

GREAT REASONS TO KEEP YOUR RÉSUMÉ UP TO DATE

Excellent! You've been with your present employer for a quite a while now and steady, full-time employment is a good thing. The potentially *unrealized disadvantage* is that your résumé is getting a bit moldy and dusty; ... definitely out of date. You're happy in your current job and certainly not giving much thought to your résumé, which is somewhere in the Cloud, on a flash drive sitting in a drawer, or locked inside your old computer.

And if you're not planning on a career transition in the near future, you might think that this is just the way things are supposed to be. I'm sorry to burst your bubble, but it's time you ***woke up and took the first step in proactively managing the future growth of your career.*** You just never know when a beneficial opportunity will present itself; and if you're not prepared to take advantage of it ... well that's a blown opportunity with someone *else* reaping the benefits. And you could find yourself *stuck in a rut* while everyone else is passing you by.

It's a proven fact that your polished résumé (and LinkedIn profile!) can be just as valuable to you now as they were when you were in the midst of an active job search campaign. 'Stay tuned' for seven strategically proven reasons to always keep your résumé updated. To quote Harvey McKay, author of *Shark Proof*, "**Keep your résumé locked, loaded, and ready at all times!**" So, even if you aren't actively looking or even planning on looking for a new job in the near future, here are seven (*make that **EIGHT***) excellent reasons to keep YOUR résumé up to date:

8. Keeping Your Current Job

Oops, does this guy Berkowitz *NOT know anything* about proper sequence? Quite the contrary: *these times and this employment market call for 'out-of-the-box' thinking.* So many companies are down-sizing, right-sizing, or just plain slashing their employment number, i.e. *reduction in force*. With so many folks working remotely, corporate execs are hoping to further trim any surplus staff. Your number one strategy, (at this point) is to demonstrate and prove your full value as well as future potential worth to the higher-ups; so, when that higher-up executive is looking to trim some fat, s/he will automatically maintain your status in the 'keeper pile'. Therefore, the strategy/reason that *should* have come at the end of the list has leap-frogged into First Place.

While not a comprehensive listing by all means; the following represent a number of proven strategies that will certainly put you ahead of the game:

- ✓ **Take stock of your achievements / accomplishments and phrase your bullet point statements in terms of P A R (Problem –Action-Result) or C A R (Challenge-Action-Result). Be sure to quantify or qualify your results.**
- ✓ **Even if your boss did NOT take action on your suggestion or recommendation; you should take credit for your efforts. You might phrase it along the lines of: "Innovated operational strategy designed to _____ in order to achieve an X% time saving / expense reduction / efficiency gain." {etc.}**
- ✓ **Compare / contrast your performance with that of your peers / predecessor or successor in your position. Highlight and quantify your contributions.**

We now return to the regularly sequenced portion of this article

1. In Case You Want to Present Yourself as an Expert

Presenting at workshops or seminars, teaching a college course, contributing articles to publications, or giving quotes to the media, as an expert in your field, are all excellent ways to enhance your professional reputation and grow professionally, without leaving your current job. But when you present yourself to the media or conference organizers, you'll need to effectively highlight your education as well as showcase both your experience and expertise.

By keeping your résumé and LinkedIn profile updated, you can send them off without blinking an eye. (And after you've given an amazing presentation or had your article published? You should parley that experience into an extra qualification to an upcoming opportunity that's just around the corner; by adding it to your résumé.)

2. A Colleague Wants To Nominate You For A Position

A client of mine recently had a colleague nominate him for a board position with a prestigious service organization, but when the friend requested a résumé to give to the selection committee, my client realized he hadn't updated his in a couple of years—and therefore it only showed a fraction of his phenomenal achievements! Instead of feeling totally excited for the recognition, he found himself all stressed out, having to carve out the time to update his résumé.

By making sure that your LinkedIn profile and résumé are no more than a month out-of-date, you avoid selling yourself short (necessitating someone to wait for your document). In case you missed out on the 'Scouting' experience, the scout's motto is to "BE PREPARED!" So, in a way, we make our own good luck by being prepared to take advantage of opportunities that may present themselves; or in other words, *'fall into our laps.'*

3. You Might Want to Take On an 'Extra-Curricular' Project

Even if you're *not* actively looking for a new full-time job, you might decide that you want to take on a freelance job, or partner with someone on a side project. And if a great opportunity *'shows up on your doorstep'*, you'll be in a much better position if you aren't pressured into digging out your old résumé and juggling your busy schedule to perform vital résumé surgery.

For example, some years ago I was approached by an organization to work on a major outplacement project. When I spoke to my contact's boss, I found out that he needed my résumé by 5PM *that day*. At that time, *I didn't even own a quality printer*, and was lucky that I had a good quality laser print of my documents in my briefcase ... otherwise I would have been completely out of luck. What do they say about the 'Scout's Motto'?

