

How What You Don't See in Your Resume Can Hurt You and Resumes Exposed

Carol M McCullagh, PhD
General Management Executive
(President, COO)

www.linkedin.com/in/carolmc

About Me

- Corporate history in engineered products and associated professional services (site engineering, installation and spare & repairs)
- Led organizations in product development / management and global deployments with supporting functions reporting to me (e.g., finance, marketing, ...)
- Reluctant consultant looking for a President / COO position in a diversified industrial corporation (HVAC, Security Systems)
- Member of Careers in Transition Leadership Team

Introduction

- So this can be used as a reference, many of the slides are wordy.
- Lots of material to cover, so fasten your seatbelts!
- Evaluate who's telling you what and why.
- Use bits and pieces as makes sense.
- Bottom Line: You need to decide what makes sense TO you and then decide if it makes sense FOR you!

Rant Number 1

- Use a resume writer or career coach?
 - Resume writer takes your info and creates a resume for you
 - May be excellent BUT
 - May not represent you accurately or as you want to be
 - Career coach teaches you to do it
 - You do the work and many drop out BUT
 - You own it and it says what you want it to say

Sources

- Lloyd Feinstein, Alex Freund, Abby Kohut, Pat Romboletti, and many others
- Lloyd Feinstein, “Shorten Your Job Search,” 2014
- Kevin Kermes of Career Attraction, Free webinars – “The 3 Biggest Job Search Mistakes that Keep you from Being Hired and How to Avoid Them”
- Careers in Transition, Short Hills, NJ resume review (free, register at <https://www.christchurchshorthills.org/careers-in-transition>)
- Lisa Rangel of Chameleon Resumes, Free webinars, podcasts and emails
- “Beating the ATS” – Lynne Williams presentation at bit.ly/BeatingATS or on the PSGofMercerCounty.org site (March 29, 2019) and updated versions - 2024
- Wharton Club of NJ webinar – “The Advent of AI in Hiring Technologies” by Rena Nigam, CEO of Meytier, January 19, 2021
- Melanie Woods (CGL Recruiting) has lots of YouTube videos demo’ing LinkedIn Recruiter – major changes have happened and more are happening
- JobScan YouTube Video 2024 – How to Use Job Scan to get More Interviews; can download the ATS for JobSeekers Handbook
- TheBreakfastClubNJ.com Jan. 11, 2025 YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3qxFxcifpo): KeepPace with Generative AI (GenAI) and It’s impact on the Future of Work – will your job be eliminated by an Intelligent Agent

Things to Consider

- Is there info in the file that:
 - Says things you don't want it to say
 - Causes doubt on the credibility of the document
 - Causes doubt on your expertise
 - Messes up your Applicant Tracking System (ATS) submission so that you're eliminated and/or they have wrong/missing info, etc.

Whose resume is it?

ELLEN T. ALIEN

2000 Rt. Galaxy Road, Sun System, New Jersey 07950

xxx.xxx.yyyy

ellentalien@yahoo.com

www.linkedin.com/pub/ellen_alien

Did Ellen write it? Let's check the MS Word File Properties or Info

Related People

Author

Suzy Q

Add an author

Last Modified By

Carol

They're not Ellen, so who are they?

What else may be lurking?

Use the Show/Hide feature (backwards P)



Administrative Professional

Facilitating and enhancing the productivity of senior management and staff using all my technical and organizational skills. I do this by...

Double period?

- Proactive, "take-charge", focused professional providing administrative support to the executive level while maintaining confidentiality of all corporate and personnel matters...
- Build and develop client relationships with key personnel and earn trust and loyalty by exhibiting integrity and sincere concern for their needs.
- At all levels of the organization combine critical thinking and broad business knowledge to expertly solve problems.

Mixed tabs and spaces; date not at right margin

EXPERIENCE

COMPANY, XXX, NJ / Staffing Agency → → → → →2014

Contract Analyst

- Coordinated and supported the Contracts, Informed Consent, Study Start-up (SSU) and Outsourcing. Coordinated and maintained cross-functional contract tracking database in Access and Excel.

