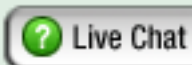




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TheLadders.com Newsletters

Week of 2007-01-29

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Good Monday Morning, **Kim Sam,**

Folks, in some ways I'm in a situation not too different from yours. While I'm not looking to leave TheLadders.com -- heck no, I love this job too much and helping get the leaders of the country into their next great role in life is too rewarding an avocation -- I **am** looking to get my name out in front of organizations that I'd like to join. And while sending my bio to civic groups and industry organizations is fine as a first step, for the later, more serious steps in the admissions process, my "PR" bio seemed a little, well... thin.

So I had the bright idea of re-doing my resume. Like many of you, I hadn't updated that old thing in about seven years! And it was in awful shape. [You can see just how awful for yourself.](#)

And as I wanted to practice what I preach, I decided to get my resume professionally re-written.

Now over the years, we've seen a lot of... **unfortunate** resumes at TheLadders.com. Resumes that, with a little effort on the part of the viewer reveal a competent, capable, dynamic executive, but that taken at face value in 20 seconds really don't communicate the strengths of the person behind it. And the trouble is, most resumes get only 20 seconds (or less) to state their case -- to state **your** case -- to a recruiter or hiring manager.

So back in 2004, we interviewed dozens of resume writers, looked at their output, and selected a handful to recommend. Over the years, we have professionalized [TheLadders.com Resume Writer program](#) and have even launched internet-based tools to make the resume critique and re-writing process go more smoothly for you. And thanks to your feedback and these tools, we've been able to understand which resume writers are doing the best job for you, and have removed writers whose efforts were not up to snuff.

So when it came time for me to get **my** resume re-written, I turned to [resume guru, Alesia Benedict](#). Alesia took that old rag of a resume that I had floating around and worked her magic on it.

Here is [Alesia's re-write of my resume](#).

So let's have Alesia walk us through why she changed what she did and what makes it an all-around superior effort to my own draft....

"The new, two page version of Marc's resume provides the reader with a more comprehensive look at his experience, which is imperative to getting Marc noticed within the competitive business levels and environments he's targeting. Providing the reader with sufficient information to make an educated decision about Marc's potential is critical in achieving the difficult task of reaching the interviewing level. Executive resumes at this level should typically be 2-3 pages long. Marc's old resume was too much of a 'skeleton' approach.

Let's look at the resume from beginning to end. First, the "Objective" summary is much too low-level, and was replaced with a "Summary" section that introduces the reader to the many ways Marc is equipped to generate great results within dynamic business environments. Marc's original objective line focused more on Marc's wants and needs as opposed to what he can offer an organization. Taking a "this is what I want from the company" stance is not a good marketing message, because the company is (of course), interested in what you can offer and do for them.

Next, a list of "Core Competencies" is the key to getting the reader's attention. It provides an organized look at Marc's areas of expertise and it is a great tool for presenting industry terms and keywords.

Instead of bulleting all information under each position, the bulleted format was reserved for highlighting accomplishments. This ensures that this information jumps out at the reader and facilitates the reader's ability to see the ways Marc has impacted organizations' performances and growth.

Resumes need to detail about 10 - 15 years of someone's career. Earlier experience, or

lesser weight experience (as in the case of Marc's Summer Associate position) can be summed up in a Career Note vs. giving it prime real estate on a resume. The scholastic activities were removed from Marc's resume. Again, this information pulled down the 'weight' of his resume as those details are best for new grads.

Dates for the education were removed. Readers use the dates to determine the age of the job seeker. This can be tricky in many ways. Marc is younger than some executives, and that could be seen as a negative by a reader who has 10 - 15 years on him. The opposite is true in other circumstances, where the job seeker is perceived as being too old. Age discrimination can take the form of many shapes. Why risk it? What is important is that Marc has earned those degrees, not the years he graduated!"

Wow! Thanks, Alesia. So, Readers, I took my own medicine, and I have to say I'm very pleased with how it turned out. To visit learn more about our resume writers, and [get your own free critique](#), please visit TheLadders.com Resume Writers today.

OK, Readers, here's wishing you the best with putting **your** best foot forward this week!

