



Make Your Resume an “Ad” for Brand You

By Catherine Kaputa

Your resume is the often first impression you make on a potential employer or business associate. And first impressions are important. That first minute read of your resume decides whether your resume gets pitched in the circular file, or whether you’re perceived as someone who can add value and called in for a meeting.

Your resume also helps people position you and compare you to other candidates – so make sure that you help them brand you in the best way possible.

Here are tips for creating a winning resume:

1. **Tell a story.**

Your resume should have a narrative thread that ties all of your achievements together and tells a story about you and your future. So downplay or don’t include aspects of your experience that doesn’t fit into your “story” now. Develop a single minded positioning for yourself that’s different and relevant.

2. **Define yourself in a sentence.**

Your profile paragraph at the top of your resume is like the headline in an ad or the hook in a magazine article. Have the first sentence in your profile



define brand you in a sound bite phrase. The rest of the profile paragraph should expand that clincher sentence - identify who you are, what sets you apart from others, and the value added you bring to a job. A profile paragraph should not only differentiate you, it should convey a compelling reason to choose you and not the other people you are competing against.

3. **Use a Celebrity Endorsement.**

As the saying goes, the best advertising is word of mouth - endorsements from satisfied customers. And the ultimate endorsement is the celebrity endorsement. For your resume, we're not talking about getting a testimonial from an actual celebrity. But, rather, asking for an endorsement sentence from a former boss, senior executive or important client. These are your "celebrities." Ask them if they would provide a quote about you and your abilities, or about a project you worked on. You can place the senior executive's endorsement statement right after the Profile at the beginning of your resume or as part of an Achievement Addendum at the end.

4. **Include a Brag Page.**

A brag page as an addendum to your resume is a relatively new device used by job seekers to set their accomplishments apart and serve as the "clincher" in the sale. A resume can do a lot in selling you, but a brag page is the something extra that can make the critical difference is choosing you, and not the other guy.

Use the brag page to identify career defining achievements, things you have done that meant a lot to you, help define your brand, and are compelling to your potential employer.

Headline the top of the page with something like: "Critical Leadership Initiatives" or other title that best suits your situation, such as "Key Campaigns" or "Major Achievements" or "Important Design Projects." Tell a



story about two or three initiatives in a case study format such as Challenge, Action, Results. This is a great place to put in a “celebrity” endorsement from a prior boss about your performance on a project.

You can include the Brag Page as an addendum to your resume or use it as a handout at an in person meeting or with a follow-up letter. It just might be the thing that sets you apart in a crowded market.