

Mastering Your Story

Power Hour

Presented by

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Mastering Your Story

How do we turn your professional data into a story that piques the interest of the people who want to hire you?

- Data ➔ Information ➔ Interesting Info ➔ Story
- Achieved through the Resume F-Words



Resume F-Words

○ Function

- Why do you need the resume?

○ Facts

- Your experience, education, and contributions
 - What do you say?
 - How do you say it?

○ Format

- Chronological, functional, combination, targeted
 - What order do you say it?
 - What are the requirements?

○ Flow

- Order of information, intended movement
 - What do you highlight and where?



Resume F-Words

- Function: Why do you need the resume?
- Professional career shift
 - Internal or External
 - Lateral or Vertical
 - Government or Private Sector
 - Business or Academic



Resume F-Words

○ Facts

- Quality Data

- Your experience, education, *and* contributions
- Who, What, Where, When and HOW!
 - Notice emphasis on “how.”
 - The “How” is where many stumble. The w’s are easy to answer. The more difficult factor to encapsulate is the how. But that’s the factor that will differentiate you from other people.



Resume F-Words

○ Format

- What order do you say it?
- What are the requirements?

○ Types of Resume Formats

- *Chronological* – your data in linear time order, always from most recent to oldest experience.
- *Functional* – preferences skills over chronology. What do you know how to do and what have you contributed?
- *Combination* – a mashup of chronological and functional, customized to your purposes and experience.
- *Targeted* – a position and company specific combination format that involves heavily researching your desired position and customizing your resume only for that position.



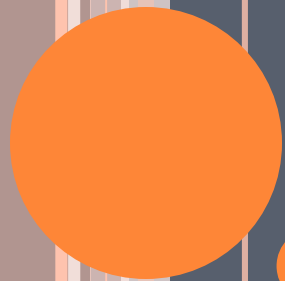
Resume F-Words

○ Flow

- Your Story at a Glance
 - Order of information, intended eye movement

Determine what to highlight and where so the reader doesn't need to search for information. Tell the reader how to read your document. Make the necessary requirements easy to spot and the added benefits of you as an individual easy to see: your career level, expertise, contributions and experience.





Eat with Your Eyes

Formatting Foibles



Spatial Recognition

- Use page space strategically
- Leave white space to avoid a cluttered appearance
- Maximize space not to waste precious real estate
- Try different layouts to highlight information



Media Matters

Keep in mind how your resume will be viewed.

○ Screen vs. Paper

- Test your resume in various media
- Make sure it looks good to diverse human eyes
 - Use Times New Roman, 11 to 12 pt as a standard rule of thumb for judging the size of font
- Readability is essential

○ Word vs. PDF

- Word = easy to edit
- PDF = easy to share
- Keep all of your software up-to-date to enable easy conversion between two platforms

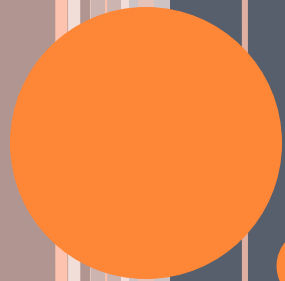


Graphics

- To use images or not to use images?
 - Keep in mind your medium
 - Keep in mind your audience
 - Keep in mind your field

When in doubt, leave them out.





Watch Your Language

Word Usage



Grammar Refresher

○ Parallelism

- If in past tense, stay in past tense
 - Led
 - Spearheaded
 - Founded
- If using present participle, use for all in series
 - Developing
 - Driving
 - Heading
- If using punctuation, use in every instance
 - Led meetings.
 - Established new policies○
 - Updated procedures.



Over Active Words

Overused and Hated Buzzwords

- Best of breed
- Go-getter
- Outside of the box
- Synergy
- Go-to person
- Results-driven
- Team player
- Hard worker
- Strategic thinker
- Detail-oriented

Beloved and Attractive Action Words

- Achieved
- Improved
- Trained/Mentored
- Managed
- Created
- Influenced
- Increased/Decreased
- Negotiated
- Launched
- Under budget



Show and Tell

Buzzwords Tell

Action Words Show

- Quality over Quantity

When writing your story focus on the rich words that will show your experience, instead the cheap words that simply tell what you think other's want to hear.



Reign in Your Buzzwords

More Overused and Hated Buzzwords

- Motivated
- Creative
- Enthusiastic
- Track Record
- Passionate
- Successful
- Driven
- Leadership
- Strategic
- Extensive experience

Some Alternatives

- Show promotion chain
- Show in resume design
- Show in the “How”
- Show the numbers
- Show in the “How”
- Show the numbers
- Show promotion chain
- Show in “How”
- Show in “How”
- Show in “How”



Activate Action Words

The thesaurus still works!

