

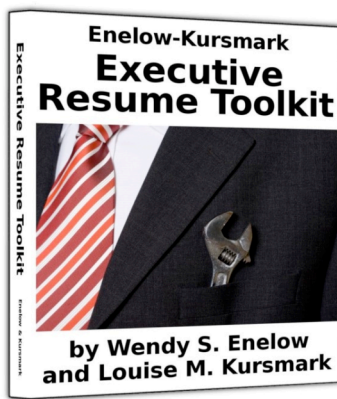
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**Definitive Guide to Strategizing, Writing, Formatting,  
and Designing Resumes for Senior Management  
and Executive Opportunities**

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Master Resume Writer  
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## ENELOW–KURSMARK EXECUTIVE RESUME TOOLKIT

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### **Definitive Guide to Strategizing, Writing, Formatting, and Designing Resumes for Senior Management and Executive Opportunities**

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#### **TOOLKIT INCLUDES:**

**Resume Writing Guide:** 50-page guidebook (with optional exercises) to help you strategize, write, and design your own winning, executive-level resume

**Resume Sample Gallery:** 123-page book, including a selection of 50 best-in-class executive resumes that you can use as the foundation for writing/designing your own best-in-class resume

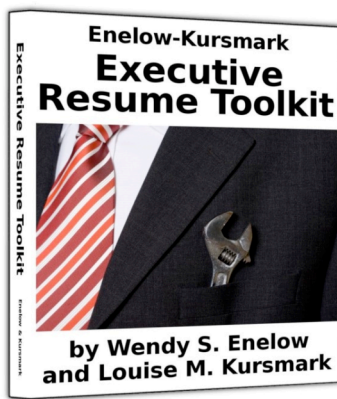
**Worksheets:** All of the worksheets discussed and used in the book are also provided in a separate Word document so that you can easily use them to pull together your essential information and construct your resume

**Resource Guide:** Short guidebook with “live” links to online resources designed specifically for executive candidates

**Executive Tip Sheets:** Two tip pages to keep close at hand while writing your resume – one detailing the top Executive Resume Strategies and the other detailing the top tips for writing Powerful Experience Sections

**Audio Broadcasts:** Two 20-minute audio recordings with expert career management advice – one titled “Top 10 Resume-Writing Strategies for Executive Success” and the other titled “My Resume’s Not Working ... What Do I Do Now?”

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# ENELOW–KURSMARK EXECUTIVE RESUME TOOLKIT

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## Definitive Guide to Strategizing, Writing, Formatting, and Designing Resumes for Senior Management and Executive Opportunities

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## Section 1: Executive Resume Writing Guide

**Y**our executive resume. More than simply a career history, an effective resume is a strategic marketing document that positions you for advanced career opportunities. As your “calling card” to employers, recruiters, and networking contacts, it is an essential tool for every executive’s job search. What’s more, an up-to-date resume that showcases your accomplishments and capabilities, communicates your value, and highlights your most notable achievements is a critical item for lifelong career management.

Your resume, then, is a vitally important document, and preparing it is a serious task.

For greatest impact and effectiveness, this seemingly simple two- or three-page document needs to communicate all of the following in a concise, hard-hitting, interesting, and compelling manner:

- **Who you are**—your executive brand (also referred to as your unique value proposition), core capabilities, and functional areas of expertise
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- **What you have done**—the experience and accomplishments that distinguish your career and are the proof of your executive brand
  - **Where you have been**—the organizations, industries, and geographies where you have worked, studied, and otherwise gained your current expertise
  - **How you provide value**—the impact you have achieved and results you have delivered that have helped organizations be more profitable, successful, and competitive

This Executive Resume Toolkit is designed to give you all of the strategies, information, examples, and exercises you need to create a compelling executive resume. You'll learn how to think strategically about what you include in your resume and how you include it, because strategy is the underlying foundation that drives your entire resume-writing process.

What's more, through the process of developing your resume using the value-focused approach we recommend, you'll arm yourself to conduct effective interviews, negotiating sessions, performance reviews, and other critical interactions that affect your career and your compensation.

## **WHY US?**

For more than 20 years, both authors, Wendy Enelow and Louise Kursmark, have worked directly with executives in career transition. As such, we have extensive, in-depth experience with thousands of executives who have faced precisely the challenges you are facing as you develop a resume for your job search or for managing your career as it continues to move forward and you reach even greater distinction and levels of responsibility.

In addition, we are among the most widely published authors in the careers industry, having written more than 40 books—some individually, many as co-authors, and still more with other professionals. We remain current with trends and activities that affect executive resumes and job search, and we have access to a vast professional network of executive resume writers, career coaches, career counselors, executive recruiters, outplacement consultants, HR professionals, and senior executives to extend our own knowledge and viewpoints.

In short, you're in good hands! We have applied all of our energy and expertise to create this one-of-a-kind Executive Resume Toolkit precisely for you—an executive in career transition who wants accelerate your career success.

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## WHAT'S INCLUDED IN YOUR EXECUTIVE RESUME TOOLKIT

By sharply focusing on just what you need to know to develop a best-in-class executive resume, we've created a resource that is concise, efficient, and easy to use. You'll find that you move easily from the big picture (the strategy) to the tactical details and step-by-step process involved in writing, designing, and formatting your resume.

Here's what you'll find inside this kit:

- **Resume-Writing Guide** (the booklet you're reading now)—This 50-page guidebook leads you, step-by-step, in developing the material and then the resume that will powerfully communicate your executive brand and value. Included in this Guide are resume-writing exercises that are also provided separately as Word documents so you can work with them directly. These worksheets and questionnaires help you capture all of the details, from your career history through your career-defining achievements, that you'll include in your resume.
- **Sample Gallery** (123-page booklet)—A selection of 50 best-in-class executive resumes that we've chosen from our own executive resume-writing practices, these documents give you great ideas for format, language, structure, and strategy that you can adapt for your own resume.
- **Worksheets** (separate Word document)—All of the worksheets that we discuss and share with you in this section are also provided in a separate Word document so that you can easily use them to pull together your essential information and construct your resume.
- **Resource Guide** (separate document with "live" links)—To help you launch your job search efficiently and effectively via multiple channels, we provide you with our recommendations of top resources for executives in career transition.
- **Top Tip Sheets** (separate two-page document)—Keep these key points close at hand as you develop your resume. They'll remind you of the most important strategies that are described in detail in the Resume-Writing Guide.
- **Career Management Advice** (two 20-minute audio broadcasts)—In addition to all of the advice and information included in the rest of the Toolkit, we've compiled our favorite tips and strategies for executive career transition into two downloadable audio presentations. You can listen to these, in whole or in part, whenever you have a few moments to spare.

So let's jump in—beginning with the big strategic picture and proceeding through every step of the process to create a resume that will foster your professional success and accelerate your career advancement.

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## IT ALL STARTS WITH STRATEGY

Just as you determine a strategy before launching any business initiative, you must also take a strategic approach to writing your resume. After all, you can't possibly include every activity from your entire career. You must pick and choose—strategically—the information that is most meaningful, the approach that is most compelling, and the organizational structure that delivers the greatest impact.

Without first defining your strategy, in all likelihood you will produce a “career obituary,” a summary of what you've done in your career with a focus on the past and **not** on the future. Or, you might position yourself perfectly for a job just like the ones you've held in the past—but not necessarily the one you want now.

### ***Meet Joe Green***

To illustrate just how critical it is to approach resume writing from a strategic viewpoint, let's examine the case of the fictional Joe Green, who is considering not one but three different career targets:

Objective #1: High-Profile Field Sales Position

Objective #2: Sales Management Position

Objective #3: General Management Position

To prepare for this multi-focus job search, Joe has prepared three different versions of his resume. While each contains the expected information about his career history, each employs a different strategy and format to clearly position him for one of his specific targets.

