

# Tips for Creating a Concise Resume

Killing a scrawny deer on the hi-way is easy, Hunting a trophy Buck in the brush takes skill.

When I was living up in Alaska I was asked to go hunting with some local folks one day. I was excited about the hunt and spent several weeks reading every book I could get my hands on to prepare for the forthcoming hunt. I had even gone to great expense to outfit myself with the needed gear I would need for this kind of a hunt. Imagine my anguish when I found out the extent of the hunt was loading up the truck with beer, grabbing a gun, and driving up and down the hi-way looking for deer crossing the road so we could shoot them. That way we would not have to go to all the trouble and work of going in the woods, shooting them, and then dragging them back through the woods to get back to the truck. True, we did fill up the truck with scrawny dead deer, but it did not take any great hunting skill. It was later I learned about really going out into the brush and hunting the trophy bucks that never venture out into the open areas where everyone can get a shot at them. Finding those prize bucks took real hunting skill, but the rewards of bagging a trophy buck were well worth the extra preparation, time, and patience.

In good times it does not take any skill to get a job. You go home, answer the phone, and then go to your new job the next day. We are not in good times right now, you need to learn how to go into the brush and hunt for that trophy job.

Now that the economy is down I am getting a lot of calls from designers I have worked with in the past and from designers I have never meet before. They are looking for work, their companies cut back and tossed 'em out the door with almost no notice. Some of these designers were good designers and thought they were bullet proof, some were just punching the company time clock and had a "let's wait and see" approach as to what the company was going to do with them. Denial is a powerful weapon, and it usually gets turned and used on the person who uses it. If you have a job right now there are some things you need to start doing to aid yourself for later on when you might need some help finding a job.

I cannot stress enough the need to be networked into your designer community. Every job-hunting seminar I ever attended said "networking" is the most powerful tool there is to help you land a new job. I cannot count the number of times I have seen "networking" work to get someone a new or better job. So how do you network?

To begin, let me say I take every call I receive from my vendors and I always give them the time they need to talk to me and I always help them when I can. They know you have a job to do and the professional ones will not burden you unnecessarily. When you have a job, your outside contact with other companies that could use someone with your skill set is minimal. These vendors are out on the street everyday, calling on many companies that could use people with your background, they know the lay of the land and they can be of tremendous help in helping you scout the terrain for job opportunities that you otherwise would never see or hear about. Now, think a minute, if you're a vendor- who are you going to help? The designer that calls you for help, that has always returned your calls and tried to help you with a few leads, or the designer that has always blown you off and

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is now calling you in a panic asking for help. Vendors can be powerful allies but you have to have developed a rapport with them, and shown them that you are a professional who is mindful of the fact that respect for others is not a bad thing, and it can help to make us both more successful in our mutual jobs.

So your new first rule is: I will treat the vendors that call on me with respect. If I am unable to talk to them now, I will set up a time later so they can talk to me. I will give them the time they need to talk to me and offer them what assistance I can even if I have no use for their services at present.

I am making this rule one because it is the most important rule and can help you the most later.

Rule Two: I will seek out and join organizations that can enhance my profession. Here in Dallas we have two such organizations. The North Texas Designers Council and the SMTA. We are very lucky here in the Dallas area that we have these two professional organizations. As I travel across the United States I see many cities that do not have even one organization remotely close to their area. We are envied in many places because we have such great resources so close to home. Joining organizations that enhance your profession can also network you into the roots of the companies that you might be trying to wiggle, squirm, and climb into later. Dig deep in those roots now and meet everyone you can at every meeting. Find out who they are and let them know who you are, so in the future maybe you can help them out, or more importantly they can help you in.

Rule Three: I will take steps now to get trained on the software packages that are most in demand by companies using the people in my profession.

Many people view their company work status as a static snapshot that does not ever change, they think they will be with their company forever and they know all they need to know to keep their jobs. I see these people as deer in the headlights – the death mobile is coming but they are too blinded by the light to see it. It's a job kaleidoscope out there right now, the slightest twitch and the image you so want to keep looking at is wiped out and quickly replaced by one you don't want to look at. No one is safe, get trained now on the software you need to know later so you can get reemployed quickly if the worst happens. We have many training programs at our local colleges and our designer's council chapter will be glad to help arrange some additional software training if you need it, but get started now...

Rule Four: I will start familiarizing myself with the different technical opportunities that exist in my area of expertise and develop a backup plan to help me get a new job in a different position if I suddenly need one.

This sounds easy, but when your company closes the door behind you, and you are left alone on the dark and lonely streets, it's hard to see what you could have seen when you had the lights on. Let's say you have worked for one company for the last ten years and you did not see that last car coming, its going to be tough to get up and get moving again. When you have been with one company that long you have lost your job-hunting skills. You have been eating from the company trough so long you have forgotten how to forage on your own. It is a depressing thing to be let go after so many years with one company,

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but it is happening now everyday to good people we know. Some people when they get let go, get so despondent that they all they can do is think about what was, and not what needs to be done now. Make plans now so that you will have a plan later as to what you will be able to do if you are suddenly released from your job. If you are a senior designer and you see while scouting the want ads a lot of job openings for a librarian, but its been years since you built a part, then get in there now and start building some parts, so you will have some transferable job skills later if you need them. Do not assume that your current job skills are transferable to another company. If you have been designing low speed analog circuits and you see a lot of openings for high-speed digital designers that know how to control impedance, then go get that training, NOW! Do it on your time at night if needed, you won't regret it later. The important thing is to develop a plan now and get your skill set in line with what the market outside of your company is looking for. If you are a designer now, you might have to become a components engineer somewhere else. This rule four is a little different than rule three in that you have to learn how to reposition your job skills to get employed in a different position than the one you have now. Rule three just gets you trained on more software packages and you are trying for a job in the same position as the one you have now.

Rule Five: I will set up my professional life so that if I am suddenly removed from my company all my professional contacts will still be able to find and contact me. A common question I hear is "Do you know where 'so and so' is? He got cut and I can't find him anywhere." More often than not the answer is no. Many times we set ourselves to have one point of contact for all our professional dealings- our office. Suddenly that door is closed and all those lovely professional relationships you have built up over the years cannot find you to tell you they know where you can go to get another job. Today, when you get back to the office, immediately set up a new email account that you can access from anywhere in the world. Start using that email account as your point of contact for all dealings with anyone outside of the company. If for some reason you need the emails to go in your company email directory then forward them there yourself. If asked why you set your emails up that way, tell them you want to stay on top of all communications at all times either at home, work, or on vacation, because you care about what goes on and you want to be able to respond to work issues immediately from wherever you are. You might end up a hero and looking like you really care about your job. If you are provided a company phone give it back to them and get your own phone that you can keep if you are suddenly removed. Make sure every person you work with knows how to contact you away from the office. Tell them you are providing this information to them in case of any emergency work contingencies that may require them to contact you at home. Please be sure you know how to contact them at home as well. They may be the references you will need to provide later at your next job interview. I have seen people with ten years experience and no professional references because they had all been let go at the same time and lost all contact with each other. When you are out the door companies are very reluctant to release any information to you or about you. Get your contact information in place now. I am probably the most "easy to find" designer in the world, do you really think that's by accident?

# Tips for Creating a Concise Resume

## Tips for Creating a Concise Resume

by Kim Isaacs, MA, CPRW, NCRW  
Monster.com's Resume Expert

Are you asking yourself any of these questions:

- How long should my resume be?
- How can I fit all my experience on one page?
- What can I eliminate, and what should be highlighted?

If you are, you're not alone. As millions of workers update their resumes, one of the top concerns is length. Not long ago, job seekers followed the resume golden rule: No resume should exceed one page. However, today's job seekers are finding that rule no longer applies.

In this time of mass confusion, the solution is simple: Use common sense. If you are just graduating, have fewer than five years of work experience or are contemplating a complete career change, a one-page resume will probably suffice. Some technical and executive candidates require multiple-page resumes. If you have more than five years of experience and a track record of accomplishments, you will need at least two pages to tell your story.

