

Are You Attending the Right Workshop?

By the end of this presentation, you will learn what résumé readers want and do not want (they are busy people with feelings, too).

Suppose that you received a phone call from a company hiring manager or an external recruiter (e.g., someone at an employment agency), what would you say? By the end of this presentation, you will learn the importance of proper phone etiquette, and how to “act” on the phone.

Is your message powerful enough? By the end of this presentation, you will learn how to grab attention, and keep it.

Suppose you do get the attention of a résumé reader. What will your résumé persuade that reader to do? (Hint: give you an interview or trash your message; although you may receive one of those “we’ll keep your résumé on file” letters.) By the end of this presentation, you will learn to stand out, in a positive way, and rise to the top of the “keepers pile.”

Do you think an employer will hire you if you are not liked, or likable? Do you think you are likeable? What do employers like or dislike about candidates? By the end of this presentation, you will learn the answers to these questions, and more hiring SECRETS.

What are the odds?

Did you know that the odds that a given resume will “get through” to a human are very slim?

For example, here’s a message from just one company that tells us a lot about those odds. Ironically, this company is named DataFrenzy.

It claims to be “the World’s Largest Job Distribution and Résumé Management Company.” According to this company’s web site, it handles:

“over 20,000 active job orders each day” and processes “over 10,000,000 résumés annually.”

A Google search suggested that Southern Methodist University's Department of Human Resources "receives 9,000 resumes annually."

However, when this institution's HR Director was asked about the number of openings SMU had annually (in an e-mail), her reply indicated that there were far more résumés than the available openings for which those résumés were received. Further, in her answer she stated that (actually):

"The numbers you have are from the year before last. We had 15,000 applicants last fiscal year, and hired 192 regular benefit-eligible employees."

What are the odds?

$15,000/192 = 1.28\%$

Per Job = 78 Résumés

Odds (on Average) = 1 in 78

An advertisement promoting the strength of the *Argus Leader* as a means for employers to attract candidates indicated that one HR manager collected 85 résumés from one ad. Per Job = 85 resumes. Odds = 1 in 85.

An article on *FAST COMPANY*'s web site discussed a company called HireSystems.

This company “works with its customers to search, organize, track, and process résumés. All of that is done on the Web by more than 150 employees, 130 of whom work at home. They process 2 million résumés a year...”

Let's keep this straight:

First your résumé will go out over the “net”;

Then it will be tracked and organized by someone working from home that works for a company that keeps track of résumés for other companies;

Your résumé will be mixed in with 2 million others.

Do you like those odds?

Supposing that your résumé did get through to a human, what would he or she be looking for?

#1 Preferably, someone who is not a STRANGER. Someone they know and trust as a person has a strong chance of getting an offer, even if that person has lesser qualifications. (Of course, this also means that little or no résumé reading may be involved, and the employer will find you through established relationships or word-of-mouth referrals).

#2 A trajectory based on trends and patterns in your career—as compared to others with whom you are competing. (If they must take a chance on someone who is a STRANGER, they want proof.)

#3 They wonder the same things you would wonder if you were screening candidates' résumés.

Can you do the job?

Are you interested in the job?

Will you take the job?

Will you do the job?

Will you “fit” in?

Supposing that you had a pile of résumés (85?) to sift through, how would you go about it?

In any human résumé sorting process, most people would try to cut that pile down to a manageable number, quickly. One might start by immediately cutting out the unqualified candidates or those who have made inappropriate submissions.

There are probably three piles:

The DOA Pile

Dead on Arrival

The Maybe? Pile

Often these will be filed, and several years later, the employer will hire everyone in this pile. It just takes time. (Obviously, this statement is just a cruel joke; sorry about that.)

The Keepers Pile

Probably a small handful—about a dozen—will make it into this pile. These are the “contenders.”

Does your résumé have a “blooper”?
(Hint: These are immediately placed in the DOA pile.)

Try these favorites as published in a *Fortune* magazine article:

“Reason for leaving last job: maturity leave.”

“Failed bar exam with relatively high grades.”

“It’s best for employers that I not work with people.”

If you think bloopers are persuasive, you are correct!!!

What would a blooper PERSUADE you to do if you were the one making a hiring decision?

Your résumé must catch the attention of a reader in only a few seconds

One quote Dr. Lahm found suggested that:

“The average time spent reading a résumé is 18 seconds.”

Another quote indicated:

“The average time spent reading a resume was less than five seconds.”

The reason given was:

“They all look the same.”

Translation:

Your résumé may have between 5 and 18 seconds to catch the attention of a reader, and it should not look like all of the other résumés.

Two Important Words From Information Processing to Keep in Mind When Designing Résumés (or Telling Your Story in Person)

Truncation: Collapsing data or information.

