

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO CAREER
SUCCESS

The Professional Guide to Creating a Killer Resume
by Mike Anderson

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Introduction

A little background on me, and why I am writing this book. I have more than thirty years of front line business experience in several industries. I have been a C level executive for the better part of the last fifteen years. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with the term “C” level executive, the “C” stands for Chief as in Chief Executive Officer, also known as the CEO. Most companies have a number of C level executives running the business. Those executives go by the title of CEO or Chief Executive Officer, COO or Chief Operating Officer, CFO or Chief Financial Officer, CIO or Chief Information Officer and CMO or Chief Marketing Officer. The C level executives are the highest six to eight executives that set the strategy for the business.

During my time in the C level suite, I have had many opportunities to read thousands of resumes, interview hundreds of candidates, and hire scores of employees. (By the way, a *score* is the verbal description of twenty of something.) Many of those candidates have been incredibly well prepared and impressed me with their resumes. Others seemed to write their resume on the back of a napkin during lunch, full of typos and misinformation, and didn't even know what business the company for which they were interviewing was even in. Sometimes, even when their resume was well done, they interviewed in such a horrible, unprepared way that I almost felt compelled to give them the answers to the questions I was asking. I did not of course, but the interview was probably more painful for me than it was for them. The questions most interviewers ask are all well known and are very easy to prepare for.

For these reasons and many others, I have decided to write this series of eBooks to share my experience and to give you access to one of the people, a C level executive who is responsible for making the hiring decision for your dream job. I hope that after you read these books you will be able to obtain your dream job, move up the corporate ladder, and eventually help someone else you feel may be deserving.

Thank you,

Mike Anderson

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Part One - Pick your format

What is a resume? A resume is an organized collection of your professional experience, skills, education, and training. It is, if you will, a representation of your life's work.

A resume is exclusively used in the United States. A Curriculum Vitae, or CV is used in the rest of the world, and in the U.S. for some scientific, higher education, and legal positions, instead of a resume. The literal translation from Latin means “course of one's life.”

The goal of your resume is to qualify you in the eyes of an employer and to get yourself an interview. A resume is analogous to a sales brochure for a product. In this case, the product is you. It is the same as if you were a salesperson selling this really wonderful product. To sell it, you would need to be able to explain what your wonderful product does by leaving behind a brochure, your resume. And, if the prospective customer/employer likes what you're selling, he will call you back for a face to face meeting, or in this case, an interview.

So what do you need to put into your resume to catch someone's attention? Well, if your product was a car, what would you want your prospective customer to know about it? If your product was a vacuum cleaner, how would you sell it, and what would your brochure say about it to sell it? Remember, you will not be selling yourself in person until they grant you an interview, therefore, you need your resume to sell you until you get in front of them!

The first step in creating your killer resume is to pick a format, or a template. As you probably know, there are dozens of different formats available. Some are very cute and creative. Some are just straight forward and borderline boring, and a few are excellent and flow very well. Picking your format is very important because there are different formats for entry level people versus someone with twenty years of experience. There are also different formats for different jobs. A creative advertising person may need to have a resume that is just that, more creative, while a computer scientist needs to be shorter on creativity and longer on -their qualifications for the position. You also need to consider what parts of your experience - you need to emphasize. That will affect which format you choose, but in general, you want a straight forward layout that is clearly defined by section, and encourages the reader to continuing reading. I have a packet of resume formats on my website that you can download for **free**. The website is <http://www.directyourcareer.com/blog>.

When picking the format, you want to select one that flows nicely for the reader. You want to be sure that they are going to want to read the entire resume. In the beginning, you want to make it very easy for the reader to read. More often than not, your reader is usually a recruiter or someone in Human Resources. They read so many resumes that they are actually looking for reason to stop reading yours so they can move on to the next one. That point is very, very important. They are not looking for a reason to continue reading. They are looking for a reason to throw yours away.