### Your Resume Is Not an Autobiography

Don't confuse telling your story with creating your autobiography. Employers are now inundated with resume submissions and are faced with weeding out the good from the bad. The first step involves quickly skimming through resumes and eliminating candidates who clearly are not qualified. Therefore, **your resume needs to pass the skim test**. Dust off your resume and ask yourself:

- **Can a hiring manager see my main credentials within 10 to 15 seconds?**
- **Does critical information jump off the page?**
- **Do I effectively sell myself on the top quarter of the first page?**

### The Sales Pitch

Because resumes are quickly skimmed during the first pass, it is crucial your resume gets right to work selling your credentials. Your key selling points need to be prominently displayed at the top of the first page. If a degree is important in your career field, your education shouldn't be buried at the end of a four-page resume.

An effective way to showcase your key qualifications is to include a Career Summary statement at the top of the first page. On your Monster.com resume, use the Objective section to relay your top qualifications. The remainder of the resume should back up the statements made in your summary.

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## Use an Editor's Eye

Many workers are proud of their careers and feel the information on a resume should reflect all they've accomplished. However, the resume shouldn't contain every detail. It should only include the information that will help you land an interview.

So be brutal. If your college days are far behind you, does it really matter that you pledged a fraternity or delivered pizza? **The editing step will be difficult if you are holding on to your past for emotional reasons. If this is the case, show your resume to a senior colleague for an objective opinion.**

## Eight Tips to Keep Your Resume Concise

### 1. Avoid Repeating Information.

Did you perform the same or similar job tasks for more than one employer? Instead of repeating job duties, focus on your accomplishments in each position.

### 2. Eliminate Old Experience.

Employers are most interested in what you did recently. If you have a long career history, focus on the last 5 to 10 years. If your early career is important to your current goal, briefly mention the experience without going into the details. For example: Early Career: 1970-1972 Short Circuit Designs, Inc. - City, State - Served as Slave to Lead Designer.

### 3. Don't Include Irrelevant Information.

Avoid listing hobbies and personal information such as date of birth or marital status. Also, eliminate outdated technical or lost software skills. *(Once I was looking for a job, I had "Telesis" on my resume, which was no longer in business and I no longer knew how to use the software. I was getting calls every two to three days to go contracting to a company that was desperate for a senior Telesis designer. Since I did not know how to use the software anymore and I did not want to be on software that was outdated I quit responding to the shop requests for that position and so the shops removed me from their active list! I missed some good job opportunities when that happened! Trim your resume to what you are willing to do and Always call the shops back every time they call!)*

### 4. Cut Down on Job Duties.

Many job seekers can trim the fat off their resumes simply by removing long descriptions of job duties or responsibilities. Instead, create a paragraph that briefly highlights the scope of your responsibility and then provide a bulleted list of your most impressive accomplishments.

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## 5. Remove "References Available Upon Request."

Many job seekers waste the valuable last line of the resume on an obvious statement. Unless you're using this as a design element, remove it.

## 6. Use a Telegraphic Writing Style.

Eliminate personal pronouns and minimize the use of articles when preparing your resume. (*Personally, I always use "I", it lets people know it was me without a bunch of clever wording*)

## 7. Edit Unnecessary Words.

Review your resume for unnecessary phrases such as "responsible for" or "duties include." The reader understands you were responsible for the tasks listed on your resume. (*I always use phrases like "responsible for" or "duties include." The kind of people that look at my resume want to know these things, not assume them*)

## 8. Customize Your Resume for Your Job Target.

Only include information relevant to your goal. This is particularly important for career changers who need to focus on transferable skills and de-emphasize unrelated career accomplishments

## How to Handle Employment Gaps and Job-Hopping

by Kim Isaacs, MA, CPRW, NCRW  
Monster.com's Resume Expert

While hiring managers are more understanding of an imperfect work history than they used to be, you still need to carefully present your experience to avoid being seen as unstable. Start by evaluating your situation and determining how bad it really is. If you are panicking about two months of unemployment back in 1984, your job search will probably not be affected. However, if you are dealing with recent periods of unemployment extending for months or even years, you will need to start strategizing.

### If You're Concerned About Employment Gaps:

- Think about other activities you can use to fill that time period. You might have experience relevant to your job target, regardless of whether you were paid. Volunteer activities, community involvement, special projects, consulting engagements and continuing education can be used in the Experience section.
- Short gaps might not be apparent if you eliminate months from your traditional resume. Use the Objective statement to summarize your goal as well as your top qualifications. This will draw attention to your selling points and downplay your work chronology.

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- If you're returning to the workforce after an extended absence, show how you've kept up-to-date with changes in your industry.
- If you've been out of work because you raised a family, continued your education, cared for a sick family member or recovered from an injury, be sure your tone is not apologetic. There's nothing wrong with being out of work for whatever reason, and a negative attitude might affect your résumé's quality.

## **If You're Concerned About Job-Hopping:**

- Some fields are prone to short periods of employment, and job-hopping might not be a concern. For many other occupations, there is less of a stigma regarding job-hopping than in the past.
- The best way to handle job-hopping on your resume depends on your specific job titles and companies. You may be able to lump two or more similar positions under one heading (for example, Sales Representative, ABC Company and DEF Company, 2/94-4/96). You can list your combined work experience's highlights. Independent contractors and temporary workers should consider grouping their experience under one time period (such as IT Consultant/Network Specialist, 4/95-present) with project highlights.
- You don't need to include every job you've ever held. Short-term positions that don't do anything for you can certainly be omitted. Keep in mind: A resume is a marketing piece, but you will need to provide a complete work history if you are asked to fill out a job application, which is a signed legal document.
- Employers might be leery of hiring candidates with a history of job-hopping due to recruiting and training expenses. Use your cover letter to explain your work history and put a positive spin on your circumstances. Also, indicate your interest in a long-term position.

## **What About a Functional Resume?**

Many hiring professionals say they prefer chronological resume presentations to the functional format. They are often suspicious of functional resumes, which are usually used to hide something. Only select this format if you have an extremely poor work background with extended gaps or a terrible history of job-hopping.

## **Accentuate the Positive**

There's nothing you can do to change your work experience, so the best strategy is to develop a forward-looking resume that shows the value you offer potential employers. If you are sticking with a chronological resume format, lead with a Qualifications Summary, a narrative profile summing up your key qualifications for the position. This will draw attention to your strengths.

## **Layoffs and Downsizing: Quick Tips to Improve Your Resume**

- **Update your resume right away and be sure to showcase your recent achievements no matter how you may feel about your employer.**

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- **Ask your former employer or colleagues to supply you with written reference letters. Consider including a positive quote from a reference letter in the Qualifications Summary or Experience section.**
- **Read as many job openings as possible to evaluate the skills and experience employers find desirable. Incorporate your matching credentials into your resume.**
- **Don't misrepresent your employment status by indicating, "to present" on your resume.**
- **Don't write the reason for leaving on your resume, but do use the cover letter to explain your circumstances.**

## **More Than One Career Goal**

*by Kim Isaacs*

- Are you torn between two or more career directions?
- Are you thinking about returning to a former career?
- Are you multitalented with the potential to perform more than one role?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you need to examine your resume strategy.

Many job seekers who are pursuing more than one objective make the mistake of preparing a one-size-fits-all resume. These resumes often include vague, objective statements: "Seeking a challenging position with potential for growth and advancement in a team-friendly environment." The problem with this approach is that the hiring manager may get confused about your objective, or frustrated that the key information needed to make a decision is buried within the resume.

### **The Solution**

If you have more than one career goal, the best strategy is to develop multiple resumes that target your different objectives.

### **Why Should I?**

The most effective resumes focus on specific career goals. Hiring managers are busy and often process hundreds of resumes. They have a job opening and are looking for a candidate who meets their criteria. Resumes that appear to solve their problems will get a closer look, and the ones that are unfocused are often discarded.

Did you ever receive a promotional sales letter but were unsure about what the company was actually selling? If the marketer's message is unclear, the campaign is likely to be unsuccessful. The same goes for your resume, which is really just a sales

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piece designed to market your credentials. To maximize the success of your resume campaign, your resume needs to address the needs of your potential employer.