Supposing a candidate has a series of odd, part-time jobs in college that have no relation to the new job objective, this information should be collapsed.

PRIOR BACKGROUND

While supporting myself through school.

Worked my way through school in a variety of service positions that have given me experience on the front lines of business including three summers in retailing. Beyond supporting myself while I pursued my education, I learned the value of hard work and the importance of delivering excellent customer service.

Elaboration: To expand upon information. Try to think of every single thing that relates to your desired position (you can edit down later if need be).

Course work and the things you did in those courses; these items in effect become work samples that are collected along the way and result in a portfolio (this applies to all majors and fields of study).

Doc and Pres

- Wrote a software documentation manual for a shareware program.

Technical Report Writing

- Analyzed the need for and ways to maintain smoke detection systems in an apartment building.
- Conducted a study of how to keep the town of Madison free of ice in the winter.

Features

This car has four doors.

I worked as a waitress.

This disk drive has XXX
Gigabytes.

So What?

Benefits

So you can get your growing family into the car easily!

So in this busy restaurant I was able to juggle multiple priorities, meet customer needs, serve good-hot-food-fast, and get along well with the management team as I was there for three years while in college. I learned the value of a smile* to make customers happy!

So you'll have plenty of storage space for all your stuff: pictures, music, school work, applications, just about anything you want to put on this drive.

** Don't forget to use your MAGIC MIRROR.*

Truncation and Elaboration Come in Several Forms in Terms of Applying of the Concept

Before

Elaborate to create a context for the reader that creates positive images:

Center of Excellence Member.

So What?

After

Dakota State University's *Center of Excellence* promotes student development and the application of technology for uses in business, industry, government, and education; membership requires leadership strengths as well as the achievement of high academic standards.

Before

Elaborate on specific sentences:

Restaurant worker—waitress.

Elaborate on and under headings:

(If the career path is computing)

Took courses in computing.

Create your own headings

After

Ground Round Restaurant Waitress.

At this busy, locally well known restaurant, kept customers happy with good food, served in a fun and friendly atmosphere.

List specific software programs, activities, and accomplishments such as:

HANDS-ON COMPUTER SKILLS

- Created a web site to promote a local small business.
- Helped a church pastor transfer financial records from a paper-based system to a computerized book keeping system.

Early in a career, or to break into a new field, you might volunteer for projects for free or work for a small fee.

Paper, Rock, Scissors

Experience *beats* Education (in most fields)

Honors *beats* Activities

Which is the stronger choice of words?

“Pursuing a degree”

“Hopefully I’ll graduate”

“Expected Graduation Date”

or

“Planned Graduation Date”

Military Service

or

Distinguished Military Service

Objective

or

Account Management Career Objective

or

Banking and Financial Services Career Objective

Education

or

State-of-the-Art Technology Credentials

or

Academic Background

Experience

or

CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

Some Ways to Make Text Stand Out (Use Them Wisely)

Big

Bold

ALL CAPITALIZED

Italics

Underline

Color

Some COMBINATION of *the* **Above!!!**

January 2002

Waiter. Worked two days then got fired.

January 2002

Waiter. Worked one week then got bored.

January 2002

Waiter. Worked the rest of the month (finished out a month for the first time ever).

Free Space here in this column in effect “advertises” chronological instability (job-hopping).

*Things a Résumé Will **NOT** Do For You:*

- #1* A résumé will **NOT** get you a job. Someone has to like you for that (and if they don't like you, you probably won't get that job).
- #2* Overcome the lack of a positive attitude. Confidence creates the impression of **COMPETENCE**.
- #3* Put a **SMILE** on an interviewer's face, except in rare instances, such as when you make a hilarious "résumé blooper." If you want an interviewer to smile, then **YOU SHOULD SMILE**. (One of the most powerful of all forms of persuasion).
- #4* Prove anything. A resume lists your claims and you have to back them up with skills, knowledge, examples (work samples), references, and other evidence.
- #5* Overcome the fact that you are a **STRANGER**. Testimonials help. (Would every one of your professors think that you were a "rising star" and say so? If not, why not? Did you go "all out" or just try to get by in every class?)*

** Students tend to let their guard down just like many other candidates do when they think someone isn't important. If you are in the public eye in any way, the only safe bet is to think of everyone you meet as someone who could be very important to your future success. Look nice. Be nice. Try hard. Make a positive impression. **SMILE**.*

In Some Ways Using a Résumé is Like Holding Out Your Hand and Begging With a Tin Cup

When you use a résumé you are saying:
I am looking for a job. *I need a job.*

Recruiters look for candidates who are not looking.

