

RESUMES

Resumes are the foundation of how you leave an impression about yourself. To get this right, give the overall message it conveys intense thought and analysis. If your message is persuasive, you will be interviewed. If the resume fails to quickly tell the reader what he is looking for, it is ignored or discarded. All of the blog posts I've written are to help you express the essence of your talents and achievements. I hope this collection of articles and posts gives you the tools to tell us in a meaningful way that you are excellent at what you do.

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Please forward questions or comments. To subscribe to the blog, send an email with subscribe in the subject line to: jcushman@jc-a.com.

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WHAT ARE THE 3 WORDS/PHRASES THAT I SEE MOST OFTEN THAT SHOULD NEVER BE USED IN THE INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF THE RESUME?

Strategic, with 20+ years of experience, executive level

Here's why.

You have 15 seconds to make this impression – “The resume is a keeper and I want to consider the candidate for the position I’m filling.” In order to do this, you must telegraph energy, achievement and experience that matches the scale and scope of the position. Those 3 words/phrases do just the opposite and waste those few seconds the reader is paying attention.

To make that right first impression you cannot be vague or tout your success. Let the facts speak for themselves.

Clarity and brevity are the keys. Avoid adjectives. Be as specific as possible in those 15 seconds. Convey purpose and results. No one knows what strategic means any more. Who cares if you have 20+ years of experience if they are not years where you have achieved specific goals? What does executive leadership mean by itself without supporting details (when you don't have the reader's attention to provide them)?

What is so much more effective is providing your title, company and, for example, a statement like, “promoted 4 times in 13 years with the organization.” The introductory statement should be brief and include an objective about the job you are seeking—tailored to fit a position or a function at the company you are contacting. (Omit an objective if you cannot be specific.) Briefly naming and describing your company and where you report helps the reader decide you could be a match—in three sentences.

<http://www.jc-a.com/3-wordsphrases-see-often-never-used-introductory-statement-resume/>

HOW CAN I CREATE A RESUME THAT SAYS, "I'M WORTH YOUR ATTENTION"? Part 1 of 2

After the first blog post, I thought eliminating those words would result in more impressive resumes. Truthfully, despite that change, the content did not improve. Here's a new approach to creating a winning resume. It's all about concept, viewpoint and insight.

Before you begin to assemble your thoughts for updating your resume, here's the concept. I'm asking you to reverse your thought process and instead of thinking about what you want to share about your experience, to think about what the hiring manager (or his HR partner) is thinking. Can you imagine what his first question is as s/he looks at the resume?

Since we are just at the beginning phase of the hiring process, visualize a stack of material to review or a file filled with resumes. This is not a fun job and the company representative knows that the goal is to find no more than 10 or more likely, no more than 5 resumes that appear to be interesting. Here's the answer: "Is this resume worth reading to the end or can I save time and eliminate it?"

I'm assuming that you have been in those shoes and you know that is what really happens. How long did it take you to make that judgment? On what basis did you eliminate an applicant? Didn't you have a short mental checklist? You were looking for answers to the most important questions. You were not looking at an elaborate job description to decide if the applicant were qualified. Instead you had distilled the criteria.

Assuming you were looking for "A" team candidates, you wanted to know if this candidate had impressive enough credentials (so the title mattered) with a company at the appropriate size to be in your "league." You also wanted to know approximately if s/he had a reasonably stable work history and if his/her total work experience were appropriate for that achievement. For example, if the candidate took 15-years to become a Manager in one organization, that would not be impressive.

Let's apply this thinking to creating your resume. If you now have that viewpoint in mind to guide you, let's return to your challenge. Will this insight allow you to mentally edit what message you wish to convey to a reader who has seconds to decide that you are a "keeper?"

Essentially, the first paragraph which summarizes the highlights of your career and the second paragraph which describes your current work experience are your two opportunities to send an effective message. How much time do you have? Is it perhaps 15 seconds? This is the resume version of the infamous "elevator pitch" when you have 3 sentences to describe what you do. It takes a great deal of thinking and editing to arrive at a simple, effective answer.

Here's my suggestion about what to include in the introductory paragraph of your resume. Choose the most specific words and omit adjectives. If you have an impressive title and company credentials say so. If the company is not well known, immediately describe it, e.g. 7-billion-dollar global instrumentation company in the Aerospace industry. If you have a specific work objective in mind that matches the position, indicate that as well.