COMPANY 2 Basking Ridge, NJ / Staffing Agency → → → → → → → 2013

Executive Assistant to an Executive Director

- Provided Executive level admin support.
- Assisted the Director and Executive Director by performing secretarial and administrative tasks; coordinated meetings, performed heavy calendar management.

More of ...

- Check to make sure “all changes accepted”

Do they need to know that you're typing challenged?

EXPERIENCE

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Other Reported Gottchas

- For ATSs, don't use ANY underlines
- Believe it or not, some folks are looking to see if the resume uses tab stops or tab, space, space, etc. Why?
 - Tab stops are used by millennials; perceived as being more tech savvy
- For some items, e.g., companies, schools, publications, some folks are suggesting using hyperlinks
 - If yes, maybe make them pretty – use Ctrl K BUT,
 - Cybersecurity issues may make readers not click on unknown links
- Scanned PDFs aren't ATS readable, but ones created as Save or Save As are
- Use market value driven titles and skill names
- If you're using your LinkedIn Profile to submit for jobs, be aware Unicode items aren't searchable

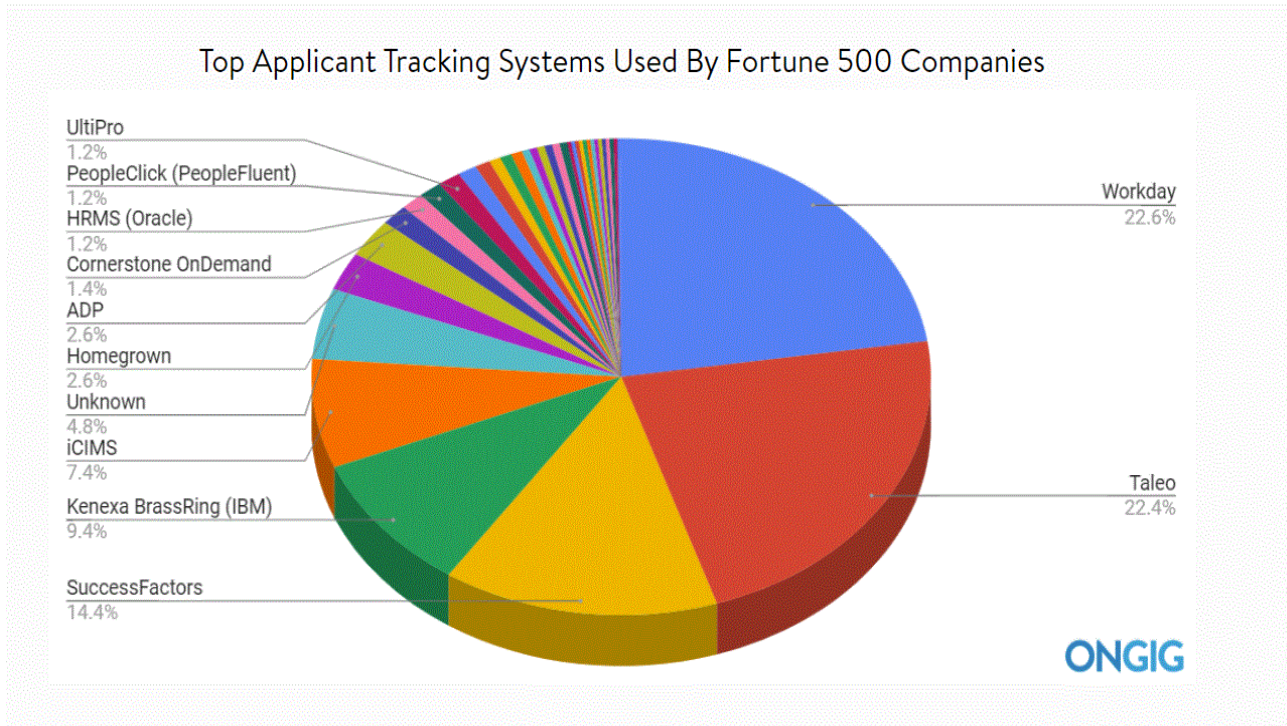
Recent Additional Issues

- If a Job Description is AI generated;
 - the candidate uses AI to create a resume;
 - hence the AI ATS finds an exact match.