The following excerpts include Joe's profile/introduction and his most recent work experience. Note the similarities and the ***distinct differences*** as he pulls from his career experiences to highlight the most relevant and meaningful information to support each unique objective.

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**Resume Version #1: High-Profile Field Sales Position**

**JOE GREEN**

11 Doyertown Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53908

209.555.1908  
joegreen19@yahoo.com

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**SENIOR SALES EXECUTIVE & KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER**

Thirteen-year career as a top-producing sales professional. Consistent success in outperforming the competition, capturing key accounts, and dominating critical markets. Recent track record of delivering double-digit revenue growth in both new and existing product categories. Dynamic presentation and negotiation skills.

- New Business Development
- New Product Launch
- Competitive Bidding & Contracts
- Key Account Relationship Management
- Sales & Marketing Communications
- Cross-Sell & Up-Sell Programs

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**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Senior Sales & Account Manager**—DYNAMIC PRODUCTS, INC., Detroit, MI 2005 to Present

High-profile field sales and account management position targeting Fortune 1000 corporations nationwide. Challenged to revitalize dormant accounts, recapture lost business, and penetrate new target markets to drive long-term revenue growth. Independently manage complex, high-dollar sales process, from initial client consultation through all phases of negotiation to final sales closing and contract delivery. Personally manage key account relationships.

- Achieved/surpassed all revenue objectives and closed 2006 at 125% of quota.
- Captured six new Fortune 1000 accounts within first eight months for \$28 million in new revenues.
- Launched four new major product lines into the market between 2005 and 2006 for more than \$10 million in revenue (at a better than 22% bottom-line profit margin).
- Trained newly hired field sales associates and account managers in selling, closing, and account management techniques.

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**Resume Version #2: Sales Management Position**

**JOE GREEN**

11 Doyertown Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53908

209.555.1908  
joegreen19@yahoo.com

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**SALES MANAGER / SALES TEAM LEADER**

Thirteen-year professional career building and leading top-producing field sales organizations. Expert skills in strategic sales planning, key account management, sales training, team leadership, and mentoring. Personal record of top-digit gains in revenues and market-share ratings. Creative and decisive with strong organizational leadership talents.

**Field Sales Leadership / Team Building & Motivation / Strategic Account Development / Budgeting  
Territory Alignment & Optimization / New Product Launch / Performance Management**

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**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Manager—Sales & Key Accounts—DYNAMIC PRODUCTS, INC., Detroit, MI** 2005 to Present

High-profile field sales and account management position targeting Fortune 1000 corporations nationwide. Challenged to build top-tier sales team able to revitalize dormant accounts, recapture lost business, and penetrate new target markets. Management responsibilities and leadership achievements include:

**Sales Management & Leadership**

- Led a staff of six sales professionals and two administrative support personnel through complex, high-dollar sales processes. Directed team from initial client consultation through all phases of negotiation to final sales closing and delivery. Personally managed key account relationships.
- Recruited, trained, and developed new sales personnel. Created a high-impact, high-yield sales training program to accelerate field immersion and drive immediate sales growth.
- Authored annual strategic sales and market development plans to guide the organization through accelerated growth and expansion.

**Sales Production & Revenue Growth**

- Led team that achieved/surpassed all revenue objectives and closed 2006 at 125% of quota.
- Captured six new Fortune 1000 accounts within first eight months for \$28 million in new revenues.
- Launched four new major product lines into the market between 2005 and 2006 for more than \$10 million in revenue (at a better than 22% bottom-line profit margin).



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**Resume Version #3: General Management Position**

**JOE GREEN**

11 Doyertown Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53908

209.555.1908  
joegreen19@yahoo.com

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**GENERAL MANAGER / OPERATIONS MANAGER**

**Strategic Planning & Leadership / Organizational Design & Optimization / Revenue & Profit Growth  
Team Building & Leadership / Budgeting & Finance / Sales Leadership**

Dynamic management career building and leading an organization through transformation and growth to restore profitability. Delivered double-digit gains in revenues and profits through authoritative business, sales, and market leadership. Possess strong and decisive leadership competencies, yet demonstrate flexibility in responding to constantly changing organizational demands. Shared P&L responsibility.

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**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Manager**, DYNAMIC PRODUCTS, INC., Detroit, MI

2005 to Present

Member of 6-person management team leading this company through a massive transition and market repositioning. As the most senior sales manager in the organization, responsible for defining the strategic sales and market direction, recruiting and leading field sales team, and managing related financial affairs. Work in partnership with other top executives to facilitate the company's rapid and profitable growth.

**Business & Operations Management**

- Recruited, trained, and led a team of sales, marketing, customer service, administrative, financial, and support personnel. Introduced innovative employee training and performance improvement programs that significantly improved staff morale and productivity.
- Authored annual strategic sales and market development plans to guide the organization, defined resource requirements, prepared cost and revenue projections, and monitored financial performance.
- Defined and led a complex selling process. Orchestrated team from initial client consultation through all phases of negotiation to final sales closing and contract delivery. Personally managed key account relationships.

**Revenue & Profit Growth**

- Led team that achieved/surpassed all revenue objectives and closed 2006 at 125% of quota.
- Revitalized dormant accounts, recaptured lost business, and closed new corporate accounts.
- Captured six new Fortune 1000 accounts within first eight months for \$28 million in new revenues.
- Launched four new major product lines into the market between 2005 and 2006 for more than \$10 million in revenue (at a better than 22% bottom-line profit margin).

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Having reviewed each of Joe’s three resumes, you can see for yourself that each presents a totally different picture of Joe’s qualifications and a different perception of **who** Joe is. Now, ask yourself these questions:

- Would Joe be able to conduct an effective search for all three targets using just one version of his resume? (We don’t think so.)
- In each resume, has Joe clearly communicated his value proposition for the specific target? (We think he has!)

## **START WITH THE END IN MIND**

Before deciding on the best strategy to use in writing your resume, it is essential to first define your career target. After all, without a clear vision of your goal, you will not know the correct strategy to use to effectively position yourself to achieve that goal.

Use the following categories to organize your career target information. (You’ll find a fill-in-the-blank form at the end of this Guide and in the separate MS Word “Worksheets” file.)



### **EXERCISE #1: DEFINE YOUR CAREER TARGET**

Target Job Title(s)

Job Scope

Type of Organization

Preferred Industries

Compensation Expectation



As you write and edit your resume, refer to your career target when you are struggling with decisions about including, omitting, or emphasizing certain aspects of your career experience and achievements. It will provide a clear and concise blueprint to guide your decision-making.

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## EXECUTIVE RESUME STRATEGIES

Clearly, resume writing truly is all about strategy. In this section you will find 10 strategies that we have developed, tested, and proven over many years of working with executive clients. They will help you create a resume that is truly a “positioning piece” for the opportunities you are targeting.

### ***Executive Resume Strategy #1:***

#### ***Write to the Future***

As we’ve demonstrated, resume writing is not about rehashing your past by simply listing what you’ve done and where. Rather, resume writing is about writing to the future, to the job you want or the career path you wish to pursue. This is a critical consideration throughout every phase of writing your resume **and** conducting your job search.

Once you’ve defined your career target(s), identify the skills and qualifications you’ve gained through your past experience that support your current goals, and then focus your resume and your search campaign on these elements. Don’t position yourself as someone who **wants** to be a marketing executive; rather, position yourself as someone who **is** a well-qualified marketing leader with proven capabilities in every relevant function, activity, and challenge you will face as a marketing executive—strategic planning, campaign development and execution, executive presentations, negotiations, staff management and development, budget management, new market development, and more.