## How Do You Determine If You Need More than One Resume?

- **If your job targets are similar**, you might do very well with only one resume. Think about whether or not the positions are intricately linked, requiring the same or similar skills, experience, training or personal attributes. If you decide the objectives are similar, use a tagline at the top of the resume that includes each job title. On your Monster.com resume, the Title section is a good place to include your goals. For example: "Director of Procurement/Commodity Manager."
- **If your job targets are unrelated** and would be considered distinct positions, you would probably be more successful with a different resume for each goal. A great way to decide how many resumes you need is to do a job search on Monster.com. Enter the keywords for your job titles and see how employers list the positions. If they always come up under separate listings, then you need separate resume versions.

## How Do I Create Different Resumes?

Start with your objective or tagline, because these will differ depending on the job you target. Your resume challenge will be to highlight only the experience and training related to the particular goal. Follow your objective with a Highlights of Qualifications section, which provides the resume reviewer with the top reasons why you should be called for an interview (your highlights can be incorporated into the Objective section on your Monster.com resume). Even though your experience might be diverse, concentrate on including the main reasons why you're qualified for the goal listed on each resume.

When you describe your work history, emphasize your relevant experiences and achievements. Tone down any emphasis on jobs, skills, training and characteristics that are unrelated to your résumé's goal. Also, keep in mind that Monster.com allows users to store up to five resumes in the system.

## The Importance of Tracking

The downside to using multiple resumes is that you need to track where you distribute each version. Keep a log that includes company contact information, dates, resume version sent, your actions, company actions and follow-up needed. This will not only help you remember where you sent each resume but will keep your job search organized and on track.

If your career goals warrant it, writing a resume tailored for each objective allows you to directly appeal to the employer's needs. By distributing targeted resumes, you will grab the attention of hiring managers and increase your chances of getting that all-important job interview.

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## Use Numbers to Give Your Accomplishments the Attention They Deserve

*by Peter Vogt*

If you were an employer looking at a designers' resume, which of the following entries would impress you more?

- Did high-density multilayer impedance controlled PCB design.
- Designed high-density multilayer PCB's requiring 350 pins per square inch and 26 layers. The 26 layers were needed to achieve 120 ohms matched impedance on the strip line layers with reference planes between each signal routing layered-pair.

Clearly the second statement carries more weight. Why? Because it uses numbers to quantify the writer's accomplishment, giving it a context that helps the interviewer understand the degree of difficulty involved in the task.

Numbers are powerful resume tools that will help you draw to your accomplishments the attention they deserve from prospective employers. With just a little thought, you can find effective ways to quantify your successes on your resume. Here are a few ways to do just that:

### Think Money

Organizations are and always will be concerned about money. So as you contemplate your accomplishments and prepare to present them on your resume, think about ways you've saved money, earned money, or managed money in your job and extracurricular activities so far. A few possibilities that might appear on a typical designers' resume:

- Identified and researched 15 assembly houses and recommended 3 new assembly houses, cutting the company's production costs by 25 percent.
- Wrote 25 page DFM standard that has saved in more than \$155,000 in rework.
- Managed a design department budget of more than \$700,000.

### Think Time

You've heard the old saying, "Time is money," and it's true. Companies and organizations are constantly looking for ways to save time and do things more efficiently. They're also necessarily concerned about meeting deadlines, both internal and external. So whatever you can do on your resume to show that you can save time, make time or manage time will grab your reader's immediate attention. Here are some time-oriented entries that might appear on a typical designers' resume:

- Setup review and tracking procedures for all outsourced fabrication that reduced vendor callbacks by 90% and had an almost 100% elimination of assembly production delays caused by "jobs on hold" during fabrication.
- Suggested procedures that decreased average output job order-processing time from two hours to 30 minutes.

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## Think Amounts

- It's very easy to neglect mentioning how much or how many of something you've produced or overseen. There's a tendency instead to simply pluralize your accomplishments -- e.g., "wrote ECN releases" or "developed design standards" -- without including the important specifics -- e.g., "by using knowledge of product design and assembly processes was able to combine ECR requests and reduce the amount of ECN's from 100 a month to 25 a month" or "developed design standards for department staffed with 55 designers and 100 engineers." **Don't fall into the "no figures included" trap. Instead, always include amounts.**

The more you focus on money, time and amounts in relation to your accomplishments, the better you'll present your successes and highlight your potential -- and the more you'll realize just how much you really have to offer prospective employers. Add it all up, and you'll see that playing the "numbers game" is yet another way to convince employers that you should be a part of their equation for success.

## Common Resume Blunders

*by Kim Isaacs, MA, CPRW, NCRW*

Make sure your resume is top-notch by avoiding the top 10 resume blunders:

### 1. Too Focused on Job Duties

Your resume should not be a boring listing of job duties and responsibilities. Go beyond showing what was required and demonstrate how you made a difference at each company, providing specific examples. When developing your achievements, ask yourself:

- How did you perform the job better than others?
- What were the problems or challenges faced? How did you overcome them? What were the results? How did the company benefit from your performance?
- Did you receive any awards, special recognition or promotions as a result?

### 2. Flowery or General Objective Statement

Many candidates lose their readers in the beginning. Statements like "A challenging position enabling me to contribute to organizational goals while offering an opportunity for growth and advancement" are overused, too general and waste valuable space. If you're on a career track, replace the objective with a tagline stating what you do or your expertise.

### 3. Too Short or Too Long

Many people try to squeeze their experiences onto one page, because they've heard resumes shouldn't be longer. By doing this, job seekers may delete impressive

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achievements. There are also candidates who ramble on about irrelevant or redundant experiences. There is no rule about appropriate resume length. When writing your resume, ask yourself, "Will this statement help me land an interview?" Every word should sell you; so only include information that elicits a "yes."

## 4. Using Personal Pronouns and Articles

A resume is a form of business communication, so it should be concise and written in a telegraphic style. There should be no mentions of "I" or "me," and only minimal use of articles. For example:

*I developed a new product that added \$2 million in sales and increased the market segment's gross margin by 12 percent.*

should be changed to:

*Developed new product that added \$2 million in sales and increased market segment's gross margin by 12 percent.*

## 5. Listing Irrelevant Information

Many people include their interests, but they should only include those relating to the job. For example, if a candidate is applying for a position as a designer, he could list building crystal, antique, and ham radios as a hobby.

Personal information, such as date of birth, marital status, height and weight, normally should not be on the resume unless you're an entertainment professional (*like me*) or a job seeker outside the US.

## 6. Using a Functional Resume When You Have a Good Career History

It is irksome for hiring managers not to see the career progression and the impact made at each position. Unless you have an emergency situation, such as virtually no work history or excessive job-hopping, avoid the functional format.

**The modified chronological format is often the most effective. Here's the basic layout:**

- **Header (name, address, email address, phone numbers)**
- **Lead with a strong eye catching profile section detailing the scope of your experience and areas of proficiency**
- **Reverse chronological employment history emphasizing achievements in the past 10 to 15 years**
- **Education and certifications (New grads may put this at the top.)**

## 7. Not Including a Summary Section that Makes an Initial Hard Sell

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This is one of the job seeker's greatest tools. Candidates who have done their homework will know the skills and competencies important to the position. The summary should demonstrate the skill level and experiences directly related to the position being sought.

To create a high-impact summary statement, peruse job openings to determine what's important to employers. Next, write a list of your matching skills, experience and education. Incorporate these points into your summary.

## 8. Where Are the Keywords?

With so many companies using technology to store resumes, the only hope a job seeker has of being found is to include relevant keywords sprinkled throughout the resume. Determine keywords by reading job descriptions that interest you and include them in your resume. Remember many resumes are electronic now, so you want to word your resume with the different ways a search engine might search for a design job position. Like "PCB Designer" could be searched as "PWB Designer", "Printed Circuit Board Designer", etc. If you only had "PCB designer" worded in your resume it would never show up in an electronic database job search.

## 9. References Available

Employers know you have professional references. Only use this statement to signal the end of a long resume or to round out the design.

## 10. Typos

**One typo can land your resume in the garbage. Proofread and show your resume to several friends to have them proofread it as well. This document is a reflection of you and should be perfect.**

## Follow up for the Win

*by Carole Martin*



Your follow-up letter could be what sets you apart from other candidates. It could land you a job, so put some thought and effort into what you say.