In the next paragraph provide your title and explain the length of time with the company. If there have been a series of promotions indicate that, e.g. promoted 3-times in 6-years with "X." These are just examples to indicate factually that you are an achiever. The key is, don't self-promote. Adjectives



distract from a results-oriented resume. This advice should put you on the path to a tightly constructed, effective document.

The series continues as I explained about how the resume, overall, needs to tell the right “story” and leave an accurate impression about your talents. Also, there are trends affecting employment. How you present your expertise will need to adjust as hiring organizations add new criteria to job descriptions.

<http://www.jc-a.com/can-create-resume-says-im-worth-attention-first-series/>

HOW CAN I CREATE A RESUME THAT SAYS, “I’M WORTH YOUR ATTENTION”? Part 2 of 2

Why am I spending so much time writing about resumes? Because it is not just about writing resumes. It is how to think about who you are professionally, what your particular talents are and leveraging that for your future. How do you think, say and write a clear message that telegraphs that impression to a stranger?

Do not assume your reader is well versed and knows about the industry and the level of seniority you have achieved. Assume ignorance which mean you need to explain what your company does, its size and what the title means (if it is not clear) by explaining reporting lines. And, BTW, assume the average reader has attention deficit disorder.

This means that you have, as I have written, only about 15 seconds to convince her/him to read the rest of the document. Keep in mind, you are writing your most impressive accomplishments first and what follows should be achievement focused highlights and no more than 2-pages. You do not have to provide a blow by blow description of every job you’ve held. That is boring and unnecessary. Account for years of experience leaving no gaps and consolidate or summarize information.

Your only objective with the resume is to convince the reader that you should be included in the small group selected for further evaluation. Visually, the resume should be uncluttered and organized so that it can be skimmed easily. Always start with current information first since that should be the most impressive.

Here is where there is challenge. The resume should give an overall impression, especially if you are applying for a VP level role, of clear thinking, ability to manage complex assignments, original (problem-solving) ideas, and leadership talents. It should also point out the general direction you wish to take in your career. This is very hard to do. What is compelling to the reader are “mini” stories that illustrate what you can do and what kudos you received. Selecting what stories to tell is critical in illustrating the direction you wish to take. If you are multi-directional, it will be necessary to create several versions of the resume.

As much as I point out the viewpoint of the reader/client and suggest the resume be written from that perspective, there is a balance to achieve. Candidates (job seekers) are evaluated from the point of view of, “Can s/he solve our problems and meet our needs?” You must be alert to protecting yourself from being hired for the wrong reasons. The impression the resume leaves should align with your longer-term goals. The job you are seeking should fit those goals. Select brief success stories



that focus on what you have achieved and what you wish to achieve in your next role, e.g. new strategy, building teams, thought leadership, repositioning initiatives, etc.

Despite being as clear as you can about the broad role you are seeking, a company will sometimes fixate on a specific part of your history that is directly applicable to meeting their needs. A company does not hire you from the perspective of offering you the job you have always wanted. Instead their focus can be on a narrower aspect of your work history. It will be up to you to clarify the role and determine if it is a long-term fit.

At the level we are discussing, I think taking a narrower job will undermine a top performer whose goal it is to head up a function. For example, if the company has a number of crises happening, the job description may talk about a broad communications role. However, the reality is, this company will hire a professional with firing line experience who has led other company leaders through media crises. In these situations, knowing what the key priorities are, translates into the job you will be doing. If you have done your homework initially, you will know when to bow out of a situation and that can be equally as important as receiving the right offer.

<http://www.jc-a.com/can-create-resume-says-im-worth-attention-2-series/>

HOW DO I REINFORCE THE INITIAL IMPRESSION FROM A GREAT INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT WITH AN EQUALLY STRONG RESUME?

Once you have the reader's attention that your experience, industry knowledge and career goals are a potential fit for the company, you can continue with supporting details. Describe your current company and the scale and scope of your work that reinforce what should be your (now) obvious strengths.

Include answers to these questions to help the reader quickly understand your experience and how it relates to their organization.

How big is the company—by number of employees, annual revenues? Is it a major player in its sector? Is it a start-up? What does it do?

What is your job? Provide specific examples in addition to broad statements. What are your reporting lines? For example, are you within the marketing, the corporate communications or human resources department of your company?

What does your title mean? Is it necessary to clarify your role since the title might be confusing?