When you write to the future, you enable readers to see you in the role you are seeking and not just in the roles you have held in the past. In essence, you’re painting the picture and creating the perception of yourself that you want prospective employers and recruiters to see.

### ***Executive Resume Strategy #2:***

#### ***“Reweight” Your Skills and Qualifications***

When writing your resume, you want to bring to the forefront the skills and qualifications that are most relevant to your current career objectives. This might mean highlighting and drawing special attention to some activities that, in actuality, represented only a small part of your recent experience but are directly relevant to your future goals. In like fashion, you might want to de-emphasize some of the tasks and initiatives that consumed a good deal of your time but do not relate to your current objectives.

Consider the following example: In the position you’ve held for the last four years, your primary function has been as a Finance Manager with collateral responsibility for IT planning and project management. Now, as you prepare to launch your job search, you are seeking a role as an IT executive, where your financial expertise will be helpful but will not be the primary emphasis of the job.

To best position yourself for your target opportunities, you’ll want to “reweight” the information you include on your resume. You should put greater emphasis on strategic IT planning, major technology

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projects, and the business benefits the technology delivered rather than on the financial management functions you performed on a daily basis. If you can effectively reweight your skills and qualifications, you will have positioned yourself for the opportunities you are now pursuing.

### ***Executive Resume Strategy #3:***

#### ***Sell It; Don't Tell It***

Resume writing is sales—pure and simple. You have a product to sell—**yourself**—and you must create demand for that product by highlighting value, benefits, and accomplishments, not simply “features” and credentials. To accomplish that, change your resume-writing mindset. Instead of simply telling your readers what you have done, sell them on how well you’ve done it.

Consider the difference between the following two sentences:

- *Tell:* “Managed team of seven design engineers for auto industry supplier.”
- *Sell:* “Led team of seven engineers in designing/developing new technical products that revitalized company revenues, generating \$40 million in new business in just two years.”

Do you see the difference in impact?

As you write your resume, look for every opportunity to transform “telling” into “selling.” With well-written accomplishment statements, you can communicate a great deal of information about when, where, why, and how you did something—information that you might otherwise need to detail in dry, lengthy “responsibility” summaries.

In the “sell” example above, the reader can quickly grasp a great deal of information about your responsibilities in team building and leadership (most likely including recruitment, training, supervision, and evaluation), product development (most likely including product concept, design, pricing, packaging, and quality), revenue growth, and much more. By incorporating this information into your accomplishments, you convey depth and detail that add impact and interest to your resume. Try it!

### ***Executive Resume Strategy #4:***

#### ***Highlight Your Keywords***

Keywords are a vital component of every job seeker’s successful search campaign. Tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of companies and recruiters use keywords as the primary vehicle to search their database of resumes to identify qualified candidates. For example, a recruiter might be interested in a candidate with a strong background in supply chain management. If your background has been in logistics, you’d be an ideal candidate. However, if you haven’t included those specific words—supply chain management—in your resume, along with other essential keywords, you’ll most likely be passed over.

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Take the time that is necessary to research and learn the keywords that are important to your current career goals. Then be sure to incorporate them into your resume (as long as they reflect your actual experience and expertise).

One of the best ways to find the “right” keywords for your industry and job function is to peruse job postings, circling or highlighting words that appear repeatedly. For example, if you’re a Director of Operations in a manufacturing industry, you’ll probably find terms such as these in many job postings:

- continuous improvement
- key performance indicators
- manufacturing processes
- site operations
- labor relations
- capital projects
- lean manufacturing
- Six Sigma
- productivity
- quality
- safety
- cost reduction

Remember, initial resume screens are often conducted via computerized keyword search. Therefore, it’s essential that you include the right terminology in your resume—the exact words and phrases used in a keyword search—simply to get an opportunity for a deeper resume review and eventual interview. These words and phrases can appear anywhere in the resume to be “found” by the electronic scanner, so when writing you can include them naturally as you write about your various experiences and accomplishments. It is **not** necessary to include them in a separate keyword summary. Before launching your resume, take the time to cross-check what you’ve written to be sure you’ve included all of the appropriate keywords you discovered.

Beyond screening you “in” following resume review, keywords communicate that you are a knowledgeable insider in your field. They connect you to the employer’s needs, and they show that you know what’s important on the job. Thus, they are critical during every stage of your search, from writing your resume and cover letters through networking and interviewing. In brief, they are the language of your profession, so be sure you speak that language fluently!

### ***Executive Resume Strategy #5: Communicate Your Executive Brand***

The latest and greatest strategy for successful resume writing is the concept of personal branding—defining and communicating a brand that is unique to you and your specific skill sets.

What exactly is a brand? Consider these two definitions:

- “Your unique promise of value” (William Arruda, Reach Branding Club)
- “A collection of perceptions in the mind of the consumer” (Colin Bates, BuildingBrands)

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In other words, your brand is how people perceive you. It is not something that you can “create,” but it is something that you can define, refine, and relentlessly communicate so that you portray a consistent, value-laden image at all times.

Keep in mind that other candidates competing for the same jobs have strong qualifications, just as you do. They will have similar experience, education and other credentials, industry knowledge, and their own track record of accomplishments. How, then, can you make yourself stand out among many other well-qualified professionals?

Often it is the **way** you accomplish what you do, the **leadership style** that gets people to go along with your ideas, your **track record** of results in challenging circumstances, and your **personal strengths** in key executive functions—yours might include, for example, leading organizations, defining and communicating vision, analyzing complex situations, and driving complex projects through bureaucratic organizations. Together, these attributes make you unique and represent your personal/executive brand—your promise of value to that employer.

We recommend that you take some time to define your brand attributes and make them a key part of your resume, cover letters, networking communications, and interview messages. The following exercise guides you through a brand-identification process. (The Worksheets document a Microsoft Word file with this exercise, and a print version is included at the end of this Guide.)

Remember, you are defining your “executive” brand, so put yourself in a professional context as you answer these questions. You might respond somewhat differently if you were wearing another of your many hats, such as parent, condo association president, soccer coach, or spouse.



## **EXERCISE #2: DEFINE YOUR EXECUTIVE BRAND**

### **How would others describe me?**

What have others said about you? What characteristics have repeatedly cropped up in performance evaluations? What are you “known for” in your company or professional network or industry?

### **How would I describe myself?**

What do you think are your strongest qualities? What makes you different from your peers? Why do you think you have been successful?

### **Thinking back on my career, what trends can I identify?**

What has been consistent in how you approached challenges, how you handled difficult personnel situations, what you were recognized for, the kinds of results you delivered, and more?

### **What kinds of challenges do I most enjoy?**

### **What do I love to do?**

### **When and why have I been successful where others have failed?**

### **What factors and traits have contributed most to my success?**



Review all of the information you’ve gathered, highlight common themes, and “gut-check” for authenticity. What characteristics, themes, and trends stand out? These become the foundation for your executive brand.

Now, write several brief statements that incorporate your most significant brand characteristics, and then consolidate all of those statements into one integrated brand. You can use a variety of structures and formats for these statements, as demonstrated in the following examples. And, remember, the important thing is to capture the key elements that identify **you** and set **you** apart from others.

To show you how effective this strategy is, here are some brand statements that we have taken from the summary section of several of the executive resumes you’ll find in the Sample Gallery. After

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you've reviewed them, you'll quickly see how each communicates much more than just bare-bones information about professional function and credentials:

- "Technology leader who thrives in challenging, fast-paced IT organizations focused on the development and deployment of new technologies to drive growth, performance improvement, revenues, and profitability."
- "Results-focused manager of customer and partner relationships, complex programs, and financial/administrative controls to drive revenue growth, profit enhancement, and customer satisfaction. Fifteen-year history of adding value."
- "Resourceful, intensely driven, dynamic International Business Development Executive successful at envisioning and swiftly executing international opportunities from concept to multimillion-dollar sale and/or operations."
- "Operations Executive recognized as a catalyst for positive change, double-digit revenue and profit growth, and best-in-class operational performance."