## To Send or Not to Send -- Does It Make a Difference?

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Catherine was looking for a design-outsourcing manager to fill a position that had been open for weeks. She was eager to hire but wanted the right person for the job. She had narrowed the field to three candidates: Jim, Kelly and Steven.

She had promised to call them by Friday, and on Wednesday afternoon she was still vacillating. Each had a strength she was looking for, but each also had some issues that made her hesitate. Jim had held several jobs in the last few years. Would he stick around for the tough times ahead, would he stick around when times got better and he could go elsewhere for more money? Kelly was ambitious but didn't have the necessary experience interacting with difficult vendors. Steven was the quiet type who hadn't revealed enough for her to learn what he could offer, particularly in terms of interfacing with other departments and outside vendors.

When Catherine opened her 42 emails that morning, she glanced over them and thought she saw Jim's name, but didn't take the time to read his email. She had 17 voice mails. There was one from Kelly, but she only listened long enough to hear that she was thanking her for the interview. She hadn't heard from Steven.

That afternoon, Catherine closed her door. She was going to catch up before making a decision regarding the business analyst position. First, she opened her mail. In the pile was a letter from Steven. It caught her attention because of the obvious thought that had gone into its composition, so she took the time to read on:

*Dear Catherine,*

*Choosing the right candidate is not an easy task. I know, because I have been in your shoes before.*

*Based on our interview, I have done some thinking about the position and how I could bring added value to your organization and address some of the problems you discussed.*

There was a spreadsheet included, containing issues Steven had picked up during the interview. He not only identified problems, but also showed how he could create solutions based on past experience. As Catherine read the letter, she became intrigued and liked what she saw. This guy not only heard the issues, but had also done some thinking and analysis. He looked beyond what was said in the interview, and this was a trait she was seeking. She wanted to talk with him again.

Don't assume the interviewer remembers everything you said or has an accurate picture of who you are. When three candidates are interviewed and compared, some of the highlights you hoped would be considered may be lost or forgotten.

**The follow-up letter is more than a nice way of saying, "Thank you for the interview." Take advantage of this second chance to sell yourself. It is one more opportunity to tell them what you can do for them, not what they can do for you.**

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## The Power of a Simple Thank-You Note

*by Peter Vogt*

It seems amazing, but it's true: A simple thank you note after a job interview can wield considerable power and influence, and reflect very favorably on your candidacy for the position. Why? Several reasons:

1. **By sending a thank you note, you show your interviewer common courtesy and respect.**

Unfortunately, in our busy and often impolite world, we simply don't acknowledge each other's time, efforts and commitments. So in sending a thank you note, you tell your interviewer in no uncertain terms that you appreciate the time he has given you. After all, he had to give up part or all of the day to be with you, and expend effort learning more about you and what you have to offer.

2. **So few job applicants send thank you notes that you automatically stand out if you do.**

It's shocking, but the majority of job applicants fail to send thank you notes after their interviews. Why? Who knows? But the bottom line is that you wind up in a position to shine simply by putting forth the effort of sending a note. Strange, but true.

3. **A thank you note gives you an opportunity to reiterate points you made during your interview.**

Have you ever left an interview wishing you'd more strongly emphasized a certain skill or experience the employer seemed to be looking for? A thank you note gives you the chance to do just that. After using the first paragraph of your note to thank your interviewer, you can use a brief second paragraph to touch again upon the key points you made in your interview. You can also use a similar strategy to clean up any interview rough spots you might have had -- i.e., to expand upon or clarify responses you felt were weak or shaky.

4. **A thank you note lets you make points you forgot to make in your interview.**

Sometimes after an interview, as you walk out to your car, you smack yourself on the forehead and say to yourself, "Why didn't I talk about \_\_\_\_\_?" Frustrating? You bet. But you can take care of the problem to some degree in your thank you note. Again, perhaps in the second paragraph, you can say something to the effect of "After our discussion, it occurred to me that I forgot to tell you about \_\_\_\_\_."

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## 5. **A thank you note demonstrates your written communication skills.**

In receiving and reading your thank you notes, your interviewer will see firsthand how you handle yourself on paper. You'll be using similar skills every day with the company's potential clients, customers and vendors -- so the interviewer will be reading carefully to see how you come across in print.

Writing thank you notes isn't terribly difficult or time-consuming. It can make a much bigger difference than you might think -- perhaps even the difference between the job going to you or someone else.

### **Cover Letter Refresher Course** **10 Tips for Crafting Eye-Catching** **Cover Letters** *by Peter Newfield*

Your cover letter presents your intentions, qualifications and availability to a prospective employer in a succinct and appealing format. As your first chance to make a great impression, a personalized letter indicates you are serious about your job search. Your resume can give the nitty-gritty of dates, places of employment and education, but your cover letter must entice the reader to consider you amidst hundreds, or even thousands, of candidates for any one job opening.

#### **1. Do You Really Need a Cover Letter?**

You bet! Just as you would never show up unannounced at a prospective employer's door, your resume should never just appear solo on a decision maker's desk. Your cover letter is your first opportunity to introduce yourself, present your qualifications and show the search committee you are a potential candidate for the advertised position.

#### **2. Personalize It to the Company.**

**Anyone can reproduce a "canned" cover letter and hope for the best. Instead, take a few minutes to personalize your letter to show a company you are serious about working there. State the reason for your interest in the company. Show that you have done your homework by mentioning company specifics such as a department, a new project or a recent acquisition. Address the cover letter to a specific individual whenever possible.**

#### **3. Why are You Sending Your Resume and Cover Letter?**

**Cover letters should be clear and to the point. Include the specific job title, two to three reasons why your experience makes a good fit and a brief outline of your career highlights.**

#### **4. Highlight Your Strengths.**

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You may be a great person and never call in sick, but prospective employers really want to know why they should consider you for this position. Brag a little! Give a few facts, list relevant skills and state accomplishments on recent jobs that will be impressive.

Examples:

- Increased overtime by 93 percent.
- Negotiated a new car loan on company time.
- Increased staff turnover by 15 percent.

## **5. State Your Intentions and Qualifications Right up Front.**

Don't expect a senior personnel manager or recruiter to wade through a mishmash of information on your cover letter before understanding why you are sending your resume. (These guys see your resume first and you have to get it passed them to the people who will understand what you do. Make your job abilities clear right up front)

## **6. What Makes You Different?**

Emphasize your skills, talents and experiences to show how you would be a valuable addition to the team. If you have relevant volunteer or professional experience, mention it briefly in your cover letter. For example, if you are a designer who serves as a certified instructor for a nonprofit organization like IPC, include that information. Or if you are an international lecturer on PCB design topics who has lived in Europe and Asia and speaks several languages, add that to your letter.

## **7. No Negative Information.**

**Never include personality conflicts with previous employers, pending litigation suits or sarcastic remarks in your cover letter. If you are bad-mouthing your present place of employment, interviewers may fear a repeat performance if they hire you. (*It is amazing how many times I see this being done, don't ever do it!*)**

## **8. When Should You Include Salary and/or Relocation Information?**

Only if a prospective employer requests it, include salary requirements and/or salary history in the cover letter. For example, you could write: "My salary requirements are \$60,000-\$75,000 (non-negotiable)." Or you might write: "My current salary is \$53,000 at XYZ Corporation." Eliminating this information from your cover letter may justify your resume getting tossed out. **Never include salary and relocation information on your resume -- only address this information in your cover letter if requested.**

## **9. Take Action Steps.**

Take a proactive approach in your cover letter. State the fact that you are available for a personal interview; give your home, work, email and/or cell phone numbers where you

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can be reached; note that you will follow up by phone (whenever possible) to provide any additional information required.

## **10. Be Direct!**

A professionally written cover letter and resume can open the door to your next position on the corporate ladder or to a new career in a different field. A clean, error-free presentation, combined with strong phrasing and solid facts, will encourage the reader to review the attached resume and call you in for an interview.

## **Do You Have Any Questions?**

*by Carole Martin*

At the conclusion of a job interview you may be asked, "Do you have any questions?" A common answer is, "No, I think you've covered everything very well." This is the wrong answer. You have passed up your opportunity to ask some critical questions could help you decide whether you want to work for this company.