Another important reason to pick the correct format, is that many companies are using computer software to scan resumes, parse them, and look for keywords that will

qualify or disqualify you for the position. The electronic version of your resume is uploaded into their electronic applicant database. I will go over how to make yours more appealing to the computer as well as the HR guy later in the book.

“Welcome to the first day of the rest of your life!”



When looking for a format, find one that breaks the resume down into clearly defined sections. The first section is your personal information. This is where you will put your name, address, email address, and phone number.

You do not need to spend too much time in this section other than to make sure your personal contact information is accurate and professional. Make certain that your email address is appropriate for business. If you are still young and using an email address that suggests that you are a party girl, a drinker, or describes some part of your anatomy that might embarrass your parents, get a new one. I have seen some real crazy ones that are just plain embarrassing. You can get a free email address at yahoo or gmail. Use an address that comes as close to using your first name, separated by a

period (or what we call a dot) and your last name, followed by the service provider or domain name. Some good examples are john.jensen12@yahoo.com or jessica.m.kendall@gmail.com. Something you should never use is your current work email. It sends a bad signal to anyone reading your resume, and could actually get you into trouble at work if your computer system screens your email.

“What do I do now?”



The last important point is that you should only list one phone number. Do not list optional numbers like your home, your cell, and your work number. The recruiter is not interested in hunting you down and will not call several numbers. He wants to call just one number that has voice mail. If you are not available, he will leave you a message. He would rather have your cell number if you have one. Make sure the message on your voice mail is professional, and doesn't say something like *“Hey, this is your boy Jimmy, you know what to do, and if you do it right, I'll hit you back up.”*

Yeah!” I know how funny that sounds to you and your crew, but the HR guy or recruiter may just hang-up. Create a clear, concise message that has no music, jokes, or celebrity voices. Just say “This is Jim. Please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible.” Anything else is unnecessary.

See the sample resume at the end the book for an example of a well formatted personal information section.

Part Two – The Body of Your Resume

The body of your resume is where you actually start building the brochure that starts to sell you. After putting your contact information at the top of your resume, you need to tell the reader what you do for a living. In the example at the end of the book, the fictitious Patrick McCarthy is a **SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE**. I put that title in bold, with no other fanfare. The reader of your resume now knows without a doubt what the product is. If you were selling a vacuum cleaner, you might have written **STRONGEST SUCTION VACUUM ON THE MARKET**. The bold headline will grab the reader immediately. There is no question what this person does for a living and you both know what it is you want to do.

The next section of your resume is called the Objective. An objective is defined as the goal you wish to attain. That means that you are explaining to your reader what it is that you want. You can say anything you want here to tell the reader of your resume what your career objective is or the objective of sending them your resume. In the sample resume, Mr. McCarthy chooses to take a moment to say he is a proven executive, therefore declaring his objective is to let the reader know he is looking for a similar position. Directly below the objective, you can list three or four significant selling points about yourself to give the reader some idea of your qualities, successes or achievements you have had in your career. This is your chance to tell the reader of your resume somethings that you feel would differentiate yourself from the competition. If you are inexperienced, these might come from your personal or college life more than

your professional life. If you are an experienced professional, you should use bullets to list real life accomplishments you have had in your career. If you are an accountant, then use some examples of things you have done that demonstrate your competence and/or work ethic. If you are a salesman or sales manager, talk about your achievements, sales goals, or making or exceeding plan for the last six quarters. But remember, the reader is not an expert in your field. This is where you try to set the hook. Don't use professional



jargon or buzzwords here. You want to speak everyday English so the reader can really identify with your accomplishments. Look at what McCarthy writes. He simply states some real world achievements that anyone can understand.

I can't stress enough how important it is to keep your reader's attention. Don't be

in a hurry to finish this section. Imagine you are in Human Resources and you read ten to fifteen resumes a day. After awhile, they all start to look the same. You begin to subconsciously find reasons to disqualify the resume so as to not have to read the entire thing. Don't give your reader a reason to stop reading, or try to be cute or funny. What would you tell him if you had fifteen seconds in an elevator?

