

## How You Can Repair Your Résumé to Address Problematic Situations

Whether you're currently employed, facing a layoff or looking to improve your employment situation, keeping your résumé up-to-date is *critical*. In today's economy, however, it's even more vital to have a current copy of your résumé readily on hand. After all, you never know when an amazing job opportunity -- or a pink slip -- might just come your way.

You've got to be ready to submit your résumé on *spur-of-the-moment* notice. Candidates who have not taken time to update their résumé may be passed over for another candidate, of similar caliber, that's all set to go right now. You just never know when that opportunity may land in your lap and you have to be prepared to act.

Updating your résumé today, however, may be more complicated than it once was. As company transitions and layoffs continue to increase, people have to do more with less to enhance their résumés. If you're like most job seekers, you are stumped about how to deal with lack of employment, gaps between work, title demotions, decreased duties and shortened job spans when updating their résumés.

*Here are some effective strategies to enhance your résumé even if it is lacking in one or more of these following areas:*

### **You have a gap between jobs**

Depending on the length of the gap, you should fill in the gap with something you've been doing during your down time. This will demonstrate to employers you've taken initiative during this period rather than waiting for something to fall into your lap.

"Consider getting actively involved in volunteer projects and/or consulting opportunities, even if you do the work pro bono." This will enable you to make use of your skills in a way that not only keeps them fresh, but is also worth describing on your résumé."

### **You've been laid off**

There is no shame in getting a pink slip. In today's environment of lay-offs, reductions in force, down sizing and right sizing, no employer will be surprised see an applicant who's been laid off. *There's a huge difference between being fired and having your position eliminated.* Be honest about your departure. In today's economy, it's bound to happen sooner or later to just about everybody ... through no fault of their own. *In most cases* you shouldn't misrepresent that you're still employed by dating your last position as *to present* if you're not currently with that company. It's certainly a red flag if a recruiter sees you as currently employed when in fact, you're *in between* jobs.

### **You were hired recently but laid off right away due to the economy of recent years**

Don't leave any employment off your résumé, no matter how short a period you may have worked there. Just don't explain the details on your résumé.

In today's job market, most people will give you the benefit of the doubt that your departure was not a result of poor performance. Just be prepared to discuss it if it comes up in a conversation or interview.

## **You were demoted or had a title change**

Titles are just that -- a title. It says nothing about your specific accomplishments and your track record of meeting or exceeding metrics for your organization. Use your job title, but focus on your accomplishments for the organization. After all, you're being considered for the VALUE that you offer, not your job title. Any good recruiter or potential employer is going to be more interested in your track record of meeting objectives no matter what *'hat you wore'*. A sales director for one company may require something completely different from a director role at another company. We've seen identical job postings where one company called the position a *financial analyst* while the other company called it a *business analyst*. Make sure to highlight your quantifiable / qualifiable achievements and accomplishments.

## **You went from a senior-level position to a "filler" position at a lower level**

In this situation, it's critical to include an objective that outlines the kind of position you're looking for at the company that you're applying to.

If you have to take a 'filler' position between professional positions, you need to include the role but place your focus on the activities you have maintained during that time to remain current in your professional field.

Volunteering, professional networking and taking classes are all things that will help keep you current.

## **You're a recent college graduate with little experience**

Most people have skills that they don't realize are important résumé builders. Classes, special projects that were part of your course-work, volunteer experience, internships, leadership activities and professional networking groups are all examples of experience you can incorporate in your résumé.

**Now that you know how to correct any potentially *sketchy* parts of your résumé, here are five strategies to help you *strengthen* and keep it up-to-date.**

### **1. Keep up with trends**

"Keep up-to-date with current trends for résumés and online profiles. Be sure that you are highlighting how you stand out and emphasizing what makes you valuable," Mark Berkowitz of CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES advises.

### **2. Keep a brag book**

At CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES, we suggest keeping a log of your performance reviews, coaching reports from managers, sales reports, goal assessments, formal observations and the like to use as content for your résumé. "You're going to be measured against someone else in most any position you may hold," he says. "Update this list each time you receive an e-mail from your manager or a report from your company. Include achievements applicable to the position for which you're submitting your résumé."

Additionally, you should be keeping a file of any complimentary things that supervisors, colleagues, and clients say about you, and also asking for recommendations on social networking sites like LinkedIn.

### **3. List more than job duties**

"Listing job duties on your résumé is merely OK, but to really sell your full value, be sure to include the metrics you were held accountable for and your performance related to those goals," Berkowitz says. "Many people just list the duty but don't include the scale of their accountability and how they performed." **Remember that the hiring authority has two implicit but critical questions in mind:** "*Is this candidate any good at what s/he does?*" and "*How would I be better off with this candidate on my team rather than one of what might appear as*

*similarly qualified applicants?”* Let these questions guide you in curating your bullet-point statements and enable you to stand head and shoulders above your competition!

#### **4. Always ask for feedback**

Never stop asking for feedback or a critique from colleagues, friends and experts. “You never know what someone may see in your résumé that needs further enhancement or may just need to be eliminated”. On the other hand, someone who knows you and your performance well may just *call attention to the fact that you omitted something that s/he considers an outstanding accomplishment!* Now that your friends and colleagues have a copy of your résumé, they will be able to call your attention to opportunities (for you) that they may hear about.

#### **5. Keep lists**

In order to keep your résumé up-to-date, you need to keep a running list of your accomplishments and things you've done in the workplace, and add to it regularly. Keep track of your digital profile, too, and recognize that your digital footprint is an important part of your professional presentation and job search.

Mark Berkowitz, NCCC, CPRW, IJCTC, CEIP is president of **CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES**, a full-service career management firm with a demonstrated, decades-long track record in helping job seeking candidates maximize their career potential. The firm assists clients in successfully managing their careers through state-of-the-art, professional assistance from start to finish in an effective career change and/or job search campaign, providing such services as: Résumé Development; Cover Letter Writing; Job Search Coaching; Career Counseling; Peak Performance Interview Training; Salary Negotiations; and Career Testing & Assessment.

Mr. Berkowitz holds a Master’s Degree in Career Development and is a **National Certified Career Counselor, Certified Professional Résumé Writer; Internationally Certified Job and Career Transition Coach**, and one of only one hundred individuals credentialed as a **Certified Employment Interview Professional**. 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*” 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.*”

If you feel that you need some pointers or are not up to the task, reach out to Career Development Resources at:  
+1 (910) 833-5013 or [CarDevRes1@gmail.com](mailto:CarDevRes1@gmail.com).