But, what questions are appropriate? When Marianne was asked if she had any questions at the conclusion of her first interview, she began asking about sick time and vacation days and when she would be able to start taking them. The interviewer was taken aback. "Is this what this woman cares about? Time off? This doesn't sound like someone who will come in and get the work done," the interviewer thought to himself. Clearly, Marianne had asked inappropriate questions.

## **Timing Is Key**

The first round of interviews is about discovery, learning about the job and the company, not the benefits or raises. Good questions to ask in the first round are about the job content, and the company's culture and future.

David had prepared ahead of time and was ready when the manager asked if he had any questions. David asked, "What types of projects would be forthcoming over the next six months?" The manager was eager to tell David about prospects for future business and the plans for future growth. This discussion prompted more questions from David. The interview ended after a lively exchange and on a very upbeat note. David's questions were appropriate and timely.

The interview should be an exchange of information: What does the company want, and what do you have to offer? But it is also important to discuss what the company has to offer, and what you want. It is essential to express an interest in the company and the work being done. By asking questions, you will demonstrate investigative skills, illustrate you are particular about the company you work for and that you are not going to take just any offer.

It is also important to consider whom you are talking to. The human resources person is the one likely to know about job descriptions, qualities being sought and the morale or

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company culture. The hiring manager, your future boss, is the person to ask about the department, the team you will be working with and the job's challenges.

## **What About the Bennies?**

But what about those other questions about benefits, stock options and time off? As the interview process unfolds, there will be time to ask about the benefits and practical matters. Often the human resources department will provide you with a brochure or information packet. Obviously, you will need this information to assess an offer, but all in good time.

## **What You Should Not Ask in the First Rounds of Interviewing**

- Don't ask about salary, stock options, vacation, holiday schedule or benefits.
- Don't ask questions that have already been answered in the interview, just for the sake of asking something.
- Don't grill the interviewer. It's OK to ask about the person's background, but only as an interested party, not an interrogator.

## **Questions You Should Ask in the First Rounds of Interviewing**

- May I see a copy of the job description?
- Why has the job become available?
- What qualities are you seeking in the person for this job?
- What is the next step?
- When will you make your selection?

**Prepare five or six questions before the interview and take them with you. When the time comes for you to ask questions, take out your list. This will show good preparation on your part. This time is a valuable opportunity for you to get the information you need to help you make an informed decision.**

## **Smile, You're on Camera: Videoconference Interviews**

*by Carole Martin*

There is no handshake. You are alone in a room, even though you are being interviewed by another person or group of people, face-to-face, from thousands of miles away. Once again, technology has taken us to a new dimension, and it's not the twilight zone.

Employers can now see and judge appearance and body language to get a deeper sense of what applicants have to offer before flying them cross-country for interviews. This includes the capability of viewing applicants at multiple sites, in various states and countries, at the same time.

When Craig Sheldon learned he was being considered for the position of design development manager for a Fortune 500 company, he was ecstatic. And then he heard

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the bad news: He would have to fly to New Jersey within the week. Sheldon was unable to travel due to work commitments, and since the committee of interviewers had a targeted date to narrow their search, it looked like Sheldon was out of the running. But, thanks to technology, he was offered another option -- an interview by teleconference.

The company set up the process and managed the details. All Sheldon had to do was drive to a Kinkos location in Plano, Texas, some 10 miles away. Within minutes of his arrival, he was being interviewed by people in New Jersey and Japan. Sheldon was groomed and prepared and aced the interview. He was now among the three finalists. They were ready to accommodate his schedule and fly him to Yankee Land.

Preparation played a major role in Sheldon's success. The hiring company had briefed him before the session, giving him some pointers:

- Speak up if you're experiencing any difficulty with sound, delays or picture. This is not a time to suffer in silence. It will not be held against you if the technology is not working in your favor.
- Dress conservatively in solid colors. Keep distractions like jewelry to a minimum. Choose soft, neutral shades rather than black and white, which are too extreme on camera. Various shades of blue work well. Watch TV presenters and newscasters for other ideas about camera-ready clothes.
- Look at the camera full-face, as though you were presenting the news. Talk to the camera as you would any person interviewing you -- be conversational, maintain eye contact and smile.
- Keep your movements limited. Hand gestures will be magnified on the screen. While arms waving about can be distracting, you don't want to look stiff either. Use small, smooth movements when gesturing.
- At the same time, forget about the camera and the technology. Focus on your purpose and presentation. You want the attention and concentration to be on you and what you are saying.

There are some disadvantages to interviewing via videoconference. For one, there is a lag as the data is compressed and sent from one location to another. This means there is a silence while you sit and wait for a response from the other end. Sheldon found this worked to his advantage, because he could actually watch the interviewers while his answers were received. The trick, which will become obvious, is not to step on the other person's words. Allow for the delay.

Videoconferencing is not a substitute for a face-to-face interview, and a personal meeting would always be the first preference. But the advantages sometimes outweigh the disadvantages. This technology saves time, money and allows several locations to connect at once, in spite of major time differences.

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This type of interviewing is gaining in popularity as technology improves. It will only be a matter of time before you sit in your own home or office and interview around the world. The future of interviewing is here. Be prepared.

## Handling Multiple Interviewers

*by Carole Martin*



It might feel like you're facing lions and tigers and bears.

There you sit alone in front of the room, waiting for the pack to attack with questions. It's really not quite that bad. In fact, there is an upside to this process. You'd probably have to talk to each of these people individually at some point in the process. This way, you get it over all at once.

But how do you deal with so many interviewers in one sitting?

The best way is to take them one at a time. The board or panel is not one entity, but several individuals coming together with the common goal of hiring the best candidate for the job. At the same time, each person has his or her own agenda or department's interest at heart. For example, the HR manager will be checking to make sure you are a good fit with the culture and people working at this company. The design manager will want to know about your technical skills, and the person from engineering will want to know if you are savvy enough to do the job.

A female designer interviewed for a senior design job at a major electronics firm facing a panel of 10 engineers, designers, technicians, and administrators. She felt like it was an inquisition, not an interview. But she had prepared well and was confident when she faced this tribunal. She looked at each person as he or she asked the question, and continued to look at that person for 30 seconds or so. She then shifted her eye contact to each member of the interviewing team. She made sure she made contact with each set of eyes while answering questions. She felt very much in control and her interview went well. The result was a job offer.

Another multiple-type interview is the team or "good cop/bad cop" interview. The team is usually made up of two interviewers, one who ask the questions and one who takes notes. The two typically trade roles, which can be confusing if they have different styles. In fact, one person may be kind and gentle and the other more harsh or pushy.

Just remember, these inquisitors are working together toward the same end. Treat them equally, not favoring one over the other. They are trying to see how you react under pressure and multiple conflicting inputs.

Regardless of the type of interview, the best advice is to prepare and practice beforehand. When you have your script and have rehearsed your answers, you will feel prepared and more confident no matter how many people you have to face.

Lastly, a good tip to remember is to make sure you get each person's business card, hopefully at the beginning of the interview, so you can address each person by name.

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Arrange the business cards on the conference table in front of you in the setting order of the people you are talking to, that way as things progress you will not forget who are addressing.

## Getting Over Interview Jitters

*by Carole Martin*



Michael waits in the lobby for his interview. His hands are sticky and wet, his heart is beating faster than usual and his mouth feels like cotton. The interviewer approaches, and Michael has to wipe his hand on his pant leg before shaking hands.

This is a familiar scenario in company lobbies throughout the world. The job interview can be very stressful for most people. Since one of our top fears is rejection and one of our top needs is acceptance, it is not surprising that interviews make people sweat.

### A Change in Thinking

The first and most important step in overcoming the fear is to put the interview in perspective. This is not an appointment with the dentist, who may inflict pain. It is a conversation with another person. The worst thing that can happen is you won't get the job, which may not have been the right job for you anyway.

Second, think of this conversation as a two-way process. You are interviewing potential employers as much as they are interviewing you. Is there a good fit here? What looks good on paper may not be what it appears for either party. Investigate whether this company is a good place for you and whether you want to invest a significant part of your life here.

### Calming Techniques

One of the best techniques to handle stress is through breathing. Take deliberate shallow breaths. Take air in through the nostrils and exhale, quietly, through the mouth. This technique should be practiced to relax before the interview.