If you look back at your career, what is the most significant accomplishment you are proud of? What two or three qualities could you brag about to someone? Are there accomplishments that you would love to do again? Did you save your company money? Did you reduce the paper expenses? Did you increase sales or blow out your quota? Were you involved in a merger or acquisition? Did you improve customer service and received recognition for it? What two or three professional victories did you have that you would love to tell your parents, your spouse or your wife? Is there something you did that you just get very excited to talk about? Work very hard on these items. Find something that you did (that you may have even forgotten about) or quality that you have that you can add to this area. For example, once in my past, I created an in-house training program that was dubbed The University. It seemed like it was no big deal to me, but my company was thrilled with it, and any time I told a prospective employer about it, they gushed with questions. Do you have a similar accomplishment?

Part Three – Industry Expertise & Management Skills

In the sample resume, the next section discusses specific skills and experience that you have. This is the section where the automated resume reader will look for key words in your resume to qualify or disqualify you for the job. For example, if you are a computer programmer and are skilled in programming in SQL, C++, RPG or some other computer language, this is where you will put that information. If you are an attorney and are skilled in contract law, litigation, or labor law, you will put those skills here. If you are a recent college graduate and have some skills that you have acquired during an internship or summer job, you need to enumerate those in this section.

Whether your resume is being parsed by a computer program, or read by a Human Resources person, they are not specialists in your area. In most cases they are generalists who have been given a job description and a few high level requirements for the position. You need to make sure you are entering the key words that are in the job ad, or that you know are important to the job in general. Add words like “C++ Programmer”, “Contract Law”, “Manager”, or whatever words will attract the attention of the resume software or Human Resources readers. In the sample resume, McCarthy wants the reader to know that he has skills in handling all aspects of being an educational sales rep and teacher, and his skills section reflects that.

You can put as much information here as you want. It is a good idea to list as many skills as you can so that the HR person, or computer can easily match your skills against the requirement of the position. As I have said several times, the person reading

your resume for the first time is usually someone that is not an expert in your field. I have had numerous conversations with HR recruiters that are confused when trying to match resumes to job openings, so anything you do to help with that is going to separate you from the pack. For that reason, you may have to modify this section a little bit for the jobs you are applying to. I have had some clients that are fortunate to have many different skills and experiences, that they ask me to re-write this section for them many times. Whatever you do, work hard to add here the key skills you need to get the job.

“Communication is the key!”



Part Four – Your Career Summary

We have discussed writing a clear personal information section. We have also discussed the Management Expertise section and listing the specific skills you need to do the job in question, but now we are going to discuss your actual work history. This is probably the most important part of your resume.

In the Career Summary section, you will chronologically list all of the companies for whom you have worked, the dates you were employed and what you did for them. The first information you will enter is the name of your current or most recent employer. Unless you have a legitimate reason not to do so, enter the full name of the company and the city and state in which you worked for them. That format is just pleasing to the eye because that is how letters are addressed and people have trained their eyes to read that way. So, make sure you write the name and address as if you were addressing a envelope.

To the right of the company name, put the year or month and year you started and ended working at the company. You do not need full dates, and if you are still employed there, just enter “Present” or “Current” next to the start date. Don't worry about exact dates. The reader is trying to get a sense of how long you worked there to gather your experience level.

Under the address, enter your full title, and don't exaggerate. If you are not a Vice President or a Manager, don't lie about it. I know that many of you have titles that do

not reflect what you really, but here is not the place to rectify that. Just enter your exact title. By law, all a former company is permitted to tell a reference check is your title and dates of employment, so if you fudge one of the two items they may provide, you may appear deceitful.