After explaining what the company does, its size and where the communications function reports, you can describe precisely what level you have achieved. In one company a Director title is one step away from the top communications position, in another it is a mid-level title 4 levels away from the head of communications. Remember, clarity in a resume (for a reader who is not in your industry or only somewhat familiar with communications) is essential. If there is any potential for confusion, provide an explanation.

When you use adjectives the first reaction is, "prove it" and so you are casting doubt on your capabilities. Avoid that by selecting brief stories about your work that had measurable accomplishments — all factual and impressive.

Strategic is so overused so don't bother to define it. Instead talk about how a program or a project you created was original and fit company strategy/business goals. Mention results and give credit if others supported your effort. As you tell these stories, fit them in reverse chronological order under the companies you were working for at that time.

And, remember two pages is reasonable for a resume but what you write in the opening statement and in the first paragraph describing your current employment are what make the first and strongest impression.

<http://www.jc-a.com/reinforce-initial-impression-great-introductory-statement-equally-strong-resume/>

WHAT IS THE OVERALL TONE OF YOUR RESUME? WHAT IS THE FIRST IMPRESSION IT MAKES?

Here are questions for you consider. What is the overall tone of your resume? When a hiring manager looks at your resume for the first time what is the visual impression it makes? As she starts to read it, how does she feel about your message? Is she struggling with the copy?

Your unintended impression can be self-centered and the information incomplete. Or, you can succeed in delivering a very positive message. She can decide that the tone of your resume reflects how you perform. By the second paragraph she could decide she doesn't like your resume and reject you. Or she could be feeling you are genuinely reaching out to her—all this in a matter of seconds. Here is a blog about current trends that affect how you craft your resume.

Why is reading resumes such a chore? Wouldn't it be less onerous if the reader actually liked what the resumes told her/him about the applicant? What if the resume were so well-crafted that the reader was delighted to learn about the job-seeker. Done well, a resume tells a story that is down to earth, factual and clearly written. The tone, which is so important, is conversational.

If you read most resumes out loud they seem to be shouting, "look at me; look what I have done." There are others that are so self-promoting that they read like a commercial or an advertisement. Instead of inviting communication, that arrogant tone shuts off dialog. It's as if the candidate decided to raise the volume and say, "Pay attention to me and not to anyone else." That is the wrong approach. The hiring manager is not partially deaf. Does she instinctively decide this type of thinking as expressed in the resume, is too "me" focused to join the team? Here is an example of what I mean by shouting. There were the introductory paragraphs of a resume.

"A senior-level communications professional with more than 20 years' experience and a rare combination of a visionary approach, and strategic and tactical skills, along with a contagious, passionate and team-motivated desire to achieve complete success. Possesses exceptional leadership skills, excels in team building and mentoring high-potential team members. Media and public relations (financial and business, crisis communications and issues management, and consumer) brand positioning, and marketing and advertising experience in retail and consumer products businesses.

"Accomplished in strategic planning; marketing and public relations; leadership of cross-functional teams; budget development; sponsorship negotiation and management; and special event management. Skilled in planning, organization, detail and multiple task management, building and maintaining key relationships, hiring and training, and field communications. Strengths include flexibility, relationship building, public speaking, calmness and creativity, while consistently performing in a high-growth environment."

And then there are the academic style of resumes that lecture you by telling you everything about them in 4-pages (or more) because all that detail is what the candidate is sure you should care about. (And, of course you don't.) That candidate has little regard for your time, displays a lack of judgment and is out of touch with current business practices. The inability to edit the material effectively sets the wrong tone and signals a lack of clarity about the way the candidate thinks. Would you want to hire this candidate to lead a comms team?



Write the resume as if you are having a conversation over a cup of coffee and you are pressed for time to make your point effectively. You need to keep the tone low-key, encourage next steps and wrap up the meeting. Isn't that what the resume accomplishes accompanied with a well-constructed cover note?

Here is an example of how that introduction (above) was replaced with a brief statement followed by a detailed work history. A cover note was crafted to provide specific examples of work that fit the job description. (The client liked the resume and note. The candidate was interviewed and received an offer.)

"As a solo consultant, I provide strategic communications and marketing planning and execution to companies and public relations agencies. I bring xx years of experience in corporate communications, marketing, executive communications, public relations, executive facilitation and reputation management to meet client needs. Client roster includes companies in global manufacturing and commercial service, commodities research, education, food, internet and pharmaceutical industries.