 - BUT a candidate interview doesn't show a match.
- Companies are finding that they may do better with an evidence-based resume.
- Tools like McCoy (currently an I-Phone app) maybe worth exploring.
- Proliferation of AI job tools (not all are free):
careercheck.ai, JobScan; LinkedIn, Tealhq.com
and ...

Other New Items

- With LinkedIn, etc. using market-based titles and skills, it maybe worth using them if they are equivalent to what your company called them.
- Another possibility to consider if unemployed and what to call yourself
 - Use the Desired title(s) as your title and your name as the company

Applicant Tracking Systems



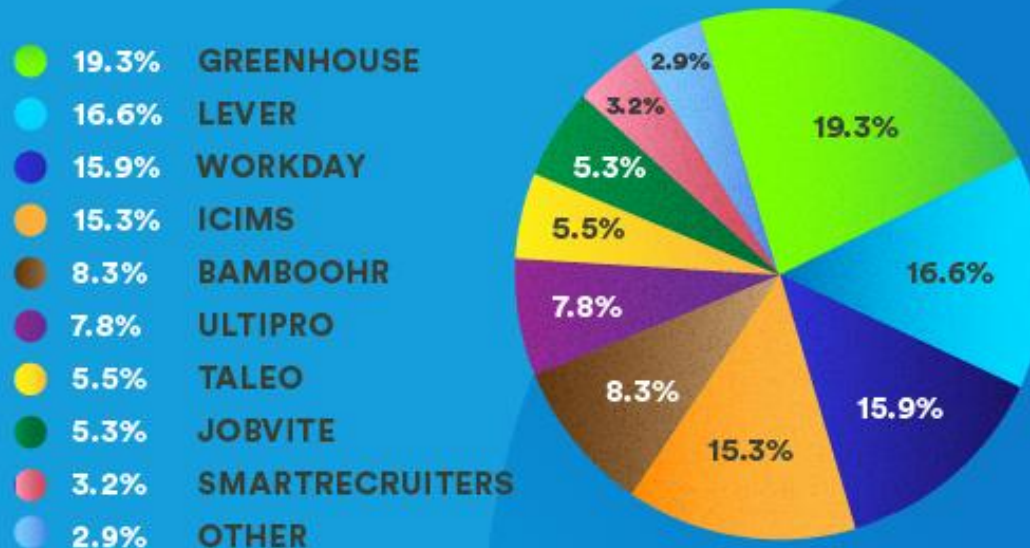
Source: <https://blog.ongig.com/applicant-tracking-system/top-at-s-systems-used-by-the-fortune-500-2019/>

Source: <https://blog.ongig.com/applicant-tracking-system/top-applicant-tracking-systems-ats-software-2020/> , has a partial listing of which companies use what ATS

Source: <https://blog.ongig.com/applicant-tracking-system> :
<https://blog.ongig.com/applicant-tracking-system> July 2024

<https://www.jobscan.co/blog/fortune-500-use-applicant-tracking-systems/#ats-distribution-across-fortune-500-companies>

General ATS Distribution 2024



But we don't know ...

- What software package
- What version / release
- How the company is using it
- How the user is using it

So best to keep the file clean and simple!