Relaxation techniques such as yoga and meditation classes are effective in overcoming extreme cases of interview fright. The interview can cause panic attacks if the fear is strong enough. Preconditioning will do wonders for this type of anxiety.

### Prepare Before the Interview

Michael has been to twelve interviews in the past two months. He has been runner-up for a couple of the jobs but has received no solid offers.

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These are competitive times, and rejection can be expected. Competition for jobs is much keener than it was a year ago. It is important, however, to do everything possible to sell yourself by preparing for the interview. Start thinking of yourself as a product and presenting what you have to offer the company.

Can you imagine giving a performance without some practice and preparation? Winging the interview in today's market is a big mistake. Preparation will make you feel more confident and less anxious.

## **Fear of Rejection**

Because of the number of interviews with no offer, Michael feels defeated, and it is beginning to affect his self-esteem.

Such rejection hurts, but try not to take it personally. There are so many factors that could be affecting the offer that it is impossible to say what is happening. There may be internal candidates, relatives promised jobs, a competitor who is a perfect match for the position, a lack of chemistry or a big mismatch in salary needs.

## **Let It Go**

When Michael has done everything to prepare for the interview and is satisfied that he has presented himself in the best light possible, the next step is to let it go. There is something to be learned from each interview.

Give yourself credit for getting an interview -- only a small percentage of people get this far in the process. Give yourself credit for going out there and putting yourself on the line, even though it is painful for you. Give yourself permission to not get job offers. Believe that an offer will come through when it is the right offer -- the right fit for the company and for you.

## **Illegal Questions**

*by Carole Martin*

The female candidate was asked, "Do you plan to have children?" She was taken aback by the question and wasn't sure how to answer.

She had three choices:

- A. To answer the question honestly even though she did not want to.
- B. To tell the interviewer it is none of his business and the question is illegal.
- C. To deal with the concern behind the question, ignoring the illegal question itself.

How would you answer the question if you were the female candidate?

The best answer is "C."

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An appropriate answer from the candidate might have been, "Whether or not I plan to have children in the future is not really relevant to my career. I plan to work and have a career no matter what happens in my personal life."

Why is this type of question asked in an interview? Why are interviewers concerned about your plans to reproduce, your marital status and your retirement plans? It's simple; they want to make sure you are the solution to a problem, not the source of more headaches.

When the female candidate was asked her plans regarding future motherhood, the interviewer may have been trying to determine whether she was in for the long-term or just until the company could pay for the birth of her firstborn. It is clearly a discriminatory question, one that would probably never be asked of a male candidate, and it is illegal!

Technically, it is illegal for an interviewer to ask anything personal that is not directly job-related. Off-limit questions include (but are not limited to): information regarding your age, marital status, country of origin, religion, sexual preference and health status. Almost any legal information about you is illegal in the job interview.

There are some exceptions to this rule, which might be confusing. Personal questions considered to be job-related usually are allowed in the interview or on the job application.

## **Legal Personal Questions:**

Have you ever been convicted of a crime?

Depending on the type of job you are applying for, this could be critical.

Can you show proof of your eligibility to work in the US?

Every new employee, regardless of place of origin, must provide such documentation during the first days on the job.

Can you perform the job's essential functions with or without reasonable accommodation?

This question must be accompanied by a job description covering the essential functions.

The concerns behind these questions are relevant to the job's requirements and performance. As an example, if you have been convicted of embezzlement, you will probably not be considered for a job handling money. The concern is that you had a problem in your past that could be a problem again.

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The interviewer wants to know if you can report to work and do the job. Any information that could be enlightening is important. But the interviewer's questions should focus on the job and your qualifications to do it.

By becoming aware of illegal questions, you will be prepared to deal with them if confronted in an interview. Pre-interview thinking and preparation can spare some embarrassing or uncomfortable moments during the interview.

## The Offer May Not Be As Good As It Seems

*by Carole Martin*



Nicholas received an on-the-spot offer and was thrilled. This was the job he wanted, and he was anxious to get started. He was going to get an increase in salary from his last job as well as a starting bonus. What more could he ask for?

When he got home that evening, he sat down with pencil and paper and began to evaluate the offer and what he was getting overall. He was not only shocked by his discovery, but wished he could go back and talk about some of those issues. Unfortunately, he had signed on the dotted line that afternoon.

Most people quickly accept the first offer presented to them. Have you ever negotiated an offer?

### Avoid Accepting an On-the-Spot Offer

It is generally wise to do some homework and evaluate what you are gaining and losing prior to accepting offer. Had he done his homework, Nicholas would have realized the following:

- Nicholas was offered \$55,000 per year, with a hiring bonus of \$5,000 paid in two payments over the next six months. **Gain: \$10,000.**
- When he looked over the benefits package, he discovered he would now have to pay the insurance premiums for his dependents. His last employer had paid the entire family's premiums. **Loss: \$4,200.**
- His new vacation package provided only two weeks' time off accrued over the next 12 months. His former package included three weeks of vacation. **Loss: \$962.**
- In his last position, Nicholas received a 6.5 percent yearly bonus based on company earnings. His new company does not include a planned bonus as part of the salary. Bonuses are earned based on performance and given as deemed appropriate. **Loss: \$3,250.**
- His former employer matched 50 cents for every dollar contributed up to 6 percent on his 401k. This company does not match funds. **Loss: \$1,500.**

### More Can Be Less

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Nicholas's calculations showed a loss of \$10,000 in the first year of his new job based on the cost of insurance premiums, lost bonus and lost matching 401k contributions. He quickly realized this offer wasn't as great as he originally thought.

Although he got that \$5,000 hiring bonus, which should cushion the fall, he didn't anticipate the higher tax rate on special checks that was deducted from the bonus money. These taxes can run as high as 41.5 percent.

## Leave Negotiating Room

Nicholas got the job he wanted, and that can be more important than money. But it would have been wise to make the decision with all the facts before signing the offer letter. He might have been able to negotiate another \$5,000 to compensate for the benefits differences, or given the higher tax rate, he could have negotiated for an increase in the hiring bonus.

It is always best to take some time to reflect on the total package. Benefits can be worth another 29 percent to 50 percent of your salary. There are other factors to consider, like more challenging work, a better company or increased opportunity. It may be worth giving up dollars now to invest in your future. The decision, however, should be thought through before rushing ahead.

If pressed to accept an offer on the spot, always stall for time. Tell the company you need to do some calculations and think about it. There is only one window of opportunity to negotiate your terms of employment. Once you say "yes" that window quickly slams shut.

## Raising the Ante

### How to Get the Raise You Deserve

*by Gayle Goddard*



You know you are worth it, but when it comes to asking for a raise, you get a little weak in the knees -- you and about 70 percent of the workforce. There are ways, however, to strengthen your pitch.

When Mary was hired as head of hardware design operations by a design services firm, she was determined to prove her worth and, when raises were going to be considered in 10 months, they were going to be based on performance. Because her company had no performance guidelines in place, proving her worth was up to her.

She knew she'd implemented valuable cost-saving measures. Having recently hired two people who would answer to her, she also knew she'd be shouldering increased responsibility. And the notes she had routinely taken during the course of her work let her accurately document her achievements.

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"You can't expect other people to remember your accomplishments, so you need to keep these things out front," she says.

Because she was responsible for the budget, she knew what fellow employees earned. What she didn't know was how their salaries compared to those outside of the company. That's where the Internet proved invaluable.

"I did a market survey, which was one of the best things I could have done," she says. "I found out only two salaries at our company were below market, and one of them was mine."

Armed with surveys and confident of her value, she negotiated a 30 percent pay raise.

Although 30 percent dwarfs the three to five percent that is the current US average, it's still a testament to the power of a well-planned approach, says Brian Veasy, senior career advisor for Bernard Haldane Associates, a career management organization headquartered in New York.

"Don't just go in and ask. Do your homework first," Veasy says.

Start by knowing your job description and the company's compensation policies. Are there minimum/maximums or performance evaluations? Many companies have no tools in place to measure your performance, which leaves it up to you to chronicle your accomplishments. Your self-evaluation should include a general assessment of your strengths -- are you the company's best technical person, best rainmaker, best all-around resource?