Company Name... "Xxxx Consultant» (From 20xx – 20xx)

senior vice president, account director

- Initially led successful national launch of the xxxxt, a consumer rebranding effort, for xxxxx r by creating Brand Message Architecture
- Won xxxx Co. as an agency of Record (AOR) \$1MM account and joined agency as senior vice president
- Built industry analyst relations function to validate the rebranding effort with mobile consumers

Company... Xxxx Inc. (20xx-20xx)

Vice President, Corporate Communications" (Additional details were provided in the resume)...

There is tendency to use more formal language in the resume. I don't recommend that; clarity and easy-to-understand sentence structures should prevail.

The layout should reinforce the message that the information is easy to absorb. Keep the look uncluttered and not distracting with fancy graphics. For VP Comms positions, it is all about clarity and a presentation that honestly presents (without assuming unreasonable credit) what s/he has achieved. For the hiring manager, the conclusion is, this candidate "gets what I need to know, and how to deliver that message without wasting my time."

<http://www.jc-a.com/overall-tone-resume-first-impression-makes-4-series/>

WITH THE TREND TOWARD HIGHLY TAILORED RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS, WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO STAND OUT AND BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY?

What it takes to be seriously considered for a VP Comms position has changed as the jobs have become increasingly important to the leadership team. Bringing the wrong person on board can delay important initiatives by more than a year. That also means that the criteria for evaluating every exchange ranging from how you present yourself initially to how responsive you are to emails and calls is scrutinized. You can be eliminated from consideration for lack of attention, commitment and small errors of judgment. Knowing the bar has been raised challenges a candidate to invest time and attention to every aspect of the hiring process.

What is critical is the ability to communicate an understanding of the issues the organization is tackling and your expertise to meet those challenges. That impression should be made as early as possible. Clearly that implies a standard resume will not be specific enough. Your resume will need to be reworked to highlight the areas that directly apply to the client's needs. This advice makes sense but how can you do that?

If you are working with a recruiting firm that has done its homework, there should be a well-executed job description that describes the challenges to meet and the areas of responsibility the job supervises. The recruiter who wrote the description should be able to provide additional details. S/he should be appreciative of the attention you are paying to presenting yourself as an outstanding candidate. If that is not how they behave or if they have not done their homework, remember that so you will not work with them particularly if you have, at some future date, the opportunity to retain a search firm.

If detailed material is not available, it is essential to conduct sufficient research to understand the basic business and competitive issues that the organization must address. That should provide the picture you need to prepare a cover letter and a revised resume that is relevant to the hiring organization. Of course, you will do your homework about the background of the executives you will be meeting and what they have publicly stated are the goals of the organization.

I would not be rushed by a recruiter to "send me a resume I can send to the client." I think rushing and not customizing your message will be a waste of your time. Certainly, a basic resume should be available for an interview with a recruiter who can then provide feedback and discuss the position. However, a resume should stand on its own as a statement of your qualifications and not need further explanation to convince a company representative to meet you. Fix it first so you are satisfied that your strengths as they apply to the position are clearly stated. Do not share a general all-purpose resume and then say you will send a new version. First impressions count and those resumes have a habit of resurfacing.

Exploring a new opportunity today is time-consuming and there are no shortcuts to producing quality written communication and preparing for in-person meetings. That means putting aside the time you need to be at your best and looking realistically at the question of fitting these demands into your already demanding schedule. I think that exploring 3 opportunities is about maximum if you are already in a high-level role. That realization should help you prioritize what is most appealing and avoid spinning your wheels.

<http://www.jc-a.com/trend-toward-highly-tailored-resumes-cover-letters-take-stand-taken-seriously-5-series/>

HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS FOR A POSITION AT THE VP, CCO LEVEL WHEN WHAT MATTERS ARE THE INTANGIBLES?

You can list all your skills but every candidate can do the same. If you over-emphasize the tactics at the start of the resume, you will not get past the first round.

The qualifications for the head of a function are about leadership, adding value to company officers and their direct reports. It is also about original problem solving, winning consensus for solutions and getting the work done. Building a team of excellent performers and having a visceral, instinctive sense about the culture of the organization that can be communicated to employees and stakeholders are essential capabilities but not often stated. Here is a post about current trends that affect how you craft your resume along with the common mistakes to avoid.