Some details excerpted:

- **Taleo**, by the applicant's location. Unique in that it uses zip codes specifically. An **accurate zip code along with a full address** should be used when applying for jobs.
- **Greenhouse** reads resumes differently than others by looking to fill in three specific categories for each job listed: **company name, position title, and dates of employment, in that order**. It is good practice as a job seeker to include the full company name, position title and dates of employment (including month and year) in order to have all information properly parsed into his or her applicant profile.
- **iCIMS** sets itself apart by location search. Makes **location searchable by city name** rather than zip code.
- **Bamboohr** **does not allow hiring managers to search by keyword** the way many others do, which means recruiters will likely read through applicants' resumes the old fashioned way. For this reason, readability is more important than formatting
- **Jobvite**, used by LinkedIn, Hulu, and Logitech, is one of several ATS that **prefers non-abbreviated keywords**. E.g., if the applicant is an SEO expert, Jobvite might prefer "Search Engine Optimization Expert" instead. When in doubt, applicants should use both the unabbreviated version and the acronym. In this case, it would be acceptable to use "Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Expert."

Source: The GetFive Blog, "How the Top 5 Applicant Tracking Systems Read Resumes Differently," January 17, 2010 and more recent reissues (2024)

Do You Know That

- Only 5 in 1000 submissions make it through the ATS (Execunet, March 29, 2018); general feeling is 75% make it through
- Over 40% of your resume content is missed by ATSs, so upload or submit using .txt files (attach .doc(x) or .pdf)
- Some ATSs do not allow Google docs
- The number 1 cause of resume elimination is not filling out the submission 100%
- ATS providers encourage their customers to eliminate based on the Q/As, not keywords (Taleo is known for using Knockout Qs)
- ATSs, recruiters, and HR look for resumes that fit their standard profile: in the job, no current gaps,...
- Job descriptions usually don't reveal the company problems, so ...

More Considerations

- Note: women and minorities tend to soften their approach, so to combat ATS and hiring committee bias
- Include all your skills
 - If you're working on a skill or taking a class, you may want to include that skill
 - Use market driven terms for the skills – LinkedIn now has pulldown terms
- Use power language
 - “team” is implied

Even More Considerations

- Some recruiters (Internal and External) are using Candidate Relationship Systems to find candidates vs the ATS (PSGCNJ.biz 11/21 Recruiter Panel)
- Since LinkedIn Profiles now follow the same structure as what ATSs expect - some think using a fully filled out profile to submit is best - not so clear to me
- You are the result of ALL your experiences so may want to include all your experiences even though you may never want to do that ever again (briefly)
- Resume screeners are generally inexperienced and just know that a keyword showed up in their search. Even experienced folks including VP and above HR folks may not really understand what the job entails or your resume
- Resumes are becoming more skill based so more info is better

Resumes Exposed

What are Resumes

- A marketing tool
- A career history summary
 - Additional documents can be used
 - Project sheets detailing projects or non-major functions
 - “How you can use me” beyond the job description
 - Career Portfolio
- An input for a job application
 - **WARNING! May become a legal document**

How are they used?

- As a marketing device
 - Generally shorter (typically 1-2 pages)
 - Interest generation to get an interview / discussion
 - The move toward skills-based resumes tends to favor more info (longer)
- As a risk reduction document for the hiring manager
 - Usually longer (may be 3 pages, even more)
 - May be too detailed for a first contact
 - May replace some of the interview notes they didn't take
 - May answer more of the hiring manager's and maybe the hiring committee's questions

Contract positions vs becoming an Employee

- Contract
 - They want a specific set of skills and/or expertise, so they
 - Don't care about skills, etc. not in the job description (doesn't mean you shouldn't have a complete description outside this resume)
- Becoming an employee
 - They want to know more skills and expertise
 - This hiring manager wants to know that I can move you within the company if an opening exists if the project ends or downsizes and not have to release you

What format?