By incorporating these powerful statements at the beginning of their resumes, these executives have immediately communicated **who** they are and the **value** they bring to a prospective employer. Not only that, they have distinguished themselves from competitors by providing insight into their personal style and strengths—their executive brand.

Keep your brand statements on hand as you write your resume and cover letters. Then, also be sure to incorporate your brand message into all of your other written job-search communications, in your interviews, and during your compensation negotiations. The stronger your brand, the stronger your perceived value the more easily you will distinguish yourself.

### ***Executive Resume Strategy #6: Make Your Resume Inviting to Read***

You've heard it all before. Use plenty of white space on your resume, use bold and italics to highlight important information, write in short paragraphs for a quick read, and use bullets to showcase your achievements. In addition, consider using a typestyle other than Times New Roman, which is the most widely used of all fonts. Arial, Arial Narrow, Tahoma, Verdana, Garamond, Bookman, Book Antiqua, Georgia, and a number of other typestyles are clean and crisp. They give your resume a unique appeal that makes it stand out from the crowd of competitors vying for the same executive opportunities. Just as importantly, the above typestyles are fairly universal across computer platforms, so you can feel fairly confident that your resume will be viewed as you designed it regardless of the operating system or Word version that your recipients have.

These visual factors are important considerations when preparing your resume. Not only must the content of your resume be solid and clearly communicate your value to a prospective employer, the visual presentation must be sharp, professional, and easy to read.



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***Executive Resume Strategy #7:  
Create Multiple Resume Formats***

Savvy job seekers know that in today's world of electronic job search, you must have two distinct versions of your resume—the Microsoft Word version and an ASCII text version. You'll use the Word format whenever you submit your resume via snail mail or as an attachment to an email message. You will also print copies of this version to take with you on all of your interviews and in-person networking meetings. In fact, the Word format is probably the one you'll use most often. As noted previously, this version of your resume must be inviting to read, with a sharp, distinctive, professional appearance.

Note that if you are using word processing software other than Microsoft Word, you need to save your resume in Word (.doc) format. Ensure that it is 100% readable, without glitches or bizarre formatting changes, by people who use the dominant MS Word program. A PDF file, although it retains visual integrity and is easy to open and read, is not acceptable in most cases because it cannot be entered into a company's or recruiter's resume database. It is critically important that your resume get into those databases, so be sure to make the transition as seamless as possible.

At times you will need to submit a resume via an online application or "paste here" form on a recruiter or employer website. If you simply cut and paste your Word resume, it's very likely the formatting will be distorted. You don't want to take the risk that formatting errors will make your resume uninviting or impossible to read (even by electronic scanners). In these cases, the ASCII text version is the perfect solution. It is a clean, plain, text-only format that is 100% readable by machines—and 100% scannable, should you be requested to submit a "scannable" resume in either paper or electronic form.

To create the ASCII format, use the "Save As" feature in your word-processing program. Rename your file and save as "text only" or "plain text." Close the file, then re-open it, and you will see that the formatting has been stripped. You will want to go through the resume and adjust any odd formatting that might have occurred. Then, as a final check, open the file using Notepad, WordPad, or another text reader and fix any errors.

***Executive Resume Strategy #8:  
Proofread and Perfect Your Document***

Don't take the proofreading task lightly—edit and proofread, edit and proofread, and proofread again. Be certain that your resume reflects a polished, executive image from first word to last.

And don't overlook the importance of accuracy. When you submit a resume that has typographical errors, you've almost certainly eliminated yourself from consideration. (Recruiters and employers tell us this all the time.) And should your resume contain factual errors or misstatements, they will almost certainly be discovered at some point and place your career in jeopardy—whether that means being dismissed from the candidate pool or dismissed from your job, perhaps years later.

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Before prospective employers ever meet you, they meet a piece of paper (or electronic file) that demonstrates the quality of work that you produce. If you want someone to offer you an interview and then a job, be sure that your resume is 100% accurate and indicative of the superb quality of work you will perform for that company.

***Executive Resume Strategy #9:  
Use Your Resume Wisely***

Your resume can be a valuable tool throughout your job search. We all know that you need to have a resume to generate job interviews. That's a given. But consider these additional uses for your resume:

- as a tool for networking and contact development
- as a tool to guide your interviews
- as supporting information to help you negotiate a strong compensation package

This reinforces the point that we made very early on—that your resume must position you appropriately for your current career goals. You want others who read it to understand **who** you are and the **value** you offer. You want it to spark interesting discussions during interviews. And you want it to reinforce your value so that you can negotiate the highest compensation package possible.

Given the importance of this document, be sure to immediately update your resume once you've landed a new job. It may be that you include only the company name and location, your hire date, your position title, and a very brief description of the challenge you were hired to address and/or your job responsibilities. Then, be sure to update it again every three to six months to strengthen and expand the content. You never know when that next, great opportunity might appear, and you always want to be prepared with a current resume on hand.

***Executive Resume Strategy #10:  
Go Beyond the Resume to Convey Your Value***

For the most part, your resume is a "one size fits all" document. This doesn't mean you can't produce more than one version, as we've illustrated. But it does mean that you shouldn't feel the need to tweak your resume for every job opportunity. If written strategically and well, it will serve "as is" for most of the positions you are targeting as long as your career objectives are substantially similar.

Yet as you proceed through in-depth interviews—more accurately described as business discussions about challenges, opportunities, and the ideas, values, and solutions you offer—you might want to present some additional facets of your background or details of your experience that will help illustrate how well you fit the company and the opportunity. These "beyond-the-resume" documents might include the following:

- 
- **Critical Leadership Initiatives**—a more detailed description of your top three or four “career-defining” achievements to illustrate the kinds of challenges you’ve tackled and how you’ve delivered results. This kind of document should strongly support your executive brand and provide memorable stories of your most notable career successes.
  - **Career Profile**—a one-page narrative overview of your career, focusing on **who** you are **now** (not in the past) and highlighting your most notable executive skills and competencies, career highlights, and distinguishing professional and academic credentials. This document is also commonly referred to as an Executive Profile, Leadership Profile, or Executive Biography.
  - **Job Proposal**—a carefully prepared pitch for why you are **the** solution to the challenges and opportunities facing the company and the position for which you are interviewing. This document is most appropriately prepared after several rounds of interviews and must specifically describe how you will help the company solve the precise challenges you have been discussing.
  - **Business Plan** (Marketing Plan, Technology Plan, etc.)—a more in-depth explanation of what you perceive to be the best business strategy given what you’ve learned about the organization. Circulate this kind of report with caution, and be certain you clearly identify it as your intellectual property (using copyright notation and language).
  - **Resume Addendum**—a convenient collection of information that might be necessary to share at some point in the interview process but would bog down your resume if included in its entirety. For example, if you’re an IT executive, you might want to prepare a Technology Addendum to document the specific technologies with which you’ve worked. This allows your resume to retain a strategic focus without getting overloaded with too much detail. This approach works well for executives across a broad range of industries and professions.
  - **Web Portfolio**—a comprehensive picture of you and your career, segmented into discrete web pages. Your portfolio would typically include your resume but must be more than simply an online version of your paper document. In addition to your Career Profile and Critical Leadership Initiatives, described above, you could include press and publicity in which you’ve been featured, statements of your leadership philosophy, downloadable special reports, and even your own blog. The visual and interactive nature of the Internet means you can “show and tell” much more about yourself than you can on paper. And your Web portfolio will keep on working as a career management and marketing tool even after you’ve accepted your next position.