Don't find yourself in a pinch *like I could have been*. Make sure that you always have an updated file of your résumé somewhere that's easy to find, along with a document (addendum) containing all the experience not on the trimmed-down version (in case you need to tailor the experience you're showing off for a specific position).

4. There's A Strong Possibility That Someone Is

Searching For What You Have To Offer

Just because *you're* not looking for a new job doesn't mean someone else isn't in need of someone with just your experience and skills mix. Recruiters, or people looking to collaborate on projects, are often actively keeping an eye out for the perfect fit. If they contact you asking for your résumé (and you only have that outdated version)—or come across your outdated LinkedIn profile—they won't be very impressed.

But if they see an *up-to-date* document or profile detailing all of the impressive things you've done recently? They might just extend you an offer that you'd have a hard time turning down (and, at the very least, it'll be a great boost to your self-confidence!).

5. In Case a Promotional Opportunity Presents Itself at Work

Even if you are enamored with your present organization and don't have plans to leave your job, you might be ready to move up to a more challenging position. And even though your manager has firsthand experience of your incredible work, s/he could use some 'ammunition' to pitch your candidacy to the higher-ups. The top executives who make the determination to promote vs. hire from the outside will definitely want to see your accomplishments on paper. After all, they may have to justify your promotion (not to mention salary raise) to their own *'higher-ups'*.

By having a current résumé on hand, you'll be able to submit your application in a timely manner, highlighting your expertise, work ethic, enthusiasm, and *preparedness* for the new position.

6. On The Off-Chance You Stumble Upon An Attractive Job Posting Or A Friend/Colleague Calls Your Attention To A Suitable Opportunity

You never know just when an opportunity will present itself. If you are successfully building an effective network, letting people know **a**) what it is that you do; and **b**) what you are *hoping to do*; THEY may call your attention to something that they've seen or heard. It may be a posting or want ad that they've seen. Or it could be something that they've heard at a social engagement or even through their work. You could receive a call from a recruiter alerting you to a job vacancy that fits your needs & wants to a "T".

If your résumé is locked 'n loaded and ready to go; then congratulations: You are already prepared to take advantage of a rewarding ***career advancement opportunity*** (CAO).

7. THESE DAYS THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS JOB SECURITY

It doesn't matter whether you work in the for-profit or the not-for-profit sector: Current employment trends such as *Reductions In Force, Down Sizing, Right Sizing, Workforce Balancing* and the like; in addition to mergers and acquisitions; mean that your position could potentially be cancelled through no fault of your own. Regrettably, no matter how much you love your job or how good you are at it, a situation may arise where your position is eliminated. And if that does happen, you're going to have enough stress without having to think about updating your dusty, minimally-effective résumé. When this happens, *and sooner or later it happens to just about everybody*, your self-esteem takes a drastic nose dive, making it diabolically difficult to do an effective job qualifying and quantifying your achievements. Don't expect to do an adequate job promoting your expertise when you are 'bummed out'.

Do yourself (and your career) a favor and regularly update your career marketing documents even when you're not actively looking for a job. By keeping your résumé current, you're just a cover letter away from launching your new career advancement campaign leading to bigger and better opportunities. After all, you've laid out all the ground work in advance and you're ready.

And what's the best part of all of this strategy? Keeping your résumé updated doesn't require a huge investment of time, especially if you're doing it regularly. Simply carving out a measly half-hour or so each month can be just enough to give your résumé the polishing-up it needs.

Mark Berkowitz is the owner and President of CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES, LLC, an accredited job search coaching and career counseling firm based out of the Wilmington, NC area. Changing lives and revolutionizing careers since 1985, Mark provides one-on-one career consulting services, résumé building assistance and strategic 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, Mark 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 and personal branding. Founding President of the Career Management Alliance, Wendy Enelow, acknowledged Mark as "... *one of the most talented career counselors I've ever met*", and Mark was named in Professional Résumés For Executives, Managers, and Other Administrators as one of the *top résumé writers* out there. After earning a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Arts Education from New York University, Mark went on to complete a Master of Science in Career Development and Career Counseling from the College of New Rochelle. He worked with Network Career Résumé for 7 years, where he developed many of his finely honed coaching strategies of today.

Passionate about empowering others to realize their dreams, Mark is a member of the Professional Association of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches. Upon completing his studies at New Rochelle, Mark remained active at the college, serving as an adjunct professor for many years, successfully orchestrating the inception of two new courses: The Job Search Process and Computers in Career Life Planning. In addition, he shared his expertise in effectively utilizing career assessment tools (tests) with graduate counseling students from nearby Fordham University and undergrads at Mercy College, helping to prepare students for the transition into one of the most highly competitive job markets in the world. His work appears in nearly two dozen books on résumé /cover letter writing and winning interview strategies. He has been helping professionals, of all levels, ***maximize their career potential*** since 1985 and was spotlighted on WCBS television in "***ACING THE INTERVIEW***."

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