- Reverse Chronological
 - Most favored by Hiring Managers and Recruiters
 - Easy to see history and associate results by job
- Functional
 - Least favored because it's hard to associate results with a particular job; viewed as the candidate is hiding something
- Combined – has a Significant Accomplishments section on the first page
 - Plus: highlights a few most proud of results
 - Minus: duplicates text; uses up space
 - Variation: no accomplishments under the companies
- Personal – uses 1st person and is more like you would speak; may be a video

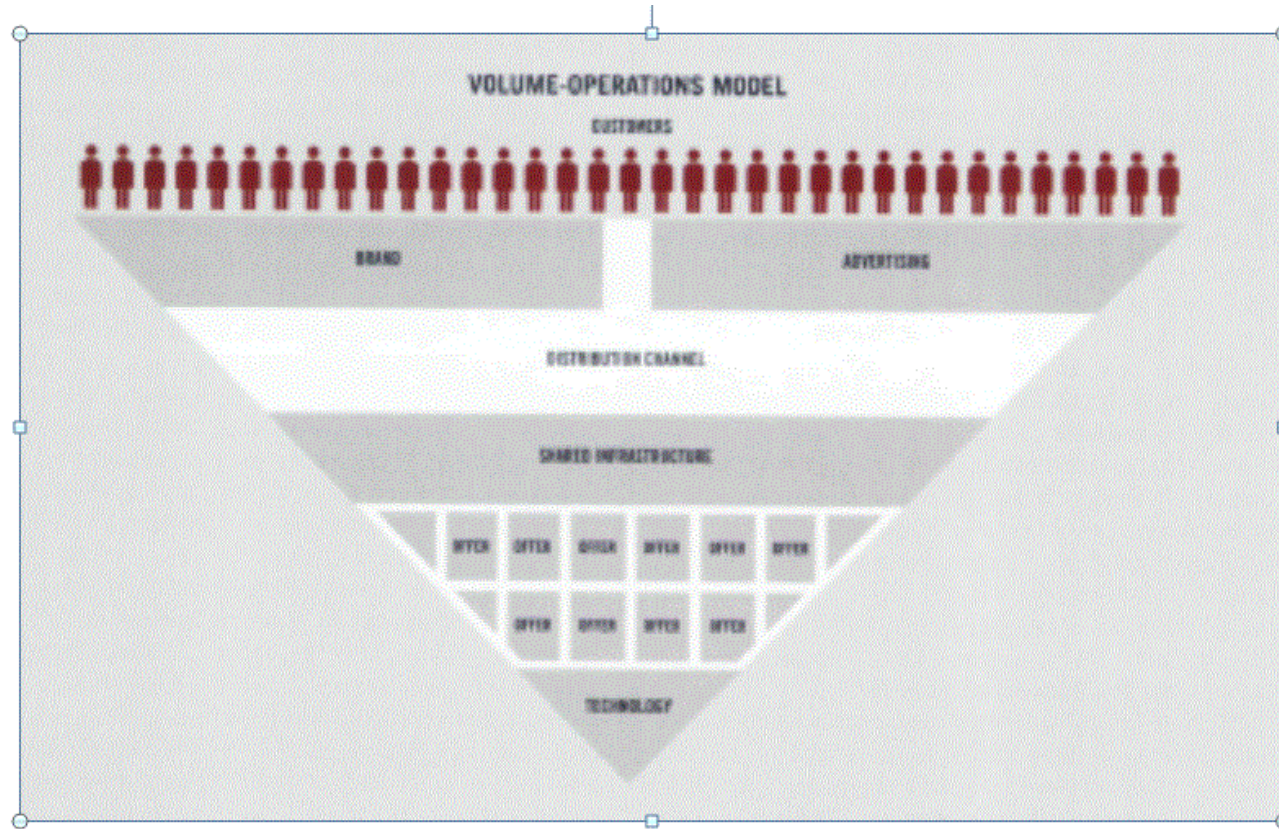
Let's Dissect the Sections

- Summary
- Skills
- Business / Professional / Work Experience
- Education, Training, Certifications
- Other: Community Involvement; Personal Data
- Additional Keywords

But First – What's Your Strategy?

- What job do you want and how do you say it
- What parts of your career history support what you want vs others that minimally or don't support it
- Do you want a marketing or a risk reduction document
- Possible challenges: gaps; you're in an area that you don't want; multiple gigs; consulting vs employment (or vice versa); changing industries,...