These beyond-the-resume documents have emerged as powerful differentiators in today’s increasingly competitive executive job search. We recommend that you consider and prepare these as appropriate to give yourself an executive edge.

In the accompanying Resource Guide we have listed several books and websites—our own and several from other sources—where you can learn more about career marketing documents and portfolios as well as other critical documents and strategies for career management.

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## WRITING YOUR EXECUTIVE RESUME

Thus far, we've talked about the big-picture strategies that help you communicate the right image, brand, messages, and expertise in your executive resume. Now we move to the process of actually constructing the resume from top to bottom.

No matter how traditional or creative or unusually constructed, your resume should include these core components:

- **Contact information**—your name and how people can get in touch with you
- **Executive summary/introduction**—a synopsis of the most compelling information about you, your career, and your executive brand
- **Professional experience**—where you've worked and what you've accomplished
- **Education**—your degree(s) and any relevant professional development, training, certification, and licenses
- **Extras**—such as board positions, community leadership, language fluency, technical qualifications, publications, public speaking engagements, teaching experience, outside interests, or any other information you feel is important to convey

Beginning on page 21, you will find a discussion of each of these resume sections, along with our recommendations for best-in-class formats to create an executive presentation.

But first, let's address a few of the questions that arise most frequently from our executive clients.

### ***FAQs—Executive Resumes***

1) **How long should my resume be?**

While there are no hard-and-fast rules, we recommend that an executive resume be at least two pages, three if warranted. You'll find it extremely difficult to capture your executive career on one page, and there is no need to try. Recruiters and employers are happy to look at two or three pages as long as the information is relevant, interesting, well organized, and easy to read. If your resume goes to a fourth page, consider transferring some of the information to an addendum page, as described previously in Executive Resume Strategy #10 ("Go Beyond the Resume to Convey Your Value").

2) **How do I avoid revealing my age?**

Although age discrimination is a legitimate concern, keep in mind that most executives are over 40, so your age may not be the detriment you think. However, you certainly don't want to advertise your age, especially if you are 55, 60, 65, or more years of age. To accomplish this, use the following tips:

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- Eliminate dates from your education information.
  - Combine your earliest career experience under a heading such as “Prior Professional Experience” or “Early Career” that follows the “Professional Experience” section on your resume and briefly summarizes the most important facets of your early experience. Was it your rapid advancement? Well-known employers? Truly stellar accomplishments? Use a couple of sentences or bullet points to convey the most important information without dates or too many details.

3) **How far back should I go in listing my experience?**

We don’t believe in using arbitrary cutoff points for experience. The key points to consider are the relevance and value of your early experience, the validity of this experience in explaining how you ended up where you are today, and how that experience is related to your current objectives. In many instances we use the “prior professional experience” strategy just described to provide context and background without making the resume too long or detailed.

4) **How do I disguise gaps in my work history, underemployment, job hopping, or other factors that I think will work against me?**

We have emphasized how important it is to be truthful and accurate in your resume, but that does not mean you have to equally emphasize the positive and not-so-positive aspects of your background. These tips will help you keep the focus on your most significant (and beneficial) information:

- Use years only, not months and years, for all employment. This helps gloss over any periods of unemployment and may also help disguise several periods of short employment (job hopping).
- Consider eliminating one or more positions that were very short term and/or irrelevant to your current goals. Keep in mind, however, that this experience may come up in an interview or be required on a job application, so be sure to prepare a concise, non-defensive, positive way to discuss that experience if necessary.
- Realize that having multiple employers or several short-term jobs is not the perceived negative that it was a decade ago. While interviewers may ask about it, it is not often a real obstacle. Again, prepare to address the question in a way that is non-defensive, non-blaming, and professional. You will want to communicate why you took the position, the challenges you faced, what you accomplished, and why you left.

5) **I’m afraid lack of a college degree will hurt me. What can I do about it?**

See the section below discussing education and showcasing “Best-in-Class Formats: Education, Training, and Professional Development.” Not having a degree will often be a factor with recruiters, particularly with high-volume searches where there are hundreds of candidates to choose from. Simply focus your efforts on networking and targeted search and don’t worry about what you lack. Rather, focus on what you have to offer!

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6) **I've been told I need a "functional" format. What is it, and how should I create it?**

A functional resume emphasizes key skills and experience by grouping them under functional headings (skill sets) while "divorcing" them from where and when they occurred. This format is extremely useful in certain circumstances:

- For people making a significant career change, where past work experience is only peripherally related to current goals.
- For people returning to work after an absence (such as a layoff, retirement, illness, or incarceration), when the lack of recent work experience will be glaringly obvious if a traditional chronological format is used.

But for most people—in particular, for most executives—we recommend portraying your work history in the traditional reverse-chronological (from present to past) format, for several reasons:

- It is much easier for recruiters and employers to see where you have been—your company affiliations, job titles, and length of time in each position.
- It allows you to showcase how your career has progressed and what you have accomplished in each role.
- It is strongly preferred by most, if not all, hiring authorities.

By using our recommended strategies, such as "writing to the future" and "reweighting your experience," you can achieve all the benefits of a functional resume without the negative consequences. Thus, unless you have very unusual circumstances, we do not recommend the functional format. We do offer several publications (listed in the Resource Guide) that can help you create such a resume if it is truly your best option.

7) **I am hampered by confidentiality agreements and cannot reveal numbers and other information about my employers.**

Get creative! You might need to use vague descriptive language ("a Fortune 50 manufacturing firm") to avoid identifying a particular customer or competitor. You can use percentages and/or graphs instead of dollar amounts to communicate revenue, profit, and other results. Also consider asking your past employers for permission to use the information in your resume, and look for public information (such as news stories and press releases) that reveals the facts that supposedly are private. Once it's in the public domain, it's fair game.

8) **I am concerned my employer will find out that I am actively seeking a new job. How can I avoid this?**

In a word, you can't. While there are steps you can take to minimize the risk, it's impossible to totally protect yourself from being discovered. After all, you can't control the connections and interactions between people with whom you'll come in contact during your search—recruiters, senior executives at hiring companies, and your own personal and professional network. All of

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these people legitimately need to know your background (which includes where you're working now) to assist you in your transition. And even if you request confidentiality and keep a low profile, it's possible word will get back to someone in your organization.

Therefore, while we don't suggest that you blatantly advertise within your company that you're looking for a new job, we do recommend that you pursue your goals and don't worry too much about being caught. But to minimize the possibility, consider these steps:

- Be selective about responding to "blind" ads and postings, where you don't know the company's name.
- Do not post your resume on Internet resume databases.
- Do not mass-mail your resume to companies and recruiters.
- Request that recruiters, hiring authorities, and networking contacts maintain your confidentiality.

## **WRITING YOUR RESUME, SECTION BY SECTION**

Now let's move on to writing your resume, starting from the very top.

### ***Contact Information***

- **Name:** Be certain your name is highly visible. Don't make readers hunt to find out who this resume represents.
- **Address:** We recommend including your home address; however, you might want to remove this personal information before posting your resume online.
- **Email:** Always include an email address—one that conveys a professional image.
- **Phone:** You should include your mobile phone number and, in most cases, your home number. With the prevalence of cell phones, it is not usually necessary to include a work number as well.
- **Fax:** Because it is rare that an employer or recruiter would contact you by fax, it is not necessary to include this number on your resume; you can supply it if asked.
- **Web address:** If you have an online portfolio, be certain to include its URL prominently as part of your contact information.