One of the most frequent errors I see is describing tactical experience since the job description lists a series of tactical requirements. A job-seeking VP, Communications relies too heavily on the job description as an accurate portrayal of the opportunity. Meanwhile, corporate thinking about writing a job description is that it should nail down the details of the position so there can be no confusion about what the company is seeking. There is a sense from the HR side that the more clarity that you can bring to a description, the less risk there is when making a hire and the company will also avoid being sued for misrepresenting the role.

What happens is a job description then becomes a list of tactics after the opening statement which usually makes some remark about the "strategic role." The truth of the matter is the job description is written by tactical thinkers. I've seen candidates check off the list of qualifications and feel completely confident that they should be finalists for a role. I remind them that every other candidate is doing the same thing and all this is – is a base line that all qualified candidates will meet.

It does no good to say in the resume that you were in a leadership role. It does have an impact if you can give an example where senior officers relied on you to create a plan of action to meet their objectives and you succeeded. If there were community issues and you developed an integrated approach, becoming a "good neighbor" where senior officers participated, that would be an example of a strategic contribution.

Aligning communications programs to meet corporate strategy where you explained how your solution was successful, brings home the point that you proactively contributed to outcomes. Explaining the scope of the solution, and the impact on the organization tells the reader that you can contribute at a scale that allows him/her to realize you "fit" the scale and scope of their organization.

The point is, all the credentials you have don't tell the hiring organization that you can do the job they are filling. Once they are convinced you are qualified, those credentials confirm their decision. What convinces them that you are qualified in the first place is telling them in a very practical way that you have been on the firing line, been tested and succeeded. Tell those stories in a resume after giving a great deal of thought to what your most powerful examples are, and your resume will stand out for all the right reasons.

<http://www.jc-a.com/describe-qualifications-position-vp-cco-level-matters-intangibles-6-series/>

WHAT IS THE MOST COMMON MISTAKE I SEE IN A RESUME FROM AN AGENCY VP SEEKING A CORPORATE JOB?

The mistake I see time after time is that the resume is written to qualify him (or her) for a promotion to his (agency) bosses' job. The EVP has the right profile, with a well-respected agency and a total of 20 years of experience, but the resume sends the wrong message. To move to a corporate role means to embrace the values for success that apply there and explain the aspects of the agency job that are relevant in a corporate environment.

That means that an agency mindset and performance measures are the wrong aspects to emphasize. It is completely irrelevant to a corporate leader that you grew the agency business by 300% or that you won new business for the firm and that you managed your accounts profitably.

To reorient to the corporate viewpoint, start fresh. Ask, what does your corporate client want/need from you that s/he can't get elsewhere? What problems did you solve based on your creativity, insight, original thinking? Tell that story and focus on results. Write about working with senior corporate leaders and earning their confidence. If there were a crisis, describe your role in leading/advising the team and the feedback you received from your efforts. The nature of the challenge should be at the level you aspire to on the corporate side. The trick is to not overshoot and leave the impression you want the bosses' position.

On the corporate side, my point is the emphasis is on relationship building, astute judgment to solve client problems and the ability to deliver on promises. That's the right story to tell to make the transition. The key is to describe the correct set of skills to the decision-maker.

<http://www.jc-a.com/common-mistake-see-resume-agency-vp-seeking-corporate-job/>

HOW CAN A PROFESSIONAL PRESENT HER WORK HISTORY BOTH IN AN INTERVIEW AND A RESUME WHEN HER JOB TITLE IS MISLEADING OR INCOMPREHENSIBLE OUTSIDE OF HER WORKPLACE?

A reader's question started me thinking about this challenge which is shared by many professionals. "Most of my career (20+years) I've held the title of Manager. The roles as I've moved from organization to organization grew larger in scope with appropriately increasing responsibility and corresponding achievements. At this point in my career I'm ready to move up to a director level role. I was recently questioned about this and I'm not sure that my explanation cut it." It is not only a question of giving a reasonable explanation in an interview. It is a question of how to present your work history in a resume first (to get the interview.) Once in an interview, follow the approach you took in the resume to elaborate on your story. Here's what I suggest.

When the title you have is not an accurate and understood statement about what you have achieved, you cannot create or invent a new title. However, there is no rule that say you must prominently display that title as the first element describing what you do. Nor, is there any rule to prevent you from doing your homework to find job titles that are equivalent to the level you have achieved and create two titles. One I call a functional or market equivalent title and the other I call your "official title" which is the last element the reader sees about the job you are describing. By that point, you have fully explained what you do and diminished the importance of your inaccurate, official title.

