

A CONSUMERS'S GUIDE TO CHOOSING A RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION SERVICE

TO HELP YOU:

- ✓ ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER;
- ✓ CHANGE YOUR CAREER; ... OR
- ✓ GAIN ENTRY INTO YOUR CAREER FIELD

We've been writing résumés for over 35 years and have never seen the level of shoddy work, scams, phony claims, and mediocre services that are on the Internet today.

You need to be extremely careful when selecting a résumé preparation service, as *anyone* with a computer, can put up a shingle and claim that they write résumés. Not too long ago, I saw advertisements for a person who had just earned his B.A. in Journalism ... and was offering *free career counseling*, to boot, with every résumé package. How did this brand-new degree QUALIFY him to provide either service? In fact, some companies are now tricking the public by ranking themselves “#1” in bogus top 10 Résumé Writing Service lists. They then send the résumés overseas to be written and then furnish poorly written résumés with horrible grammar. Other firms deliver nothing more than a prettier-looking format with exactly the same words that you've written.

Here are the critical criteria you would want to consider and what you should look for (as well as look **out** for) when selecting a résumé writing service.

AVOID THE RIP-OFFS. Unfortunately, there are numerous deceptive cons out there. While Consumer's Union rates many products, and different groups within the Travel Industry rate hotels and restaurants, *there just isn't any legitimate organization that reviews résumé writing services*, so avoid those who claim Top Ranking in some 'fictitious' Best or Top (fill in a number) Résumé Writing lists. These are generally companies overseas who have ranked their own site as #1 in résumé writing, to trick you into thinking they are the top site and therefore the best quality. Another list showing the “Top 7 sites” are sites that are all owned by the same individual.

Other sites charge résumé writers, like my professional colleagues and me, to be listed; and I'd be able to get a stellar rating on *their* list if I would be willing to pay them a few hundred dollars a month.

A newer form are those sites that guarantee a job or they will not only refund your payment, but will throw in an extra \$50. Sounds wonderful, but if you check out all the flaming hoops you'll be required to jump through, you won't want to bother. *This is exactly what they are counting on.*

Unless you think you are merely 'one of the herd', avoid the factories, résumé mills, and low-end providers. Otherwise, your new résumé will make you sound just like everybody else and will most certainly have the same look.

There has been an in-flux of new low-end providers offering résumés at **\$99 or less with a 24–48-hour** turn-around. This means their writers are writing 8-12 résumés per day and rushing through the process. They tend to use a boiler-plated, 'COOKie-Cutter' approach. Their attitude is "all you _____ (fill in your preferred job title) ...well, you're all a dime a dozen, so what difference does it make if you all sound alike and look alike on paper?" They're going to use generic job descriptions and essentially produce a 'one-size-fits-all' résumé for anyone in your profession. This approach certainly won't help you stand out from 'the rest of the herd.'

Developing a high-performing, quality résumé is not like making Instant Jello! A résumé that will achieve optimal results for you takes hours to write; and the best writers produce only 1-2 résumés per day. They take the time to understand you, your abilities, your dreams; and successfully match an effective résumé /job search strategy to your objective and goals. Everyone involved must realize that great résumés take more than 90 minutes to write. Another clue to a web site being a con is the lack of **SAMPLES on the scam websites.**

Your résumé is a critical document in your career and should not be rushed.

Some résumé mills will be 'partners' with job boards (e.g. CareerBuilder) which is nothing more than a royalty they pay for every sale. Factories often use cookie cutter templates to produce a résumé, so unless you are at a point in your career where that is all that you require, find someone who will spend the time to understand how you are unique and especially what makes you good at what you do. Mark Berkowitz of [CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES L.L.C.](#) a Résumé and Career Management firm with over 35 years of experience and résumé /job search / interview strategy samples reproduced in nearly two dozen major publications, says, "***Even more important is to find a professional who will take the time to strategize what makes you great at what you want to do next!***"