"Today more than ever, it's important to take stock of yourself because there's so much change. People get a new boss every year or two," says Dan King, president of Career Planning and Management in Boston. "That means all the good things you've done probably aren't being recorded or remembered."

Next, use the Internet. Knowing what other people make and where they make it will give you a leg-up in negotiations.

"Once you know where you are and where other people are in terms of compensation, then figure out what you want. It doesn't have to just be salary," Veasy says. "Go for the whole package."

If the company has just had a shaky quarter, consider other items you can negotiate -- incentive compensation, stock options, an extra vacation week, personal days or education benefits. Use them to offset a lower raise offer.

Consider timing when making your pitch. You can bolster your case by making your move when internal factors are favorable. If your company considers raises every January, then that's the time to make your pitch. If you are just coming off a big

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achievement, however, you can use it to reinforce your value to the company. A company that has just posted big profits may also be more receptive to your request.

Knowing your boss's schedule is important. "You may want to put together a memo saying you want to meet to discuss your accomplishments," King says. "That way you don't risk catching your boss at a bad time."

Understanding your boss's personality also doesn't hurt. A nice guy boss may not respond well to a gangbuster approach. But if a gangbuster approach is required, figure out what your boss values.

"Some bosses value loyalty, others are by-the-number. For others, how well you get along with them may be important," Veasy says.

## **Salary Requirements: 6 Steps to Handling Money Questions**

*by Therese Droste*

Everyone wants as much money as an employer is willing to shell out. Yet when it comes to job interviewing, salary questions make most people squirm. One reason is that such questions pressure you to tip your hand during the negotiating game. Winning the salary you want requires some evasive action on your part. Choose your words carefully, and don't be afraid to redirect a pointed question. These tips will help you stay in control of your compensation.

### **1. How to Handle Applications or Ads Requesting a Salary History.**

Diane Barowsky, partner at TMP Executive Search, Chicago, advises job seekers not to include salary requirements. "True, when you leave out the information, you run the risk that the employer won't look at you because you've not put a salary in there. But you run a greater risk of selling yourself short because you don't know what the range is," she says.

Instead, write that you expect a salary commensurate with your experience and the job's demands. You could also write, "negotiable," because, frankly, salary is always negotiable.

### **2. What Are You Currently Making?**

Answer carefully. State that the new job, while in line with your skills, can't compare to your current job. As such, your current salary isn't a good judge of what you should earn in this position. "Answer: What I'm making is not important. What is important is whether or not my skills are what you need, and I'm confident that the range will be fair," she adds. This allows you to reveal your self-confidence.

In addition, this levels the playing field if there are two candidates. If you're currently underpaid, answering such a question directly will work against you, your pay is lower than that of another candidate who has the same skills and experience but has a higher

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pay because he is with a corporation that offers competitive salaries? You could be hired at a much lower figure than the other person would have received. It's not the past salary that's important, it's the skills and experience and what you can do for the organization,"

### **3. Get the Employer to Say a Number First.**

Every employer has some type of salary range in mind. And they most often can play with that range, says Barowsky. "They have information you are not privy to. When you don't know what the employer has in mind, you can underbid yourself. Employers will jump on that. Later, you'll find out that someone two cubicles over from you is making more money for the same work you're doing," she adds. So find out what the range is before you state any salary requirements.

If the range is below what you want, state that you expect a range closer to XYZ. And make XYZ at least 10 to 20 percent higher than what you currently make. If you're grossly underpaid in your position, hike it even higher.

### **4. What If You're Really Pushed to State a Figure?**

State a range that reflects the amount you want to make. And remember: Employers will always look at the low end of your range, so make the low end as high as you are comfortable with. If you make \$35,000, state a range of \$42,000 to \$55,000 or so.

### **5. Be Prepared. Do Your Research.**

Research what others in the field make. Contact professional organizations and get their annual salary surveys. Read professional publications. Network and look on the Web to find out what others in your field are making.

### **6. Show Us Your Pay Stub.**

If an employer wants to contact your old employers to verify your salary, think twice about the job. Frankly, do you really want to work with someone who will intimidate you? "If they badger you during the interview, a point where they're supposed to be wooing and impressing you, think of what it'll be like when you go to work there," says Barowsky.

The bottom line is you not only want good pay, you want respect. And a job that provides mutual employer-employee respect is bound to reap rewards.

## **Set the Right Tone for Your Negotiations**

*by Michael Chaffers*

Most people would prefer never to negotiate. Others gird themselves for positional battles. When you ask your colleagues or your manager to meet with you to negotiate a change in a project, or a raise in your salary, anticipate having to deal with their anxiety

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and preconceived assumptions about negotiation. The first few things you say and do are significant in setting the tone for your negotiations. The following tips will help you establish a meeting in which it is easy to listen to each other and work together.

## 1. Clarify the Purposes of the Meeting.

Time is a scarce resource. Your colleagues will appreciate your ability to quickly focus everyone's attention on the reasons for the negotiation and the benefits of a successful resolution for all. You could say, making a final decision about the direction of this project is critical to meeting our deadline, getting this product out the door and hitting our revenue targets. For that reason, I have asked you all to convene and determine where we ought to go from here. This said, your colleagues should not resist investing time and energy in it.

## 2. Frame the Issue as a Joint Problem You Can Solve Together.

Most people dislike negotiating, especially over tough issues. But those same people may enjoy problem-solving. Present the activity as joint problem-solving so you can effectively engage them in a conversation around the topics you want to negotiate. You might say, I have this issue and I would really value your advice, or, I am not sure how to attack this problem and I could use your help. Then, you can work with them to better understand and attack the issue.

## 3. Start with the Other Side's Main Points or Concerns.

To make the meeting really feel like a joint problem-solving session, begin by raising the other party's critical needs or concerns. Then, invite them to add more points or otherwise explain their perspective. This will make them feel included in the meeting and will engage their full attention early on. Once they feel heard, they will be more likely to listen to your views and be open to finding a mutually beneficial solution.

## Top 10 Tips for Successful Salary Negotiations

*by Michael Chaffers*

**1. Be persuasive:** It's hard to force your boss to increase your compensation, and trying to do so can potentially damage your working relationship. On the other hand, it's much easier to persuade him that it might benefit the organization to pay you more, and that doing so will likely improve the way you deal with each other going forward.

**2. Aim high, and be realistic:** Many researchers have found a strong correlation between people's aspirations and the results they achieve in negotiation. At the same time, you want to suggest ideas to which your boss can realistically say yes.

**3. Start off with the right tone:** To be persuasive, you want to let your boss know that you will listen and seek to understand his views. At the same time, you expect your boss to do the same for you, so you can work together to address this issue. Avoid ultimatums, threats and other coercive behavior.

# Tips for Creating a Concise Resume

**4. Clarify your interests:** Your compensation should satisfy a range of needs, not just salary. Make sure you have thought about other types of compensation that would be valuable as well -- like profit sharing, stock options that vest immediately, a bonus, greater work responsibilities, a quicker promotion schedule, increased vacation or flexible hours.

**5. Anticipate their interests:** Just like you, your boss has needs and concerns of his own. To persuade him to say yes, your ideas will have to address those interests.

**6. Create several options:** Joint brainstorming is the most effective way to find ideas that satisfy everyone's interests. Brainstorming works best when you separate it from commitment -- first create possible solutions, then decide among them.

**7. Focus on objective criteria:** It is far easier to persuade someone to agree with your proposal if he sees how that proposal is firmly grounded on objective criteria, such as what similar firms pay people of like experience, or what others in the firm make.

**8. Think through your alternatives:** In case you cannot persuade your boss to say yes, you need to have a plan B to satisfy your interests. Part of preparation is creating a specific action plan so that you know what you'll do if you have to walk away from the table.

**9. Prepare thoughtfully to achieve your goals:** This is the only aspect of your negotiations you can completely control. To take advantage of all the above advice, you have to invest a significant amount of your time and energy.

**10. Review to learn:** The only way you can really improve your ability to negotiate is to explicitly learn from your experiences. After you finish negotiations, reflect on what you did that worked well, and what you might want to do differently.