In this situation, research may help you decide that you are doing Director-level work and it is time to be acknowledged for that achievement. It is frequently the case that titles are given once the incumbent has been working at that level for months. In fact, if you describe your level of achievement based on your research, it may become clear that you are fully qualified for a Director's position by the time you are interviewing for the next role (outside of your current organization.)

You can describe your increasing level of responsibility by clear benchmarks, such as the size of the department, your leadership role, your reporting lines (in some organizations, the Manager is the most Senior Comms professional) and the nature of the problems you solved—all without calling yourself manager until the end of the description.

Key words, such as headed up a team, worked with the VPs, heads of business units (e.g. 2 billion in sales—give specifics), created PR programs for product introductions, etc. all send a far more accurate picture of your capabilities than the Manager title. In some companies Manager is a catch-all title for anything below VP. Also, if the content of jobs has varied, provide details to demonstrate versatility.

I do not know how Diversity & Inclusion policies will affect the interviewing process in a specific situation, but be prepared to discuss any family background, skills, travel experiences, personal interests, language capability and additional international credentials that might be relevant.

In an interview, do not be defensive or apologetic about the Manager title. Simply describe how ready you are to assume a Director's role and define it. Confirm that the role as described in the job description of the job you are interviewing for is functioning at that level. It should be clear that you and the hiring manager are in agreement about your capabilities to assume the Director's role.

<http://www.jc-a.com/can-professional-present-work-history-interview-resume-job-title-misleading-incomprehensible-outside-workplace-8-series/>

HOW DO DIVERSITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVES AFFECT HIRING DECISIONS AND RESUMES? Part 1 of 2

An increasing emphasis on hiring to meet Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) initiatives is affecting how to present your capabilities, work and life experiences in a resume. How can you tell a more comprehensive story about your qualifications that don't fit traditional categories?

There isn't just one solution. Stories that make the point and cover letters that are tailored to the situation are possible answers. This is new territory and I'll be interested in feedback. Here is my answer. Do you agree?

As greater emphasis is put on agencies and companies to adopt D&I programs for bottom-line returns, token efforts are being replaced by far more impactful and costly initiatives. The pressure is on to hire and retain excellent performers from diverse backgrounds. Here is a snapshot of where we are. Read what candidates should include when they describe their backgrounds and experiences that qualify them for positions where diversity is a key qualification.

For well over 40-years the national Public Relations Society of America has had a policy supporting what was originally called Affirmative Action (AA) encouraging the hiring of specific ethnic groups such as African Americans, Hispanic, Asian and Native Americans. Check enough boxes and you were in compliance, meeting your AA goals.

These efforts were ineffective despite an acknowledgment that this objective was important for the industry to address. That simplistic and limited view has been supplanted by D&I initiatives. Here are how these terms are defined.

"Diversity is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs.

"Inclusion is involvement and empowerment, where the inherent worth and dignity of people are recognized. An inclusive {organization} promotes and sustains a sense of belonging; it values and practices respect for the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of living of its members." Source: Ferris State University.

In a 2017 article in the Holmes Report (Diversity is an on-going topic covered) reporters speculated about the lack of effective action to meet D&I goals. They questioned whether consulting firms could ever succeed in hiring significant numbers of diverse staffers, not only at entry-level but at senior ranks as well.

Within the past year, several major corporations have inserted D&I requirements in their RFPs asking if top tier agencies have diverse staffs reflecting the communities they serve. Potential clients are asking for specific numbers. From D&I initiatives seen as one of many important goals for these agencies, now, they are becoming specific bottom-line necessities.

Major global and consumer product companies are examining their own internal practices. They are making serious efforts to not only hire from a diverse candidate pool but to institute programs to foster an inclusive work place. The challenge is not only to identify diverse talent but also to provide

an environment that welcomes and supports them. (I wrote a report on this subject that is available upon request, please email me with "D&I report" in the subject line. jcushman@jc-a.com.)

With the focus on Diversity that is so broadly defined, job seekers can present credentials in many categories, e.g. educational, personal life experiences, language and travel as well as his/her ethnic and racial background. Participating in organizations representing ethnic groups is useful as well. These are all valid examples that indicate a candidate qualifies as meeting diversity criteria. How can this information be presented prominently in a resume? It certainly doesn't fit the classic format of a resume.