Changing Industries? What structure?

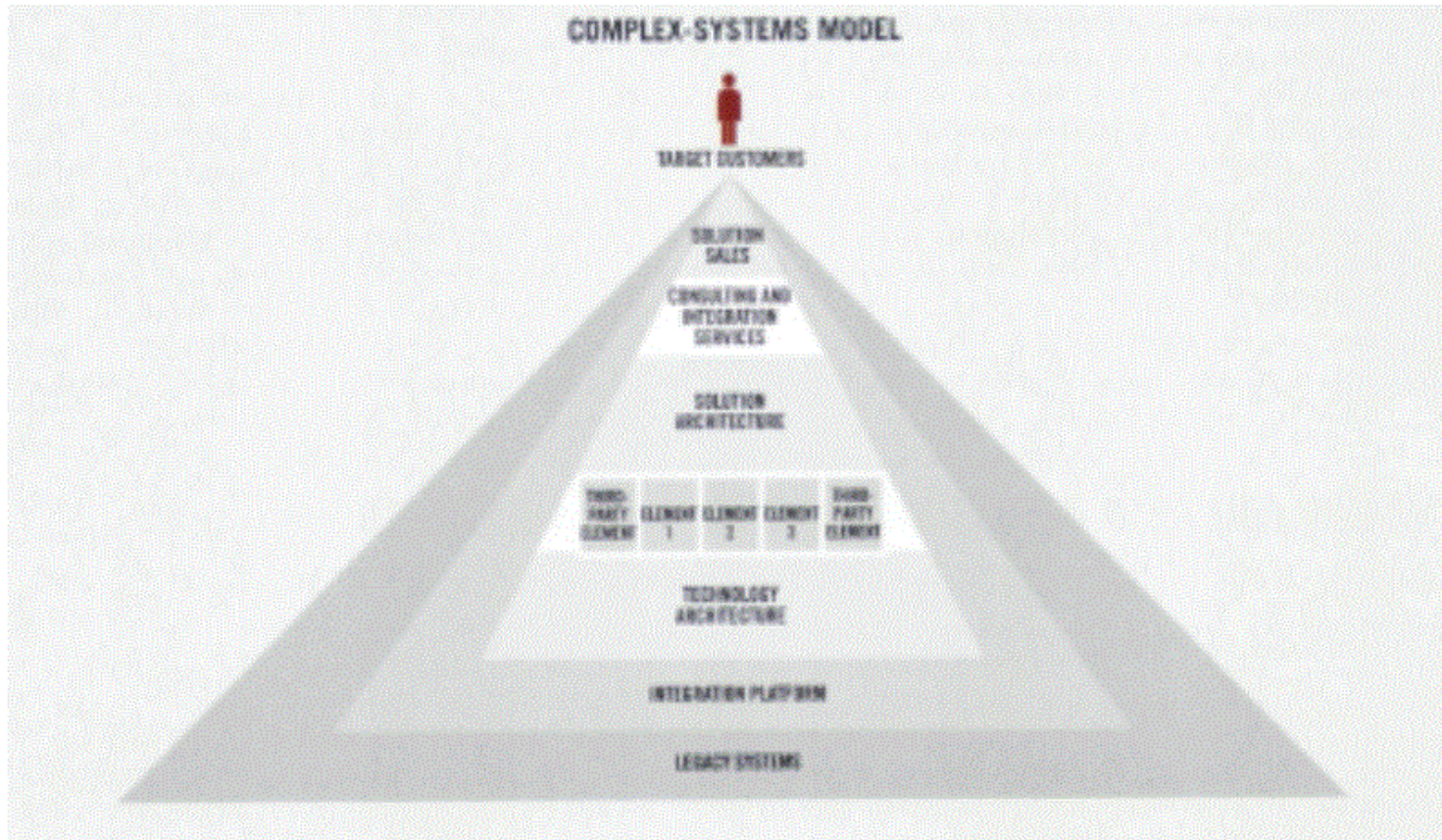


STRATEGY AND YOUR STRONGER HAND. (cover story)

MOORE, GEOFFREY A.^{1,2} (AUTHOR)

Harvard Business Review. Dec2005, Vol. 83 Issue 12, p62-72.