Warmest Regards,



Marc Cenedella
President, CEO



Good Advice

- ▾ [Succeeding in Interviews Often Means Being Likable](#)
- ▾ [Look Out for These Five Interview Questions!](#)
- ▾ [Does Your Resume Feature an Endorsement?](#)
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By Perri Capell

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Look Out for These Five Interview Questions!

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By Kimberly Schneiderman

The most important interview strategy to remember is to keep your answers positive and honest. To prepare, think about the truthful answer to a question, and look at it from the interviewer's point of view. Ask yourself how the information can be framed so it remains truthful but also validates your professionalism and insight into a situation.

Here are five examples of tough interview questions, the "right" answers, and the strategies behind them.

1. What would your previous employers want to change about you?

When presented with this question, some people may want to deny that anyone would want to change anything about them. After all, it's everyone else who has annoying habits, not you. Right? Wrong. Speak about something that is credible and sincere, but also mention how you have learned from the situation. Be sure that your topic is not a skill directly related to your position but rather something that you can work around. For example:

"I was once made aware of how poor my handwriting is; my boss was concerned handwritten notes to other staffers would be misread. With that in mind I developed a strict policy of typing all notes to my teammates, even if it is just a quick message."

Alternatively, you could talk about a situation that has created a side benefit for others, like so:

"One of my previous employers thought I could speed up progress on projects. After some reflection, I realized I was getting distracted during projects by doing tasks that could be delegated to my quite capable assistant. Now, when starting a project I make a list of tasks that can be done by my support staff. I also find now that my staff members stay productive and learn more about their jobs."

2. What do you think management should do to allow you to function more effectively?

Your response to this question should reveal your attitude toward work and management. Again, keep your answer positive! Think about your response and frame it in a constructive, yet effective way.

"I've found that the more management shares their ideas and vision, the better I can function in my position. When they clearly communicate the organization's goals and the reasons behind some of the actions they take, I'm ultimately better able to buy into those ideas and represent the company in the best way possible."

You might also share an example of a time that this worked very well for you. Be sure

to give the interviewer some background on the situation, including management's approach, your actions, and the results.

3. What has prevented you from progressing as fast as you would have liked?

This is a tough question; it implies that you are not where you *should be* in your career and that, possibly, it is someone else's fault. Don't fall into this trap by blaming any lack of success on anyone or any company. Your response should be something like:

"Some circumstances within my current position have limited my upward mobility; it's a small company with a loyal staff. Since there's not a lot of turnover, it makes advancing difficult. That being the case, I always make sure I take on as many new projects as time allows. I have always wanted to continue to learn and grow, even if my title wasn't changing."

Again, continue your answer with an example or two that demonstrates your philosophy. Whatever your response, think about what it will sound like to an employer. Does your answer present you as someone focused on achievements and goals or as someone who is "entitled" to recognition for doing the basics?

4. Tell me about the best and worst boss you've ever had? What was his or her management style?

Approach each part of this question with an overview, then use examples and insight to give definition to your thoughts. Moreover, especially with a question like this, keep in mind even your worst boss has desirable characteristics and skills that got them where they are.

"The best boss I had would have to be Jane Jeffries, the CEO at Octagon Financial. She was a skillful leader, an excellent communicator, proactive and involved in the company. She knew our products well and made sure the staff did also through quarterly educational seminars and motivating team meetings. She and I are still in touch."

"The worst boss, wow that is a tough one, I think there is something to learn from everyone. At Junior Films, the President of the company could have been more communicative. I found him to be stoic, and he often held information within a close-knit circle of upper management. Because of this, it was sometimes hard to deliver what the company was looking for on a project. On the other hand, the company was very successful because he was also skillful at keeping information away from our competitors; the company was often first to market, with the competition lagging a bit behind."

5. What have you been doing since you left your last position?

If you've been out of a traditional paying job for quite some time, it's smart to develop hobbies and activities that you can discuss during an interview.

In your answer to this question talk about your continued research to show you still have industry knowledge. Discuss your volunteer work and how the skills you apply there relate to the job at hand.

"I have spent a great deal of time furthering my education and keeping my credentials intact with continuing education courses at Albertville Community College. I also stay in touch with industry trends by reading the New York Times and Accountants World Weekly. In addition, I volunteer my accounting services at the local youth community center."