In the past, including language ability, for example, was an afterthought at the end of a resume. Now, that is highly desirable. Global business assignments especially if you resided in a country overseas are also very helpful.

I have already said a resume needs to be brief, targeted and impactful. The key is to start with an objective or summary statement about your career that indicates your background experience is global (or whatever is the strongest element in your portfolio) fitting diversity criteria.

If a great deal of the experience is personal, I would insert a special section somewhere on the first page where it will be read that says, "Supporting experience relating to Diversity objectives." I think that is the way to use the strongest elements, based on all the personal and business experience you have, to make your case.

If you have had overseas responsibilities, be sure to include that in the stories you are incorporating into the resume. It may be challenging to arrange these elements for the strongest impact. Please email me with specific questions.

There is another approach that will also work. If you are happy with the resume and it does not highlight your D&I experience, consider creating a separate cover letter. It would describe your specific D&I experience that applies to the job description.

We are still at the beginning of a what will be a long-term solution to bringing change to our industry. Hiring managers will be challenged to rethink how they evaluate candidates since their instincts have been honed to look for compatibility and fit. That leads to sameness—no doubt qualified candidates—but not adding the value that is needed in the diverse, global environment we operate in today. It will be a difficult path as old habits and instincts must be replaced with more rigor and a new approach to finding candidates with the appropriate credentials to succeed.

<http://www.jc-a.com/diversity-inclusion-initiatives-affect-hiring-decisions-resumes-3-series/>

HOW DO DIVERSITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVES AFFECT HIRING DECISIONS AND RESUMES? Part 2 of 2

In the 3rd posting of this resume series, I analyzed the impact of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) policies on hiring practices. This, in turn, affects how candidates describe their qualifications in resumes and in every phase of the process. I received very different responses to this analysis. Here is my perspective about these responses with additional insights into the impact of D&I policies.

Separately, as a portend of how important this issue is, IBM sued Microsoft for recruiting (e.g. stealing) its Chief Diversity Officer. The article states this is, "a case that elevates recruiting and promotion of an inclusive workforce to the level of safe-guarding proprietary technology." The article continues, "While the lawsuit highlights the contention that can ensue when a senior employee bolts for a rival, it also shines a light on the increasing role that diversity measures play in corporate America." (This was reported by Bloomberg News and carried as the headline item in The Seattle Times Business Section on Feb. 13th.)

In my initial posting, I said that Diversity is being defined far more broadly than it has been in the past. Simply hiring for ethnic diversity is far too narrow and missing the point. That means describing work and personal interests and the many elements that reflect a diverse and rich background are appropriate qualifications. How to describe those is a key question since the traditional resume is not designed for that purpose.

There is a wide range of response to this issue and how much attention a company should devote to studying the issue and deciding to make changes (or not) in its hiring and retention policies. Here are examples.

"In my company, no diversity or inclusion. We select the best candidate. We ignore race, ethnicity, gender and only choose the best person for the job." (See my response below.)

At the other end of the spectrum, "Probably one of your best summaries. Throw in the 'me too' movement and we realize like Hemingway that a dilemma has more than two horns. Probably the cover letter and skill summaries are the best, (to explain a diverse background) but with computers scanning for key words, it makes personal contacts more valuable. A major healthcare educational CEO once told me that, 'you can take me to court for this but I'm being told I have to hire an ethnic individual. But I will be recommending you to others and I want you to use me as a contact.' I think he was on the level with that response."

In response to a company that has no D&I policy, the underlying assumption is that by being "blind" to all prejudices in the hiring process, that will bring the best people into the company. The fact is, that by not recognizing the limits of a traditional talent pool, the company is vulnerable to hiring a homogenous staff and that has its problems in an increasingly global marketplace. Here is my response to "no D & I policy."

What happens is that there are outstanding people in traditional recruiting pools and outstanding people in non-traditional directions that are harder to identify. Without evaluating diversity statistics in the work force and making an effort to look in a variety of directions for fully qualified individuals, traditional homogenous hiring patterns don't change.

There is no implication that hiring a diverse workforce leads to a degradation of talent, in fact organizations reported having different viewpoints, world experiences, racial and cultural backgrounds have resulted in more synergy and productivity. BUT it does not happen without an effort. Moreover, from a business perspective, if your organization seeks to win contracts, there a trend toward requiring that the contractor meet diversity and inclusion goals.

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