Under your position title, I want to put a description of what the company does, make or service it provides. You would be surprised how many resumes I have received that don't do that, and I can't determine what that company does or what industry it is in. I don't want to research the company your worked for to determine if it is a convenience store, doctor's office or a funeral home. Most companies put their mission statement or some information about what they do on their website. You can get three or four sentences for the description right from there. Just don't assume that HR knows what the company does no matter how famous it is in your industry or home town.

Next you start to list the duties of your position. Remember, your title may not reflect what you actually do each day, so be sure to take credit for everything that you actually do. Most people do not adequately describe what they do each day. They say something like “Created spreadsheets for the CFO” when in reality they gathered, analyzed and produced financial analysis for the entire Executive Committee. Again, don't lie about what you do, but try to remember to describe (and brag about) what you actually do, not what you think you do. When you are done, let someone you trust look at it to see if you've captured it all.

I often get the question “How far back should I go?” Unfortunately, there is not a perfect answer to that question. If you are just starting out, list every job you have had.

The fact that you worked will show your prospective employer that you are responsible and worth taking a risk on. Whether you flipped burgers at sixteen, or swept the cafeteria floor in college, list it. All honest work will reflect positively on your potential work ethic.

If you are a senior manager, you should go back fifteen to twenty years, but no more. Companies will not admit it, but they do screen for age. If they see someone who started working forty years ago, they will do a calculation that may say you are too old. All I am saying is don't give them a reason to eliminate you. Go back in your career history and carefully create the picture of a person that has progressed steadily, but still has more to contribute.

When creating your career history, use bullets and do not use "I". For example, if you increased sales by 10% don't say:

– I increased sales by 10% annually

Just say in the same bullet form:

– -Increased sales by 10% annually

Here is the most important part – **DO NOT LIE** or **EMBELLISH** your resume.

You do not have to volunteer information about yourself, but I cannot imagine the embarrassment of exaggerating on your resume, only to be found out. An incredibly awkward and potentially career ending conversation will ensue. If you are preparing to look for work and are rewriting your resume, look for omissions, exaggerations and flat

out lies that need to be removed, and get them out of your resume. I have heard of political figures, captains of industry and even college professors that have lied about their education, military service, and career accomplishments and are found out. Their employer has little recourse but to terminate them in a mutually embarrassing way. No matter how easy it seems to be able to do, fight the urge to embellish.

Part Five – Education and Personal Development

As we move down your resume, we come to the Education and Personal Development section. This is where you will list all of your educational accomplishments that are relevant to your career. Whether you have a university degree, several degrees, or you have certificates from technical schools, you will list them in chronological order right here.

First, you need to decide what education you are going to list. What I mean by that is that if you attended several institutions of higher learning to achieve your bachelors degree, I suggest you simply list the university that actually conferred their degree on you. What I am suggesting is that if it took you ten years, while attending four universities to obtain your bachelors degree, simply list the name of the university that granted you a degree, the major you received your degree in, and the address of the university. I have actually seen resumes where the candidate will list multiple schools, only having received one degree from the last. In that case, it just raised questions in my mind about the candidate.

You should list your education in reverse chronological order, starting with the highest level of education you have completed. For example, if you have an MBA from the University of Iowa, you will list that accomplishment first. Use the following format:

MBA, Information Technology, 1995

Dean's List all four years

University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA

You may have noticed that I added the year of graduation right after the degree obtained. While in most cases this has no real drawback, it can give an employer an indication of your age. Age discrimination is against the law in the United States, so prospective employers are prohibited from asking your age or questions that might allow them to calculate your age. For example, they cannot ask you what year you graduated from high school because based on an average age of graduation being 18 years old, they could easily calculate your current age. And, if they are looking for someone younger, they can disqualify you before you ever get an interview. So, it is up to you whether you want to include the year you graduated if you have any concern about your age and whether it could be a problem for you to obtain employment.

You also may have noticed that I included having made the Deans List all four years. If you have any special academic accomplishments, this is where you can list them. Whether you graduated Magna Cum Laude (with great honors), or had a high GPA, you add it here. It never hurts to list it if it is an asset that may differentiate you from the competition, but never include any information that could hurt you.

