

Why Did My Resume Fail Me?

By Rob Salisbury



It is surprising the number of people who still believe that a well-structured résumé is the only thing needed in today's business world to get hired.

Surveys of company human resource, sales and marketing departments confirm they receive dozens of résumés for roles never advertised in the initial position offering.

In most cases, résumés received are sent to the 'paper shredder' or garbage bin.

The reason? Résumés are often sent with incorrect details as they relate to the job, spelling errors are common in cover letters and language is used incorrectly

The candidate is out before the first interview stage and has little chance of meeting the potential interviewer or hiring person. Their résumé has failed its primary role and that is to help open the door and get the candidate their first interview.

While the résumé is an important part of the journey to employment, it is only one of the steps that must be taken in gaining employment opportunities.

Similar to flying to a holiday destination, a candidate must know where they are going before picking the airline and purchasing the ticket to get on board the flight.

Your résumé is the ticket on the employment plane and without it, you will not get into the interview seat to explain why you may be the best candidate for the long flight of employment with a company.

Inventions help in résumé creation

Job seekers of today continue to follow the set and tried path put forth not long after Johann

Gutenberg invented the first printing press in 1450. The printing press made it possible for the educated and wealthy of the day to create documents of words and phrases for use in new commercial and personal applications.

The process of creating 'word documents' did not change much for the next 400 years. Long standing research confirms that the résumé did not undergo any significant changes in terms of style until the first typewriter was patented in 1867.

The typewriter was mass-produced as the Sholes and Gliden Type Writer in late 1873. This made it possible for the masses to create new personal documents at home or work as it related to their education and work experiences leading into the new industrial age.

IBM impacts mass résumé use

While typewriters improved for the next 60 years, it was the advent of the International Business Machines Company, (known today as IBM) which brought the typewriter to mainstream business and public use to create documents quickly.



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From the early 1930s, IBM mass produced the type writer and with it as their main product, their sales force sold to companies that employed thousands of people.

This helped move the business world from the industrial age to the early stages of the information age. By 1960, IBM has created the famous Selectric typewriter, which remained unchanged until the early 1980s when the first wheelwriter and quietwriter typewriters were introduced.

Desk Top Publishing Impacts Résumés

These new machines were the early prototypes of what shortly became known as 'desk top computer systems'. This propelled new companies such as Apple Computers into the market and led to the industry term 'desk top publishing'.

New companies such as Microsoft began to look at operating systems and 'software' to help bring the creativity of the person into the business machine's thinking systems.

While typewriters, word processors, computers and software have added graphics to the visual impact of résumés, the basic layout of most résumés are based on very old and well travelled paths in the résumé preparation process.

Design improves but content hasn't

There are dozens and dozens of books available from bookstores, universities and colleges or over the internet in the form of 'white papers' or articles on how to write a résumé or CV (short for Curriculum Vitae).

Business people and graduating University students in particular, often make the common mistake of bolding the headlines, including their contact details, background, previous work experiences and their duties in a structured format.

There are in fact, many creative ways to prepare your résumé. This is what is vital to separating your résumé from the pack with everyone else's.

What is working today?

Business employers have seen it all - another boring resume or CV is the last thing they need.

Creativity in presentation, style and format, and a sense of personality are needed to stand above the dozens of other candidates that are vying for the same advertised position.

A sense of individuality, both at the logical and emotional level, is needed when presenting your qualifications, employment history, references and the purpose for answering the job advertisement.

Personal Marketing is here

The age of personal marketing has taken a huge step since the advent of television reality shows such as Big Brother and The Apprentice. They do not show 'qualifications' on paper, however personality, individuality, achievements, skills and the ability to get along, lead, manage or out last others in tough circumstances does show up on television.

The winners of these reality shows become millionaires and are rewarded handsomely for their survival tactics. The losers, in many cases, are not losers and in fact, have a new life as a personality worth hundreds of thousands in endorsements and publicity that bring new rewards and opportunities.

Why do most résumés fail?

The main reason that most résumés fail is that they do not grab the attention of the reader enough to want to take it to the interview level. Unless there is an emotional impact on first read, chances are the first interview with the employer or interviewer will not happen.

Without the impact, that 'wow' factor in your résumé, it is likely your paperwork will be headed to the waste can or 'to be filed' stack.

Remember, tell the truth, and put more of YOU into your personal marketing piece because people hire people. If you are similar to someone in traits, style or ambitions, you are



generally going to be hired in a company with like-minded people.

Last thoughts

As Stephen Covey pointed out in his best selling book *First Things First*, some things need attention first before we can move on to another level.

Regarding your resume or CV, now is the time to bring your employment history up to date, get your personal and professional references in order and understand what you can do in terms of skills and strengths if opportunity presents itself.

Finally, a service attitude is always helpful. Having the answer as to why someone would want to bring you into their company or team environment is the key to getting hired and the sooner you can get that point across, the better your odds.

About the writer

Rob Salisbury B.Sci. CSP achieved early success as a Fortune 500 top achieving sales professional. He became a Tom Hopkins' Certified Sales Trainer in 1988 and served two terms as 2001-2003 President of the NSW National Speakers Association of Australia.

He is **not** a known celebrity, entertainer or sports star, however, his clients know him for helping them achieve results. To them, he is a trusted partner and strategic business asset.

His international experience spans seven countries with 350 Australasian firms in sales and marketing projects. He has been based in Sydney since 1997 and been a lecturer at the University of Wollongong and TAFE Colleges helping graduating students in gaining employment since 2001.