Changing Industries?



HBR Opinion Section in a later issue: At a high level, Pharma is a combination of the 2: an hourglass shape

Section: Summary

- The word Summary: a poor use of space, it's understood that's what the first section is
- The first thing a reader wants to know is “what do you do?”
 - Your title is even more important than your name and some suggest making the font slightly bigger than your name
 - LinkedIn has a pulldown menu for market value titles
- A title(s) of what you want or the one in the specific job description
 - e.g., Chief Financial Officer / Controller; spell out
- Styles
 - Common – The top 3 or so reasons why someone would hire you
 - Risk Reduction – Addresses the personality, chemistry, fit part of the hiring decision
- Consider listing US Citizenship; bi-lingual, and other special items on the first page (may repeat them toward the resume end)

Section: Skills / Areas of Expertise

- Marketing / Common Resume
 - A set of keywords / phrases listing key skills
 - e.g., Project Management
 - May not need a subtitle identifying this section
- Risk Reduction Resume
 - Define the process for each major keyword / phrase – says you know the process (been there, done that)
 - e.g., Project Management including scope, cost and risk management; ...

Section: Skills / Areas of Expertise

- Additional ways to use the expanded definitions:
 - If you did a function a while ago and want to go back to it, e.g., are a Senior Web Developer and want to return to being an Administrative Assistant
 - So put Administrative Assistance as the first skill and the Web Development as the second, can flip them when going for a web development job
 - Have been in multiple industries, e.g., for- and not for- profit and want the one you're not currently in

Business / Professional / Work Experience

- Tip: Spend your space wisely!
 - If it doesn't support the job you're going for, minimize the space allocated
 - By company:
 - COMPANY NAME (previous names, staffing agency name), location, dates
 - If not well known- may want a 1 - 2 line description
 - Title (can be functional / payroll)
 - Several line scope statement providing job duties, describing the playing field (e.g., Number of direct reports, what title you reported to, revenues, budget, remote location, global, ...)
 - “to present” positions, the responsibilities are present tense

Business / Professional / Work Experience (cont'd)

- Accomplishments – all are past tense; several common formats; pick one
 - Action – Result
 - Result – Action
 - Problem/Circumstance/Situation – Action – Result
 - Tells a story
 - The more universal / general the problem, the more industry transferrable
 - Problem/Circumstance/Situation – Result
 - Talk about the action in the interview
 - Result – Action – Task – Situation (RATS)

Business / Professional / Work Experience (cont'd)

- Two basic types of accomplishments
 - Project-oriented: specific results
 - Process-oriented: how well you created, executed, improved
- Results
 - Best: Numbers - dollars, time, faults found, ...
 - Percentages
 - Testimonials

Good discussions of accomplishment types to include are presented by Dale Favia of PSG of Morris County and Ed Samuel - Quantifying Results on Your Resume

Business / Professional / Work Experience (cont'd)

- Gaps – Must be addressed
 - Suggest 1 – 2 liner emphasizing professional related efforts; de-emphasizing anything that is not relevant to the job
 - Can use pro-bono / volunteer work
- Consulting – Try grouping under 1 heading; if true, can say something like “Major assignments include ...” (can use additional sheets to include minor ones and/or less-relevant ones)
 - May list clients separately with accomplishments
 - May list clients or types of clients (e.g., major Fortune 500 companies) together with a single list of accomplishments to preserve confidentiality