# Tips for Creating a Concise Resume

## **Tips for Creating a Concise Resume**

*by Kim Isaacs, MA, CPRW, NCRW  
Monster.com's Resume Expert*

## **How to Handle Employment Gaps and Job-Hopping**

*by Kim Isaacs, MA, CPRW, NCRW  
Monster.com's Resume Expert*

## **More Than One Career Goal**

*by Kim Isaacs*

## **Use Numbers to Give Your Accomplishments the Attention They Deserve**

*by Peter Vogt*

## **Common Resume Blunders**

*by Kim Isaacs, MA, CPRW, NCRW*

## **Top 10 Tips for Successful Salary Negotiations**

*by Michael Chaffers*

## **Set the Right Tone for Your Negotiations**

*by Michael Chaffers*

## **Salary Requirements: 6 Steps to Handling Money Questions**

*by Therese Droste*

## **Raising the Ante**

### **How to Get the Raise You Deserve**

*by Gayle Goddard*

## **The Offer May Not Be As Good As It Seems**

*by Carole Martin*

## **Illegal Questions**

*by Carole Martin*

## **Getting Over Interview Jitters**

*by Carole Martin*

## **Handling Multiple Interviewers**

*by Carole Martin*

## **Smile, You're on Camera: Videoconference Interviews**

*by Carole Martin*

## **Do You Have Any Questions?**

*by Carole Martin*

## **Cover Letter Refresher Course**

### **10 Tips for Crafting Eye-Catching**

### **Cover Letters**

*by Peter Newfield*

# Tips for Creating a Concise Resume

Glenn,

Saw your name in the Top Gun Hall of Fame. That's great! Perhaps you can pass this resume on to the right person at AMD. This guy has the potential to be one of the best if he can get guidance from someone like you.

Jason Dunlap

Caly Networks  
408 716-4256

**H. Alan Dunlap**  
5020 Cribari Vale  
San Jose, CA 95135  
(408)532-0153  
email: [alanantic@netzero.net](mailto:alanantic@netzero.net)

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## **POSITION APPLYING FOR: Jr. PADS or Allegro Designer**

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### **GOALS**

- Obtain advanced experience and superior speed in all aspects of PCB design using--Allegro, Pads, Protel, etc.
- To become an expert netlist and database troubleshooter, and schematic editor in Orcad, Viewlogic, and others.
- To continue to develop my understanding of computers, electronics and engineering.

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### **PCB DESIGN EXPERIENCE**

**5/01 to PRESENT: Advanced PCB Design**, 4231 Mountcastle Way, San Jose, 95136  
(as private contractor)

Obtained advanced training in PCB design and schematic software using PADS, Orcad, EPD/Viewlogic, and some Protel. Designed complex mixed signal and RF PCBs, High-speed digital Internet designs, with differential pairs, controlled impedance, requiring BGAs and high-density layouts.

**9/00 to 5/01: Setime, Inc.**, 7013 Realm Drive, San Jose, 95119

PCB Designer and CAD Technical Support: Downloaded datasheets from the Internet and created footprints in Allegro and symbols in Orcad and EPD/Viewlogic. Corrected, edited, and troubleshot schematics and netlists where required. Designed PC Boards using Allegro, created schematics from engineering sketches and instructions using Orcad, Powerlogic, and Viewlogic. Graduated from EPD training program and received extensive on-the-job training from engineers and other designers.

# Tips for Creating a Concise Resume

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## CAPABILITIES

- I've designed several PCBs, some with split voltage and ground planes, high speed signal layers, differential pairs, matched lengths and precise placement of connectors to mate with a backplane.
- I've imported fab notes, graphics, etc. from Autocad14 into Allegro and PADS.
- Extensive experience in creating footprints in Allegro & PADS, as well as schematic symbols and editing in EPD/Viewlogic, and some Orcad, in addition to organizing, and archiving libraries.
- I can troubleshoot netlists and make corrections at both the schematic level and the PCB.
- Better than average understanding of: Windows 98 or 2000, MS Office, Winzip, Acrobat Reader and Writer
- I'm able to use a scanner, fax, create CDRs, download datasheets, and convert HTMLs to .pdfs.
- Familiar with Orcad, EPD, and Pads schematic software, Autocad 14, and extensive use of the Internet.
- I've also used precise measuring tools, ordered parts, bagged and kitted up components for assembly.

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## INTRODUCTION

A couple years ago, I decided to quit the construction business and use my computer and design skills to pursue PCB Design. Since then, I've become totally devoted to developing my new career. I plan to become an expert in as many PCB design, CAD, and schematic software packages as I can in addition to using the Internet, computer networks and troubleshooting. I want to have a broad base of expertise and skill so as to be of use at many levels of PCB design. As you can see, I've done everything at least once and have a good understanding of the entire process. I just need experience. Because, an opportunity to excel is more important than the money, right now, I'm quite inexpensive!

I have an A.A. degree with courses in drafting and tech. illustration, a General Contractor's license, and an honorable discharge from the U.S. Marine Corps. Also, at present, I've access to all software packages mentioned above, and the Internet, at home.

Sincerely,  
H.Alan Dunlap

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References and detailed work history available on request.

# Tips for Creating a Concise Resume

V. KYLE PIPKINS  
9960 DIXON COURT  
FRISCO, TEXAS 75034  
(972) 335-7992

OBJECTIVE: Printed Wiring Board Consulting Designer where my experience and skills can contribute to department productivity goals and engineering services.

## COMPUTER

EXPERIENCE: MENTOR EXPEDITION  
MENTOR BOARD STATION RE  
MENTOR DESTINATION  
MENTOR BOARD STATION  
PCAD  
COOPER AND CHYAN AUTOROUTER (CCT)  
CADNETIX DAZIX CDX CLASSIC  
INTERGRAPH ADVANCE TECHNOLOGY DESIGNER (ATD)  
AUTOCAD  
MICROSTATION  
VECTOR GENERAL (IGS) – Texas Instruments in-house system  
VALOR GENESIS  
WINDOWS NT  
UNIX

## WORK

### EXPERIENCE:

2/98 to present MENTOR GRAPHICS  
8005 S.W. Boeckman Road  
Wilsonville, Oregon 97070-7777

Position: **ENGINEERING CONSULTANT**

Mentor Consulting Division where onsite structural efforts consist of implementing Mentor software to working process environments for companies within the United States and Canada. Duties include creating and populating libraries. Structuring and documenting PCB seed jobs and establishing drawing procedures. Accelerator efforts of Mentor software also included permission setup on Windows network servers. Design layout services are performed using all releases of Mentor Expedition and Board Station RE products. Position also included lab instructor, teaching software tools for new customers.

# Tips for Creating a Concise Resume

11/94 to 2/98

Position: **PRINTED WIRING BOARD DESIGNER**

Process Automation Center (PAC) for Semiconductor test division for Texas Instruments. Designed high speed multilayer printed wiring boards which required surface mount design with critical timing signals. Job required interface with engineering.

12/86 to 11/94

Position: **PRINTED WIRING BOARD DESIGNER**

Electrical Design Automation at Forest Lane (EDAF) of Computer Aided Design Services. Designing high density multilayer printed wiring boards, double-sided boards and thermal planes using military specification, DOD-STD-1000, MIL-STD-100 ANSI Y14.5. Majority of services required layout design on Mentor Board Station and PCAD. Also generated and updated library parts and manufacturing data. Generated assembly and drill plane drawings using the Autocad system. Services also required placing and retrieving files on different types of mainframes.

03/86 to 11/86

Position: **MANUAL DRAFTSMAN**

Mechanical Draftsman for Texas Instruments. Generated engineer changes and layout of harness boards. Position also required interfacing with mechanical engineers.

08/85 to 02/86

Position: **PWB DESIGN TRAINEE**

While a full time student at Eastfield College working on an Associates Degree in Drafting and Design Technology, I served in a program at Texas Instruments which required students to work in the fabrication shop to learn applications and procedures for production boards. These procedures served as a learning tool to design boards with high quality and precision.

EDUCATION: **Eastfield College, Mesquite, Texas**

Applied Arts and Sciences of Drafting and Design Technology  
Additional basic studies total 102 hours with Grade Point of 3.29.  
Mesquite High School, Mesquite, Texas. Grad 1982.