Do your due diligence: Find out who runs the firm and what their accomplishments are, as you will want to work with someone who has achieved a certain measure of stature in the field, as opposed to a nameless company that just makes bold claims about 'being the best'. Be careful if they don't mention industry achievements or industry recognized certification; as they are probably just one of the many 'fly-by-night' companies that are trying to do high-volume résumés ... in contrast with a professional with staying power, who is *genuinely interested in helping you advance on the job or make that successful career transition.*

HOW DOES THEIR WEBSITE LOOK? *If they cannot organize their website and make it look attractive, then they can't do that for YOUR résumé. However, this is not the only criteria to use. I've seen instances of companies with sub-par writers that are successful solely because they DO have attractive websites. The résumé writing firm should have some credentials. The first and most respected certification is the **CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL RÉSUMÉ WRITER (CPRW) designation** that indicates they have the expertise to produce high-quality work and the know-how to navigate the job market and genuinely help with career-related challenges. This certification has been in existence for over 30 years and is administered by the Professional Association of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches.*

That being said, look for evidence of their expertise beyond the CPRW designation. Do the people have impressive backgrounds? The better writers have outstanding accomplishments; so, look to see if they have been published in résumé and career strategy books for people in your profession. Do they have a proven track record in helping others in *your* field achieve their career objectives or successfully orchestrate a career transition like the one you may be considering at this point?

ALSO ASK WHO WRITES THE RÉSUMÉ. While the person you talk to may sound knowledgeable, will your ‘project’ be ‘farmed out’ to someone considerably less qualified? On the other hand, just because you are a brain surgeon, that doesn’t mean you have to have a brain surgeon develop your résumé. Look for people with deep experience writing résumés for your profession and ask about their success rate in helping their clients advance in their careers.

To be on the safe side, ask if they offer a guarantee with the final-product and if you will be able to have your résumé revised. Based on your job targets, will they *customize or fine tune different versions* of your résumé to optimally match you with the requirements of those additional career objectives? Examine their sample résumés. If you don’t like the displayed examples, you surely won’t like their work. Look to see if they are focusing on skills and accomplishments as opposed to producing pretty résumés that just list *duties and/or responsibilities*. Also look to see if they are using advanced techniques like color, testimonials and highlights to make your résumé stand out from the crowd.

If the firm doesn’t display samples, then be very careful as there is no reason why a firm, claiming to ‘be the best/, wouldn’t be proud to show off samples of the quality of their work. They might not have displayed examples for exactly the kind of job you want, as a lot of people tend to plagiarize web-published work, but *some* samples are a *must*.

Explore their résumé development process and make sure you get to speak to someone. A good résumé cannot be written just from a questionnaire, and a good résumé writing firm will prefer to speak with you. This way they can ask you insightful questions that highlight the skills and achievements that will impress an employer. Mark Berkowitz, NCCC,CPRW, ICJCTC, AND CEIP of [CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES](#) says “*A masterful résumé writer knows the employment market, the hiring process, and most of all is an expert practitioner in implementing the strategies that help a candidate to rise head and shoulders above the competition. If they don’t interview you, it means that they’re not interested in investing any of their time in your career success; ... they’re looking for the quick buck.*”

The best résumé writing firms may use both a questionnaire and a phone / in-person interview. The questionnaire will jog your memory and make you think a bit about things that you might not have considered or thought about in a while. In fact, it not only helps you get a better résumé; psychologically it helps you begin to prepare for the job interview. Senior level executives would insist on a questionnaire *and* an interview and there is no reason that you shouldn’t be able to get the very same **VIP treatment**.

GET A FREE RÉSUMÉ EVALUATION. If they don’t offer one, then they are probably too weak to provide a good critique, or they rely on high volume and are one of the ‘factories’ that use templates. A firm that doesn’t offer a critique or evaluation will most likely just provide a cosmetic ‘make-over’.

Then notice if they call you or send you an e-mail evaluation. The Ladders and JobFox are notorious for emailing a lengthy, well-written evaluation that is 99% canned with a couple of sentences added. A really good company is not afraid to invest the time to talk to you and get to understand your needs, particular challenges, and only then indicate how they could help. **Call the company. Do you speak to a sales**

person or a résumé writer? If you are speaking to a sales person, then they probably are more of a factory that does big volume and uses “COOKie-CutTeeR” templates. **Do they offer a guarantee?** A good service will stand behind their work and offer to revise your résumé for free if it is not working. You’ll want to choose a résumé writing service that stands behind their product.

