

Telling Your Story... The Merits of a Strong Resume

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Editor's note: The Early Career Professionals Committee is charged with promoting participation in the Society by early career professionals through increased involvement in activities and events that bridge the gap between students and senior professionals. For additional information, go to www.segweb.org/ecp.

Are you a contract field geologist working on a drilling program wondering what your next career step might be? Or a college student searching for an internship or a job post-graduation? Perhaps you have been approached by a former manager to follow him/her to a new company? Is your resume up to the challenge, a strong reflection of you?

"When you come into the industry, most of your peers will also have very similar career goals. There are a lot of people that can help you, but it's your responsibility to be proactive in getting there." - Skylie Estep, former technical recruiter for Barrick Gold, now recruitment manager for Brooks & Nelson, LLC.

Proactively seeking opportune career advancements is the responsibility of the individual, and the more equipped your toolbox is, the better chances you have in this ever-growing competitive market. Just as studying hard in college yields a strong

foundation of understanding in your field, tools such as a door-opening resume, a compilation of business cards, and a growing list of contacts all contribute toward building a valuable foundation for advancing your career.

Let's start with your resume. Likely, the basics are already there, as most

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college graduates have one. Perhaps you attended a college with a high-caliber career day or numerous SEG events, building an extensive network, or had a professor with connections, so a strong resume wasn't a necessity. We often perceive resume-writing as an onerous chore, as talking about ourselves may come easily, but writing about ourselves is often more difficult. Pushing the "updating-resume chore" under the rug is a common practice;

Developing a robust resume, updated regularly with results and accomplishments, can de-stress a golden opportunity and allows for a quick response when someone asks you to send along your resume.

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many people entirely avoid this task, using their networks proactively or by happenstance opening new

doors to opportunities and eliminating the need for a solid resume. Is it worth the risk? Developing a robust resume, updated regularly with results and accomplishments, can de-stress a golden opportunity and allows for a quick response when someone asks you to send along your resume.

The content of the resume should, at minimum, include contact information, work experience, education, awards, activities, and training. A resume will often be your first impression on decision makers. While your contacts and connections may lead you to a job, a resume will still be circulated to other employees who are making the hiring decision. Keep the format and verbiage consistent,



concise, and clear. Avoid technical abbreviations. The resume should appear crisp and easy to read, without dramatic fonts and formatting.

Start with your name and contact information. Use a personal yet professional e-mail address, avoiding a company or college e-mail. Follow with a *Professional Summary* section as your marketing plug—it should clearly convey what you can contribute to the company. It should not be an “I want” statement. If you are applying for an advertised position, match your applicable skills to those in the job/position description or advertisement. The *Professional Summary* should be short and sweet, direct, and in present tense.

The *Experience* section should state company names, position titles, time spans, and locations in chronological order, starting with the most recent. If you have been promoted, state each role you had and its duration.

This demonstrates upward movement and promotability. A clear statement of

responsibilities is expected. **However, most resumes lack a clear statement of accomplishments.** This can be woven into the responsibilities or listed separately. Graduates on their first job will learn technical skills and work in certain deposit types but, most importantly, will achieve results for the project and their personal development. Emphasize accomplishments made and/or what you learned while working singularly and in teams. Technological advancements, cost, and schedule savings, even determining that a project is uneconomic, should be stated in terms of accomplishments rather than responsibilities. This is the foundation for “telling your story.”

Your *Education* section should follow your work experience. It is



typically assumed that education qualifications are met, so you may list this farther down the page. However, advanced degrees and institutions attended are often a source of pride and can be placed right after the *Professional Summary*, if preferred. Just remember that resumes are often reviewed quickly to deter-

mine relevance. Readers tend to focus more on the top half of the page, so your most important information should be there.


This brings up another hot topic that we often hear: “A resume should never be more than one page long.” This is not always valid. A one-page resume crammed with good, relevant information is straining to the reader. A two-page resume that is clear and concise with easy-to-read formatting is much more appealing.

Your basic resume should be modified to reflect the situation in which it will be used. If you are applying online, having matching keywords and phrases is critical. Honesty is

always the best policy, but matching your terminology with an existing job/position description is simply smart. When conducting research on a company, you will likely find messages on their websites that resonate with you. Reflect this match in your resume as appropriate or include in a cover letter.

Your resume is simply the facts of your professional career story. Creating a strong basic resume and keeping

it up to date will serve you well. Directly, it may open doors with a quick submittal after connecting with a person seeking to hire.

Indirectly, taking the time and making the effort to build a strong resume, then updating on a regular basis whenever a promotion, accomplishment, or job change occurs should be a source of confidence in having the right tools in your career toolbox. Remember, it is your responsibility to be proactive in discovering your best career opportunities. 

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