Maybe you were trying a new career but decided you didn't like it -- that is OK as long as you frame the experience in a positive light and explain you are now "returning to your first passion: the (fill in the blank) field or industry."

Throughout your interview preparation, follow these strategies to formulate your ideas. When working on answers to a question, make connections between these questions and others. For example, in question #1 above, the answer could also be given to a question relating to your weaknesses. In #2, a similar answer could be given to a question about your learning style. In #5, a similar answer can be given for a question relating to professional development pursuits.

And remember, practice! Be very familiar with the information you want to share in an interview. The more prepared you are and the better you know yourself and your career, the easier it will be to answer questions and create a dialogue during interviews.

Kimberly Schneiderman is owner of [City Career Services](#), a company that provides job search tools including [Resumes, Cover Letters, and Interview Workshops](#) to goal-oriented professionals at all levels and across all industries.



Keywords for Resume Success

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By Louise Garver

Imagine you have the perfect qualifications for a position advertised online. Your background, track record, and skill set are ideal for the job. The job is yours for the taking. Or is it? In today's technology-driven world, you may not be considered a qualified candidate -- even though you are.

The reason? Applicant Tracking Systems or ATS. This tool automates the application process for recruiters and human resources personnel. The process essentially follows this pattern: You submit your resume online. Often, you're able to upload your resume and the system proceeds to extract your information. You're then asked to verify that the information has been extracted correctly. You may also be asked to complete a questionnaire related to the position(s) you're seeking.

Your information then goes into a database, allowing recruiters to search for ideal candidates. Recruiters enter search criteria, and the database produces a list of candidates that meet the criteria. To increase your odds of being found by recruiters, you need to develop a resume that will be flagged as meeting the criteria. To do this, you'll need a keyword-rich resume.

Keywords are generally nouns that identify experience, skills and qualifications relevant to a position. Although keywords may also include industry "buzzwords" and verbs, the majority of keywords are nouns. Examples include: Vice President of Sales, Marketing Communications Manager, Finance Director, UNIX, SQL, MBA, BA in Business Management and so forth.

Does your resume include the right keywords for the positions you're seeking? To maximize your chances of being found by recruiters, follow these tips:

- **Review the job advertisement for keywords.** The listing will contain most of the keywords the employer or recruiter will use to filter out resumes. Avoid creating a generic resume and submitting it to as many employers as possible. Instead craft a targeted resume and market yourself through keywords found in the listing.
- **Check advertisements for similar positions.** Find and review other ad listings for similar jobs that may contain more keywords to incorporate.
- **Make a list of all experience and qualifications that are relevant to the position.** This includes any skills, industry jargon, acronyms, association memberships, and so on. Any words that overlap with those found in advertisements should definitely be included.
- **Keyword saturation.** Incorporate as many keywords as possible into your resume. The more keywords you incorporate, the better your chances of being flagged by the software. Include the words throughout your resume, where appropriate. Of course, you'll want to make sure that your resume is "readable" by both keyword scanners and people. You may also want to consider adding a "Keyword" or "Skills" section to your resume. In this section you can place as many keywords as you need to describe your skills and qualifications.
- **Use variations of the word or acronym.** If possible, use variations of the same word or acronym in your resume. If a recruiter is searching for candidates with a Ph.D., the search may be for "PhD," "Ph.D.," "Doctor of Phil." and so on.
- **Refresh your resume often.** Recruiters can include the date your resume was submitted in their search. Newer resumes indicate that you're actively seeking a new position while, if your submission is months old, it may be assumed that you're no longer searching. So guess who gets flagged and possibly interviewed first? Refreshing your resume is often as simple as resubmitting it or updating information, even if it means retyping your name and clicking the "Update" or "Submit" button. Be sure to take this easy step for big results.

Ultimately, the best way to increase your visibility is to do your homework on the type of positions you're interested in and incorporate relevant keywords strategically into your resume. Use the tips above to create a tailored resume, and you'll increase your chances of being found by a recruiter, called in for an interview, and hired!

[Louise Garver](#) is President of [Career Directions, LLC](#). She's an award-winning Certified Career Coach, Certified Professional Resume Writer and outplacement consultant with more than 18 years of experience.



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