There are dozens of ways that you can format all of this information. When you look at sample resumes, most often you find the contact information displayed at the top of the resume and again, in abbreviated form, on the top of subsequent pages. It's also possible to use the bottom of the page for this purpose if you like that format and presentation better.

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Your chief purpose should be to present your contact information in a concise and readable fashion so that it can be easily found yet does not detract from the primary content of the resume. Below you will find several of our preferred formats.

**Best-in-Class Formats: Contact Information**

**Format #1, Adam T. Warner:** Accommodates a lengthy email address. Three lines of data can be rearranged to create a pleasing visual effect (longest to shortest or shortest to longest).

<b>ADAM T. WARNER</b>	43 Turnberry Drive, Wellesley, MA 02181 H: 781-555-3409 • C: 617-509-5555 Adam.Warner@comcast.net
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**Format #2, Robert R. Jensen:** Space-saving, one-line format for three pieces of contact information. Font spacing for the name can be adjusted—stretched or tightened—to create just the right visual effect.

<b>ROBERT R. JENSEN</b>		
292-555-8792	2909 Ricetown Road, Detroit, MI 49830	rrjsales@aol.com

**Format #3, T.J. Mulholland:** Centering all data creates nice symmetry that can be carried through the rest of the resume. Again, font spacing for the name can be adjusted.

<b>T.J. Mulholland</b>
47 Oceanview Terrace, Tampa, FL 33615 (h) 813-555-1845 • (c) 813-505-2940 • tjmul@gmail.com

**Format #4, Lewis C. Montgomery:** Prominent placement of the email address subtly conveys that it is the most preferred form of contact. All contact information is easy to find.

<b>LEWIS C. MONTGOMERY</b>	
l.c.montgomery@sbcglobal.net	
10694 Windstream Drive Columbia, Maryland 21044	Home: 410-555-1109 Cell: 443-555-2837





### **EXERCISE #3: WRITE THE CONTACT INFORMATION SECTION OF YOUR RESUME**

Select one of the formats we've provided or use your own style to display your contact information at the top of your resume.



#### ***Executive Summary/Introduction***

In this section of your resume, you must carefully position yourself as an "ideal candidate" for the opportunities you are seeking. You should include the most compelling information about yourself, your career, and your accomplishments. Not only that, you must clearly convey the executive brand that distinguishes you from other candidates with similar qualifications. To top it all off, you must communicate all of this critical information in a very concise format—we recommend taking up only about one-fourth to one-third of the page.

In our experience, this section of your resume is the most difficult to write. In fact, you may find (as we do) that it comes much easier to write the introduction after you've written the rest of the resume. Regardless of when you write it, don't be surprised if your first attempt is too long, too detailed, or too unwieldy; you'll need to edit several times to include just the right information and make just the right impression.

Use the following examples to get some ideas for ways you can structure this information to create a meaningful, high-impact introduction to the rest of your resume. You can find many more examples in the accompanying Gallery of Sample Resumes. You'll see that in many cases we have combined formats or used some of one format and some of another format. Since there are no rules for resume writing, no one way works in every situation, so let your creativity flow!

#### ***Best-in-Class Formats: Executive Summary/Introduction***

**Headline Format:** This approach ensures that readers know—immediately—who you are and your areas of expertise.

#### **SENIOR FINANCE & OPERATING EXECUTIVE**

**Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer**  
**Acquisitions / Turnarounds / High-Growth Ventures / Fortune 500 Companies**  
**Consistent Record of Performance in Delivering Double-Digit Revenue & Profit Gains**

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**Paragraph Format:** While more difficult to read quickly than a headline, the paragraph format allows you to provide a strong summary of your career. Paragraphs must be brief and to the point—don't bog them down with too much information. As you will see in the Sample Gallery, often we combine these two formats, leading off with a powerful headline and then providing additional details in a paragraph format.

## CAREER SUMMARY

INTERNATIONAL FINANCE EXECUTIVE with 15 years' experience in domestic and global financial accounting, reporting, and controls. Strengths in process improvement, audit, strategic planning and forecasting, business/financial analysis, and compliance. Substantial experience implementing GAAP and Sarbanes-Oxley controls and standards. Effective team leadership across functional, cultural, geographic, and linguistic boundaries. International experience throughout continental Europe. MBA; CPA.

**Core Competencies Format:** By highlighting a carefully prepared list of your core competencies, you ensure that they won't be passed over. This strategy is also an easy way to include the right keywords. What's more, you can quickly tweak the keyword list to match specific terms in a job description.

## SALES • MARKETING • REGIONAL MANAGEMENT KEY ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT • OEM & VAR CHANNEL SALES

**Innovative, resourceful, highly productive sales and marketing executive, consistently successful at selling complex products in competitive global markets.**

Expert negotiator, relationship builder, program director, and project manager, highly skilled at managing multiple global accounts, OEM manufacturing programs, full-fledged marketing campaigns, and the entire customer relationship from prospecting through production.

### Core Competencies

- Multimillion-Dollar Negotiations
- High-Impact Sales Presentations
- Territory Development & Growth
- New Customer Development
- Multicultural Communication
- Strategic Marketing
- Team Building
- Cost-Benefit Analysis
- Client Retention
- Technical Knowledge

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**Bullet List/Qualifications Summary Format:** This format combines a listing of your most important qualifications along with brief evidence in the form of relevant experiences and/or accomplishments. We believe this format is the least “executive” in its presentation, but it might be the perfect way to convey the breadth of your qualifications in an easy-to-skim format. It can be particularly effective if you’re pursuing a number of different career opportunities.

### Summary of Qualifications

- ▶ **Sales Management Experience:** Track record of strong performance and effective leadership in fast-paced environments—led the two most successful sales teams in Acme’s history during periods of intense competitive pressure.
- ▶ **Leadership:** Selected to leadership teams for major corporate initiatives that resulted in business transformation—from revamping sales process to restructuring field sales organization to rebranding core product lines.
- ▶ **Communication & Presentation:** Extensive experience giving effective presentations, gaining support for new ideas, negotiating complex contracts with key customers, and building relationships with customers, staff, and senior executives.
- ▶ **Academic Qualifications:** BSBA; MBA; ongoing professional development in sales, marketing, and management.
- ▶ **Attributes:** Personable, professional, energetic, and self-motivated. Highly competitive and driven to exceed goals.

**Category Format:** This format allows you to place key information covering a variety of categories right up front so that it won’t be overlooked. It enables you to present the sum of your credentials rather than dispersing them throughout the resume.

### PROFESSIONAL CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience:** 12 years as Maintenance Director & Manager for Dow Corning and its subsidiaries
- Education:** **Graduate Certificate—Facilities Maintenance & Engineering**—Cornell University  
**BS—Operations Management**—University of Oregon
- Publications:** “Improving Workforce Productivity Through Maintenance Systems Design & Optimization,” *American Manufacturing Association*, 2006  
“Redesigning Maintenance Processes to Enhance Productivity,” *National Facilities Maintenance Association*, 2004
- Awards:** Employee of the Year, Dow Corning, 2005  
Employee of the Year, Bell Laboratories, 1998



## EXERCISE #4: WRITE THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SECTION OF YOUR RESUME

Review our recommended formats on the previous pages to see how diverse information is presented in a compelling and concise manner. Now, select the most important information about yourself and your career, and draft your summary.

As we've mentioned, for most people this section is the most difficult to write. So don't worry if your first attempt is rough—if it's too long, too short, or does not flow smoothly. We recommend that you move on to the next sections of the resume and go back to the introduction when you've completed them. At that point you'll be able to see things much more clearly, and we predict that you'll swiftly edit the introduction into an interesting and concise summary.