Remember, this is your sales brochure.

Once you have completed listing all of the information for your most recent educational accomplishment, you should next list any other degrees you may have. For example, if you listed an MBA and you also have a BA, you will next list the BA as you did in the format above. Even if you received both of your degrees from the same school, list them separately. The reader of your resume may not catch that you have two degrees if you do not list them separately. You should also add any special academic accomplishments you may have achieved just as you did for your MBA.

If you have only one degree, or you attended a technical school to learn to be a tradesman, you will list that education in exactly the same way. Remember, you only need to add education that is pertinent to your career. If you are a licensed electrician and also have a BS in Information Technology, but you are applying for a computer programming job, do not list the electrician's license. It is just going to confuse the reader.

The second part of this section is for adding other personal development. For example, if you are active in Toastmasters, or have taken advanced sales training, this is where you will list that. If you have attended a several personal development and continuing education courses, you need list them in this section.

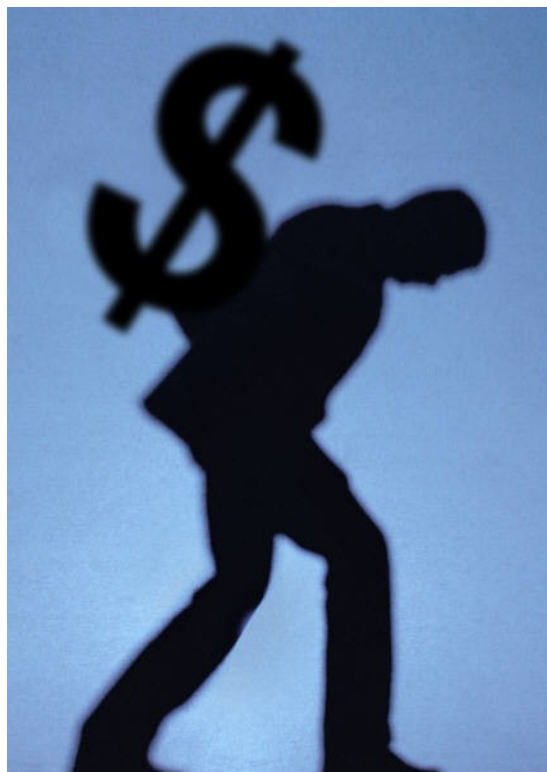
Do not spend too much time here. Most personal development, while very good, will add very little value in differentiating you from your competition. The most important information is that you are classically trained in your profession, and can do the job.

If you have something interesting that you believe will help differentiate you from your competition, you can list that here. For example, if you were a college football player, or competed in the Olympics, it is worth putting that information here as well. If you speak a foreign language, you can list it. If you choose to do that, do so modestly. Do not attempt to brag, as that will not be received well. Add something like:

Member of U.S. Olympic Swim Team 1996
Fluent in conversational Spanish

I have found that style of writing will call more attention to this area than would trying to encourage the reader to read it. The reason to list it is that it may break the ice and start a conversation, helping to develop rapport in an interview, but it won't get you a job.

“Show me the money!”



Part Five – Proofing and Sending Your Resume

Once you have written your resume, read it, read it and read it again. Look for any mistakes and errors you may have made. Make sure that the dates you have listed are accurate. Look to see that if you left one job in 2005 that you started the next job in 2005, unless you do have a legitimate break in service. Read the names of the companies for whom you worked, and ensure that the companies are spelled correctly. Make sure that your title accurately represents what you did, or at least says what you want it to say.

Run your resume through the spell checker program that comes with your software. Nothing is more ugly than a resume that is full of misspelled words. If I read a resume that is full of typos, I start assuming the candidate is just as sloppy as his resume.