Communication skills

Instead of: talked, led, presented, organized

Use: addressed, corresponded, persuaded, publicized

Organizational skills

Instead of: organized, ordered, filed

Use: catalogued, executed, monitored, operated

Management skills

Instead of: led, handled, oversaw

Use: consolidated, appointed, delegated, established



Action Words

- Some great articles and lists:
 - <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/powerful-resume-action-verbs-0317>
 - <https://www.thebalance.com/action-verbs-and-power-words-for-your-resume-2063179>
 - <https://www.themuse.com/advice/185-powerful-verbs-that-will-make-your-resume-awesome>



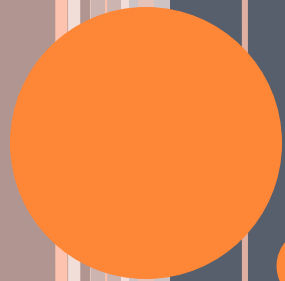
Grammar Refresher

○ Word Usage

- Be ware the mixed metaphor: *this tower of strength will forge ahead*
- Be careful of unintended meaning: *ran the execution of the project*
- Stimulate interest with varied *relevant* vocabulary
- Avoid colloquialisms, vernacular, and field-specific jargon
- Check for Typos!
 - Notice the small typo above. Some are inconspicuous, others can be quite glaring. All may signal inattentiveness.
- Always have *someone else* proofread your documents



* Thank you to Anthony Leung for his keen reading and honest feedback in pointing out this error!



Your Manifesto

What is your purpose?



Who Are You?

- What is your Professional Brand?
 - Education, history, ***skills***, contributions, goals
 - *Soft skills*: personality, character, temperament
 - *Hard skills*: learned abilities and proficiencies

How does who you are and
where you have been
contribute to
where you are and
where you want to go?



What Do You Want?

- What are your passions?
- What are your career goals?
- What is your ideal position?
- What is your ideal culture?
- What do you want to learn?
- What do you want to contribute?



What Do You Have to Offer?

- What are your skills?
 - Hard skills and Soft skills
 - Both are required
- What are your talents?
 - Natural gifts, traits and attributes
 - Unique to you
- What is your track record?
 - Quantifiable demonstrated contributions
 - Yes, you have them



What Have You Accomplished?

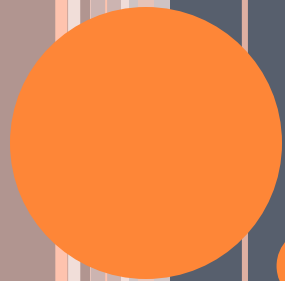
- Unbury your own achievements!
- Mine your resume for your contributions
 - Feature your major contributions
 - Highlight your minor contributions



What Is Required?

- Follow Directions!
 - What does the organization require/request?
- Find Your Sweet Spot
 - What do you require/request from the organization?





Q&A

Your Questions Answered



Q&A

- What are strategies to better present abstract business abilities, such as people management, strategy development...etc?
 - Work these into your contributions. Figure out how these abilities add to the bottom line. Did your management style increase the efficiency of the team such that productivity increased by X%? Think critically about how these abilities manifest and the results that they create.



Q&A

- What are key actions to highlight in a nonprofit position?
 - The same actions as any other position. It all depends on what is relevant to the position you are seeking next. Find out what they want/need and how your experience fits into that.



Q&A

- How do I translate government/military experience for a private sector job search?
 - Same answer here as the previous question. It's all about what is relevant. Almost all skills are transferrable. You just need to show how.

Also, be mindful that resume formats vary from government (long) to private sector (shorter). Isolate the most important roles that are relevant to your private sector search and pair down to just 1 or 2 pages.



Q&A

- How can I target my resume for a field I have never worked in or haven't worked in for a long time?
 - It's all about relevance. Determine those transferable skills. Consider concentrating on your soft skills and your contributions. Reflow your story to reflect your interest in the new field and how your work history can complement and inform this new position.



Q&A

- What is the best way to structure a resume for a person who wants to switch industries mid career?
 - Functional, Combination and Targeted resumes
 - Think about the requirements and your transferable skills
 - Look at the industry and current trends



Q&A

- How do you get your resume on someone's desk who is actually going to look at it, if you don't have that network?
 - Build your network.
 - As a Stanford alum, you have a ready-made network—tap into it!
 - Also generally people have strong networks, they just don't use them. Don't assume that your Uncle John, the janitor, doesn't know people.
 - Be mindful of SEO
 - Use the buzzwords that the company provides in the job description. Don't be afraid to lift them right from the job listing.



Q&A

- Should I list "Interests" on a resume?
 - Are your interests relevant?
 - If not, then no.
 - If yes, then definitely.

If you are involved in a high visibility or highly influential group that has some bearing on your industry, absolutely include that information. If you have the inside track on the hiring manager and share some passion (food, sport, etc.), then sure, use that angle. Just be careful. Playing on heart strings can backfire.



Q&A

- When it is ok to leave jobs off my resume?
 - If a job isn't relevant and doesn't create a gigantic gap in your resume, feel free to leave it off.
 - If the job is more than a decade ago, leave it off.



Q&A

- I know that my unconventional resume weeds out about 75-80% of potential employers; but the 20% of employers that like it, really like it!

What are some easy ways that I can show creativity, while conforming to a more traditional structure?

- *Why would you want to?*

If 20% of employers respond positively to you, maybe that's the 20% of the market you should concentrate on. You can't please all of the people. Just try to please the people with whom you will have the most success.



When in Doubt... Call Me!

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