### ***Professional Experience***

Your professional experience is truly the heart of your resume. Given its importance, it is usually the longest and most detailed of all the sections.

As you write about your experience, use these strategies to ensure that this part of your resume is extremely relevant, makes a strong impact, and is of reasonable length. You will recognize some of these strategies from our previous discussion of overall resume strategies (pages 9 to 17), while others are presented here for the first time.

- **Write to the future.** Always keep your career target in mind, and don't hesitate to eliminate or severely edit any information that is not relevant to your objectives.
- **Use context to create impact.** Before plunging into your achievements, help readers understand "what was going on" so that they can better appreciate what you did. We recommend starting with a brief description of the company, job scope, and key challenges, followed by bullet points that describe specific accomplishments.
- **Sell it; don't tell it.** Keep your resume lively and interesting by communicating the value of what you did, not simply listing your activities.
- **Use the big and save the little.** You cannot possibly include all the details of every project of your entire career in a two- or three-page executive resume. Focus on the most meaningful and impressive facts—the "big"—and save the "little" details for discussion during your interviews.

- **Reweight your skills and qualifications.** Bring to the forefront the activities and accomplishments that are most relevant to your current career goals, even if these were not the most prominent components of the job you are describing.
- **Be specific.** To be credible and meaningful, your accomplishments must be measurable. Don't merely say that you "increased revenue"—tell how much in dollars or percentages. Use these benchmarks as a starting point to develop the hard numbers you need for your resume:
  - How much was the increase? (revenue, profit, stock price, market valuation, market share, number of customers, productivity improvements, etc.)
  - How much was saved? (operating expense, cycle time, man hours, turnaround, etc.)
  - How did we compare to other departments, competitors, the industry?
  - What were we expected to do, and how did we perform against that goal?
  - Was there recognition for a specific achievement?
  - What were the immediate and long-range outcomes?

In the following samples, we chose a format to best showcase the experience and accomplishments of each individual. These different approaches will give you ideas for your own resume; or you may wish to combine features from more than one format for your own unique presentation.

### **Best-in-Class Formats: Professional Experience**

**Achievement Format:** Emphasizes each position, overall scope of responsibility, and resulting achievements.

<p><b>TECHNOLOGY INNOVATORS, INC.</b>, Stamford, CT  <b>Vice President</b></p> <p><i>Turned around a sinking business... drove operational improvements, cemented client relationships, improved customer satisfaction, and firmly positioned company to reach strategic goal of 100% revenue growth.</i></p> <p>Member of 3-person senior-management team developing strategy, objectives, tactics, and operational measurements for \$15 million software development and services company. Manage P&amp;L for Services &amp; Support Division representing 60% of company revenue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Grew Services &amp; Support Division revenue 44%</b> in one year.</li> <li>• <b>Boosted programmer productivity 27%</b> through process and operational improvements as well as organizational refocusing.</li> <li>• <b>Maintained 100% client retention</b> for follow-on projects.</li> <li>• <b>Drove client-satisfaction improvements that built retention and led to prestigious "Premier Partner" status with IBM.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improved IBM-rated client-satisfaction score from 76% to 83% and earned elevation to Premier Partner.</li> <li>– Earned 95% "satisfied/would rehire" rating in post-project client surveys.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Brought on board new strategic partners and managed all alliance relationships</b> (IBM, Global Software, Now Generation). Built service capabilities, developed co-marketing opportunities, and generated new revenue (\$80,000 in first-year revenue through Now Generation; \$3MM projected by year-end 2007).</li> </ul>	<p>2004–Present</p>
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**Challenge, Action, and Results (CAR) Format:** Details context, efforts, and results of key challenges.

**Vice President of Operations** (2002 to Present)  
**Plant Manager** (1998 to 2002)  
**WIP SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL**, Bulverde, Texas

**Challenge:** Lead turnaround and return to profitability of \$42 million technology manufacturer plagued with cost overrides, poor productivity, dissatisfied customers, and massive annual losses.

**Action:** Rebuilt management team, introduced advanced technologies and systems to expedite production flow, retrained all employees, and implemented team-based work culture.

**Results:**

- Achieved/surpassed all turnaround objectives and returned the operation to profitability in first year. Delivered strong and sustainable gains:
  - **70%** improvement in operating efficiency.
  - **75%** improvement in quality ratings.
  - **100%** on-time customer delivery.
- Upgraded facility, replaced obsolete equipment with state-of-the-art systems, introduced stringent standards to achieve OSHA compliance, and established corporate day-care facility.
- Restored credibility with one customer, generating over \$30 million a year in additional revenues.

**Career Track Format:** Emphasizes fast-track promotion, scope of responsibility, and results.

STEPHENS INDUSTRIES, INC., Worcester, MA 1998 to Present  
**Vice President, Global Business** (Worcester, 2003–Present)  
**Managing Director, Europe** (London, 2001–2003)  
**Product Development Director** (Worcester, 1999–2001)  
**Marketing Services Manager** (Philadelphia, 1998–1999)

Fast-track promotion through a series of increasingly responsible positions to current role as VP of Global Business. Built a top-tier global organization; recruited and developed a talented management team that led the company from \$8M revenue (1998) to 2006 volume of \$24M.

- Delivered 20% annual revenue growth while increasing margins 5% despite declining industry trend.
- Relocated headquarters from rural Pennsylvania to campus of Philadelphia Technical Institute, providing a vital pool of engineering and business talent to achieve corporate vision and growth objectives.
- Spearheaded opening and expansion of 2 manufacturing operations in China, with resulting sales growth of 200% in Asia over a 3-year period.
- Negotiated acquisition of 2 US businesses (\$5M and \$8M) that generated profitable revenue streams, opened a new untapped customer base, and expanded product offerings.
- Closed 2 facilities and secured \$5M to fund expansion and modernization of 4 other plants.

**Project-Highlights Format:** Places emphasis on specific projects, their scope, and associated achievements.

**MANAGER, INFORMATION SYSTEMS: Alpha Health Insurance, Milwaukee, WI 2000–2006**

Controlled \$3M budget and led 22 IS professionals in supporting and improving enterprise applications for the company's life/health network and national accounts business users. Responded rapidly to shifting priorities in constantly changing business environment. Consistently delivered projects on schedule and within budget.

**Project Highlights:**

- ▶ **FINANCIAL SYSTEMS INTEGRATION:** Managed a technically challenging integration following merger with Midwest Health; required new interfaces and new systems across all application areas. **RESULTS: Shortened month-end close by 75% in larger, more complex organization.**
- ▶ **LEGACY SYSTEM REPLACEMENT:** Selected and installed new Oracle-based system to replace aging and inefficient sales accounting system. **RESULTS: Delivered in a tight 5-month time frame and captured \$200K annual savings.**
- ▶ **CRITICAL PROBLEM SOLVING:** Led multi-department team in an intense exercise to resolve and prevent errors in monthly financial reporting. **RESULTS: Revamped the job stream and accelerated the close process from 7 days to 24 hours.**
- ▶ **COMMISSION TRACKING SYSTEM:** Refined commission system to improve accuracy of checks issued; concurrently developed an online book of business to track current payment activity for each agent based on contract sales. **RESULTS: Achieved 100% accuracy in commission sales payments for the first time in company history.**

**Skills-Based Format:** Places emphasis on specific skills, qualifications, and expertise.

**Founder / General Manager** — Law Offices of George R. Browne — 2000 to Present

Founded specialized legal practice providing corporate advisory services to CEOs, COOs, and other senior executives across a broad range of industries and on diverse topics/business issues. Built new venture from start-up to three locations and 12 employees. Achieved and maintained profitability for six consecutive years. Excellent reputation for ethical performance and integrity.