Read your resume for grammatical mistakes. Look for incorrect punctuation like misplaced commas or periods. Look for words that are correctly spelled, but are not the correct usage of the word. The words “to” and “too” are prime examples. Many years ago I used to drive past this car repair shop that had a sign that prominently said “*No muff to tuff.*” It was a creative sign, but the use of the word “to”, was incorrect. It should have been the word “too” as in “*No muff too tuff*”.. Do your best to proofread for all mistakes. Then when you are sure it is perfect, give it to someone else to proof for you. It has always amazed me how someone else can spot an error on their first read that you missed five times.

Another thing to look for is the use of the word “I”. While you are building your resume, avoid the use of “I” as I mentioned earlier, or you run the risk of being redundant, and implying you did everything. There is a fine line between writing a fabulous resume that outlines all of your achievements, skills, and accomplishments, versus one that appears to be a self-congratulatory document that approaches self-centered conceit. The reader knows that the resume is about “you”, so you need not use the word “I” over and over, and for some psychological reason, we as the resume reader do not find the use of “I” to be pleasant. Just use bullets in a declarative voice as I show you in a previous section.

Once you are 100% certain that your resume is perfect, you need to put it in a format that is readable when emailing it to your prospective employer. Since you cannot be sure what kind of document software or what version your reader may be using, you should turn your document into a PDF file

PDF is a file type that was created by Adobe Acrobat software. The PDF file format has become an industry standard to create files that are universally readable with Adobe's free Acrobat Reader. If you or the reader of your resume does not have Adobe Acrobat software, they can download it at <http://www.adobe.com/>.

To create a PDF file, you can do so in several ways. If you are running OpenOffice.org Writer, you can create the PDF version of your resume when you go to save it. You simply click on File, then Export as PDF. You will be prompted to give your file a name. To name the file, use your first name with an underscore and your last name and save to your normal directory, most likely the My Documents directory. The

software will add a PDF extension and your file will look this when you go to email it:

Patrick_McCarthy.pdf.

If you do not have document software that will create a PDF, you can download that software for free as well. There is a product called Cute PDF which you can download at <http://www.cutepdf.com/>.

Using this software is a little different and can be a little confusing to non-technical people. Once you get to the cutepdf site, follow the directions to download and install it. Once it is installed, the software creates a new printer name on your computer. With your resume file open, you click on File, then Print. Do not print using the default printer name, but find the printer name called CutePDF. Then, you simply print your resume, directing the output to the printer called Cute PDF. The Cute PDF software will suggest a name for your resume, but don't use that name. Use the name I gave you as an example above(**Patrick_McCarthy.pdf**). That will save the file in your My Documents directory. That is the file that you will attach to your email, or upload to the on line application program.

Once you have created the PDF document, you should open and review it using Adobe's Acrobat reader. Be sure that all the formatting you put into the document looks correct, and like you intended. Once you like it, print it out and ensure that everything looks good to you. The formatting, margins, and special effects can change, so you need to proof them.

Part Six – Conclusion

You now have all the tools you need to create a professional, killer resume.

Assuming you have all the *skills* necessary to get the job, this resume is a sure winner to get your intended readers attention. I realize that some of you may want some additional professional help, and I am available to help or even write your resume for you. I have read and written hundreds, if not thousands of resumes for everyone from entry college graduates to senior executives and attorneys.

If you would like some help or have any questions, feel to send me an email at mike.anderson@directyourcareer.com and always visit my website at <http://www.directyourcareer.com>

– good luck!!

“When can you start?”

Comments on Patrick J. McCarthy Resueme

Delete Ph:

Delete email: They are recognizable without labels

Exceeded

Conferred

List too long. Use 2 cols

Responsible or Managed Educationa Programs

I have heard that resume reading software can't read lines so consider eliminating lines around

Senior Account Executive.

Delete period at the end of summary statement

Sylvan Learning paragraph is too long.

Use bullet for accomplishments

Provided one-on-one

In reaching their full potential, children develop