Rant Number 2

- Do you need to state Pro bono or volunteer – since 1/1/2020 in NJ they can't ask your \$, so why volunteer the info?
 - They do have ways around it- they're in another state without a similar law, etc.
 - They and other job seekers think you're making a living wage, so why are you looking?
 - You pick!
- Realize that many other job seekers aren't making a living wage
 - 1 person from another group "landed", web says \$12-14/hr * 2000 hr/yr = \$24-28K/yr if they're lucky
 - JFS blog: Have Career Counselors Become Obsolete by Elise Prezant ~2/2020 cited that a home aide makes around \$24K/yr
 - PT work
 - Someone who has all pro bono -work or -entity as their company - they're making \$0

Education, Training and Certifications

- List in reverse chronological order
- Didn't finish your degree – consider using “in progress”, “x credits toward ‘degree’”, “anticipated mo/yr”
 - e.g., 100 credits toward BA
- Have a non-US degree ? Consider getting it evaluated. Some of the most commonly used evaluators in **the United States** include International Education Research Foundation, Inc. (IERF), Academic **Evaluation** Services (AES), World Education Service (WES), Educational Credential Evaluators, and Inc. (ECE).
- Be sensitive to keywords
 - mini-MBA (MBA not found) vs mini – MBA (MBA found)
- Notice if the ATS won't let you list things, like PMP, Six Sigma belts, Master's Certificate, etc. – dilutes your competitiveness (so may want to move them to a text section in your ATS-created profile)
- Can list other significant training on supplemental sheets

Other: Community Involvement

- Community Involvement
 - Think about how important it is to the job or to you
 - Using the word Volunteer vs Pro Bono
 - Volunteer – sometimes perceived as low skilled work
 - Pro Bono – perceived as using professional skills without pay
 - You can list as part of the Professional Experience section to fill a gap, etc.
 - See if you can state it in a way supporting your professional goal
 - e.g., Girl Scouts of America local chapter, Treasurer - for a finance professional
 - e.g., Kids' sports coach – powerful as it implies you can motivate without money
 - Caution: too much may be perceived as that you will not have time for the company

Other: Personal Data

- Controversial
 - More common in Europe
 - Some companies are tossing resumes with personal info
 - Some companies are sanitizing all personal info out of the resume including names, contact info to reduce unconscious bias
 - BUT some want to know you as a person
- Can include items like marital status, health, willingness to travel, interests, etc.
- Can put in the resume, other social media, personal website, etc.

Bottom line: you decide!

Additional Keywords

- Can add this section as a way to list any relevant keywords or phrases
- Example: the job description may list Microsoft Office components as Microsoft Office, MS Office, Microsoft Word, MS Word, ...
- May want to show current technology
 - Google Suite, Zoom, Go to Webinar, ChatGPT, other AI Tools ...

To Customize or NOT to Customize?

- Pros
 - Match the job description for an ATS or recruiter
 - For contract positions, they typically care only about what's in the job description
- Minuses
 - A lot of work to do for every job
 - May lose additional accomplishment areas that the Hiring Manager is looking for that aren't in the job description
- Suggest – create additional sheets with your full history that you can leave behind

Want more Info / Help?

- Careers In Transition – meets virtually the 1st and 3rd Saturdays, has a standing resume review group, register at <https://www.christchurchshorthills.org/careers-in-transition>
- North Dallas/Plano Career Focus Group at CareerDFW or CareerUSA.org – both Facebook Live and Zoom Thursdays for Effective Resumes, see their YouTube Chanel for past sessions <https://www.youtube.com/c/CareerUSA/playlists>
- Free Webinars
- See www.MyNetworkingCentral.com and Alex Freund's www.landingexpert.com list for more networking groups
- Bernards Township (Basking Ridge) Library- Tech Teens for help in using your laptop, tablet and smartphones; other libraries have similar programs

In Conclusion

- It's YOUR resume – you decide
- Think strategically about what you want
- Create a draft – then worry about the format, words; revise
- Have it reviewed by various audiences
- Consider who made the comments and their perspective and knowledge
- Revise, ... Continue the process until you are getting positive results