ASK ABOUT THE PRICE. Yes, the price is important but not as important as getting a résumé that works optimally. **The difference between a mediocre résumé and a great one can be as little as \$100 {the cost of a night out}.**

REMEMBER: THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DOCUMENT IN YOUR CAREER, so it makes sense to invest in an effective, well-strategized résumé that you can have confidence in. The Internet is a wonderful thing, but it has allowed anyone to offer résumé writing services, regardless of their background. Use the above 10-point checklist and you will be guaranteed to choose the right résumé writing service for you.

OK, so we’ve discussed what to look out for; but *what should you be actively searching for?*

- A reputable firm that has a solid track record, been in business for a while, and isn’t likely to be a ‘fly-by-night’ operation just out to make a quick buck.
 - ✓ Does the firm have a record of helping their clients advance in their careers for a decade or maybe even more?
 - ✓ Has the firm provided service to multiple members of the same family or clients from the same company? *Does much of their business come from referrals?*

- A firm that has expertise working in the employment field.
 - ✓ Do they know what it takes to get hired in your field?
 - ✓ Are they well versed in the appropriate strategies to help you achieve YOUR goal?
 - ✓ Is the firm / writer well-respected within the résumé / career coaching industry?

- A firm that will take the time to talk to you to find out:
 - ✓ What you are good at,
 - ✓ What you are proud of,
 - ✓ What have been your prior experiences in job-search and most importantly ...
 - ✓ What you want to achieve as you contemplate making some type of a career transition.

Mark Berkowitz is the owner and President of Career Development Resources, LLC. *Changing lives and revolutionizing careers since 1985*, Mark provides one-on-one career consulting services, résumé building assistance and guidance to help each client achieve not only job advancement, but lasting and meaningful success in their career path as well. A distinguished figure in his field, Berkowitz is one of the top career builders in the country and has been quoted in dozens of books and publications on the topic of career advancement.

Passionate about empowering others to realize their dreams, Mark served as an executive board member of the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches. He has been helping clients successfully advance in and/or change their careers for over 36 years. With a Master’s Degree in Career Development and

four specialized certifications (National Certified Career Counselor, Certified Professional Résumé Writer, Int'l Certified Job & Career Transition Coach, and Certified Employment Interview Professional), he is uniquely qualified to help you improve your career situation. A recognized expert in the field, he had not only taught in Graduate Schools and led workshops and seminars, but also trained other counselors. Mark served as chairman of the Certification Board for the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches and was a founding member of the Career Management Alliance (fkn Career Masters Institute). Additionally, he has shared his expertise in effectively utilizing career assessment tools with graduate counseling students from Fordham University, helping to prepare them for their future counseling careers.

Mark connects with clients locally as well as international clients via the internet. He also provides outreach to high school and college students, presenting career planning and job search strategy workshops.

- Highly regarded with résumés, cover letters, and interview strategies showcased in nearly two dozen books.
- Enjoys an INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION as a “Résumé Guru” by members of the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches.

His work appears in nearly two dozen books on résumé /cover letter writing and winning interview strategies. He has been spotlighted on WCBS television in “**Acing The Interview**” and has been named as the “**Professional of the Year 2024**” by the **PODCAST BUSINESS NEWS NETWORK**.



Berkowitz has been recognized as “ ... **one of the leading résumé writers in the U.S. today**” in Professional Résumés for Executives, Managers, and Other Administrators. Wendy Enelow, President of the Career Masters Institute has acknowledged Mark as “... **one of the most talented career counselors I have ever met.**”

You can contact him at 1+ (910) 883-5013 or cardevres1@gmail.com to find out how he can assist you in launching your career into a higher orbit.

*See how you can **benefit from professional expertise instead of suffering from your career mistakes.***