person who wrote it is really proud of it as an accomplishment. Unfortunately, there are two problems with it. First, there is no hook to get the attention of your next employer. Second, it doesn't do anything to make you stand out from the crowd. Instead, it sounds like something every HR person does.

A more effective resumé statement tells your next boss what she or he wants to know about your employee-relations skills. He or she is probably asking questions like:

- How did you find out about these issues?
- What skills do you have to be mediating problems?

- What criteria did you use to measure your success?
- What kinds of issues were you involved in resolving?
- Were you representing employees or helping management?

None of these questions are answered in the resumé statement we just looked at. Let's revise it and see if we can answer them for your next boss:

**Employee relations** – Satisfactorily resolved 95 percent of employee complaints and grievances without involving governmental agencies or outside attorneys by:

- establishing a complaint procedure that encouraged employees to resolve issues internally and training managers and employees on how to use it effectively;
- installing a confidential, private-line phone number and an anonymous e-mail address for employees to report (an average of 10 reports were filed each month from an employee population of 250) ethical, legal, policy and morale issues;
- using investigative and problem resolution techniques learned from PIHRA Learning Center classes, extra-curricular reading and on-the-job experience to assure that corporate policies were followed;
- maintaining employee morale at an all-time high (i.e., 93 out of a possible 100), according to five consecutive employee satisfaction surveys.

This paragraph is written in the language of the CEO or VP who will hire you. He

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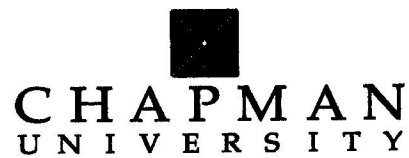
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## Your Resumé

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or she will like numbers (i.e., 95 percent) and specifics (i.e., training managers, installing phone line, employee satisfaction survey, etc.). Admittedly our new paragraph is longer, but it is much more likely to catch the attention of a decision maker. Your resumé might end up being three pages instead of the traditional two, but it will be much more likely to get your next boss to call you for an interview. If you want proof, lay your old resumé on a table next to your new resumé. Invite a few friends over for a cup of coffee. Ask each of them to tell you which resumé is most effective, interesting and appealing to them.

### Conclusion

You work hard. You contribute a lot. You are often taken for granted for what you do. Every once in a while, however, you

need to be ready to toot your own horn in a well-written resumé. Don't leave it to chance. Keep track of what you are doing while you are doing it. Keep an eye on what potential employers are looking for in the job you would like to have. Combine your experience chart with your list of key words a couple of times a year to be sure your resumé is up-to-date and ready to send to the person who is waiting to give you your next great opportunity.

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## Fact-Finding Investigations

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an employee's character, general reputation, personal characteristics, or mode of living obtained through personal interviews (Cal. Civ. Code sec. 1785.39(c)(5)). Therefore, whereas background checks involving actual credit reports of potential employees probably fall under the California act, sexual harassment investigations and other employee misconduct investigations consisting solely of personal interviews probably would not.

### Conclusion

"No problem," you say to the person filing the complaint. "I know just what to do." Outside HR consultants can no longer legally perform investigations of employee misconduct in California unless they are licensed attorney or private investigators. The type of third-party investigator most

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