Those candidates are already too busy:

They are already successful at company A (kicking company B's butt); Company B would like to hire the candidate who presently works for company A, so that it can quit getting its butt kicked, and turn the tables on Company A.

Your solution, if you are not employed?

GET BUSY!

Even if you are not employed, you too should be extremely busy (NOT looking for a job):

I'm presently working very hard at school, preparing to be an effective manager.

When I am not involved in my studies, I volunteer at church, and a local school.

In my spare time, I collect quotations from leaders I admire.

I am always looking for ways to become better at communicating.

Our school club runs several successful fund-raisers every semester; the causes we support are all for the good of the community, and that keeps me “pumped up!”

Writing a paper about customer service based on my observations of various businesses, and talks I have had with managers.

Developing a software manual for a shareware program that I am co-creating with my roommate.

Even if you are not employed, you too should be extremely busy (NOT looking for a job). Your turn:

I'm presently working very hard at school, preparing to be _____.

When I am not involved in my studies, I volunteer at _____, and a _____.

In my spare time, I collect _____.

I am always looking for ways to _____.

Our school club _____; the causes we support are all for the good of the community, and that keeps me "pumped up!"

Writing a paper about _____ based on my observations of _____, and talks I have had _____.

Developing _____ that I am co-creating with my roommate.

Suppose that you received a phone call: the importance of proper phone etiquette, and how to “act” on the phone.

Is the timing right?

If you are running out the door or a neighbor’s stereo is booming in the background—make an appointment to call back.

If you are not prepared, e.g., with your résumé in hand and your research about the company—make an appointment to call back.

Are you in a quiet room with no distractions? If you have a “hold button,” excuse yourself for a moment while you switch rooms.

Spit out the gum. Do not eat, smoke, or drink (except perhaps water, to keep your voice clear) in a manner that would indicate any such behaviors are taking place to the caller. Either do not do these things at all, or cover the receiver if you must.

If you must sneeze, sniffle, cough, burp, or make any other noises in a similar vein—cover the receiver.

Remember you are on a “first date”; you should be on your very best behavior. It typically takes around two to three interviews to “get lucky.” In the meantime, have a “twinkle in your eye” and listen to the interviewer’s signals.

Try to understand that the hiring decision maker wants YOU to be the solution to their problem

Ask questions about what they are looking for:

Could you describe the ideal candidate for the position?

If you are not, bow out gracefully, but not before offering to be helpful: “I know of someone who might be perfect for the position you are describing; let me check with this individual and call you back. Meanwhile, what I am looking for is actually more along the lines of _____, if anything arises at your company, or if you hear of anything I would appreciate any similar efforts on your part.”

Do not be so selfish. People who are helpful are far more likely to receive help when they need it. If you use the above strategy, you will make a lot of new friends.

You are probably qualified—or the interviewer thinks you are—if you have received a phone call. Concentrate on being a likeable person. Make the interviewer want you, even if you turn out to be the “great catch who got away.”

Even on the Phone!

Do not slouch.

Stand up.

Be energetic.

Look your best (this inspires confidence).

Be a great conversationalist. This usually means listening, anytime the interviewer (or your date) wants to talk.

Take turns.

Take notes (use the notes to ask some insightful questions).

SMILE!

Try to relate to the individual you are talking to as a person, and find common ground (so that you are not such a STRANGER, after all).

Ask the interviewer:

how his or her day is going;

how long he or she has been with the company;

how he or she got started at the company.

Try to understand the values of the person with whom you are speaking, and relate to them (or at least respect them).

If you can find out about personal likes or dislikes, or any common experiences, hobbies, or points of reference (such as you both grew up in a particular small town), you will be in a better position to not be a STRANGER anymore).

The number one goal is an in-person meeting, assuming you want the job. (And perhaps even if you don't want the job—you should still be helpful. Meet anyone you may be able to help). Ask for an in-person meeting, or another chance to follow-up with a second phone conversation.

Try to “smoke out” any objections and “close” the sale. All you are trying to do at this point in the game is to get that in-person meeting.

Make a statement such as:

“I realize how important it is for both candidates and employers to come to the right decision about whether or not they should be working with one another. From my point of view this has been a really positive conversation! Since reaching the right decision is so mutually important, could I be so forward as to propose that we follow-up on the phone in a few days after we’ve both had time to reflect, or for your permission to call you if I have any further questions that come to mind about your needs?”

If the answer is “No,” ask if there are any particular concerns about your candidacy so that you might clarify your suitability for the position.

If the answer is “Yes,” you will probably be offered a chance to schedule an interview or given additional information (e.g., the interviewer’s boss is presently out of town, and further meetings will be scheduled upon her return).