Serve in the capacity of a **Senior Operating Executive/General Counsel** to client companies, providing hands-on leadership in:

- Strategic Planning & Vision
- Policies & Procedures
- Growth & Expansion
- Market Analysis & Positioning
- Operations Management
- Cost Control & Avoidance
- Process Design & Analysis
- Banking & Corporate Finance
- Human Resources
- Technology
- Capital Assets
- Executive Compensation

Clients range from start-up ventures to \$200 million corporations in software development, high-tech manufacturing, industrial manufacturing, consumer products, heavy equipment, transportation, automotive and marine dealerships, services, and professional trades.

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**Functional Format:** Emphasizes functional areas of responsibility within the job and associated achievements.

**SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, SOUTHWEST REGION**  
**PharmaCare, Inc., Chicago, IL, 2000–2007**

**Transformed region from declining performance to top national status in revenue, profitability, customer satisfaction, and cost control.** Assumed leadership of Southwest region experiencing stagnant revenue, declining profits, and significant loss of its prime customer base. Drove improvement initiatives across the full scope of operations for nearly \$100M region, with full accountability for sales, finance (P&L), clinical services, and operations.

- **Turnaround Leadership / Revenue & Profit Performance:** Rebuilt the organization, strengthening management, sales, and operations/administrative teams and deeply instilling core values of customer service and efficient operations.
  - Grew revenues 225%, profits 353%, and customer base 24% in 4 years.
- **Sales, Market Positioning, Training & Customer Service:** Built sales focus and competency at all levels of the organization through effective training, constant communication, and regular reinforcement.
  - Reduced sales staff from 8 to 2 while more than doubling revenues.
  - Drove sales growth toward high-quality customers and preferred payer mix to increase income 2.5X with only a 24% increase in customers.
  - Elevated region from last to #1 in the company in customer satisfaction.
- **Finance, Operations, & Technology Leadership:**
  - Implemented multidisciplinary CRM program that provides instantly accessible information for every aspect of business performance. Successfully converted non-industry software to full functionality.
  - Centralized billing operations and reduced days sales outstanding from 132 to 51, best in the company.
  - Renovated and/or relocated 5 pharmacies, creating state-of-the-art facilities.



**EXERCISE #5: WRITE THE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE SECTION OF YOUR RESUME**

For each of your positions, first write the basic information (who, what, when, where):

NAME OF COMPANY:

CITY AND STATE:

TOTAL TENURE (year begun–year ended, or year begun–present):

JOB TITLE:

DATES OF POSITION:



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SCOPE (P&L responsibility, number of direct and indirect reports, departments managed, budget size):

Then, think about the specific business challenges you faced. Here are some questions to get you started:

Why was I hired? (Was there a specific problem?)

What was I expected to do?

What challenges were being faced by the department, the company, and/or the industry?

What unfinished or "impossible" projects did I inherit?

What changed during my tenure, and what new problems did that present?

Framed within the context of the position, think about what you accomplished. We recommend writing your achievements in the form of CAR (Challenge-Action-Results) stories. Although typically too much for a resume, these stories contain nuggets of information that you can pull out for your accomplishment statements. Not only that, but you'll refresh your memory of the details and circumstances, which will make it easier for you to relate this story during an interview. This material is invaluable for every stage of your job search and for ongoing career management.

Try to recall at least four to six CAR stories for your recent positions, decreasing the number as you work backwards through your career.

Use these prompts:

SPECIFIC CHALLENGE OR PROBLEM:

ACTION:

IMMEDIATE RESULT:

LONG-TERM STRATEGIC OR BUSINESS IMPACT:

Considering the material you have just produced, what is the best way to showcase your impressive accomplishments and communicate your executive brand? Review our best-in-class formats and select the one that best fits your unique career.

Now, write the experience section for all of the positions you've held during your career. Devote the most effort, and the most space, to your most recent positions. As you work backwards, strive to come up with one or two sentences to highlight the most significant achievements of your early positions. Be careful you don't overemphasize this early experience by devoting too much space to it on your resume.



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## ***Education, Training, Professional Development, Certifications, and Licenses***

These credentials, while important, are seldom the strongest qualifications you offer at this stage of your career. Thus, they appropriately belong toward the end of your resume, where they can be quickly perused without consuming valuable up-front space. The only exception is if you've recently earned a degree (or advanced degree) that is particularly relevant to your current objectives. If so, you might want to position your Education after your Career Summary, but before your Professional Experience.

If you've just earned a degree but you still prefer to keep your Education section at the end of your resume, one easy strategy is to briefly highlight your degree as part of your Career Summary. That way, you've moved the information up front for quick recognition but saved the details (and the entire Education section) for the end of the resume.

In most cases, we recommend simply listing your degrees and the institutions where you attained them. While you may be proud of your college career as a campus leader, top-performing student, or successful athlete, these details are not critical elements of your executive resume. We suggest including (briefly) only those items that are truly stellar. You don't want to give the impression that you "peaked" at age 22 because of the detailed information you are providing about your college experiences!

It is perfectly acceptable to omit your dates of college graduation if you're concerned that your age may hinder your job search **and** if you don't plan to include all of your work experience. For example, if you're including all of your work experience back to 1978 and you graduated in 1977, include the date of graduation. It creates a clean and complete picture. Conversely, if you're including only the most recent 15–20 years of your experience and only briefly summarizing your earliest experience (with no dates), do not include your date of graduation. In fact, for many executive candidates, this is our preferred strategy, because it allows some leeway when recruiters and prospective employers are trying to determine your age.

If you do not have a college degree, you have several options for the education section of your resume:

- Omit this section entirely rather than call attention to the fact that you don't have a degree.
- List the education that you **have** completed; this strategy is particularly useful if you have completed a substantial percentage of the requirements toward a degree. You can then use language such as "Completed 80% of coursework toward B.A. in Economics," thereby conveying that you are **almost** there and, at the same time, including the B.A. notation for an initial keyword match.
- Emphasize your recent, relevant professional training and development that, depending on your field, may be even more important than a 20-year-old college degree.

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The following samples illustrate several of these options. In each case, the format chosen puts the best possible light on the individual's educational credentials.

***Best-in-Class Formats: Education, Training, and Professional Development***

**Executive Education Format:**

<b>EDUCATION</b>	
<b>Executive Development Program</b>	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
<b>Master of Business Administration (MBA)</b>	UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
<b>Bachelor of Science</b>	UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

**Academic Credentials Format:**

<b>EDUCATION &amp; PROFESSIONAL TRAINING:</b>
<b>M.S., Management Science</b> , University of Colorado, 1996
<b>B.S., Industrial Engineering</b> , University of Nevada, 1992
<b>Highlights of Continuing Professional Education:</b>
• <i>Organizational Management &amp; Leadership</i> , Colorado Leadership Association, 2006
• <i>Industrial Engineering Technology</i> , Purdue University, 2005
• <i>SAP Implementation &amp; Optimization</i> , American Society for Quality Control, 2003
• <i>Conflict Resolution &amp; Management in the Workplace</i> , Institute for Safety, 1999

**Certifications Format:**

<b>TECHNICAL CERTIFICATIONS &amp; DEGREES</b>
■ <b>Certified Nursing Administrator (CNA)</b> , Helen Keller School of Nursing & Health Care, 2001
■ <b>Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)</b> , Missouri State University at Columbia, 1998
■ <b>Certificate in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)</b> , State of Missouri, 1998
■ <b>Certificate in Basic Cardiac Life Support (BCLS)</b> , State of Tennessee, 1996

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**Non-Degree Format:**

***Training & Education***

**UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO**, Toledo, Ohio  
**BS Candidate—Management & Administration** (senior class status)

**UNIVERSITY OF OHIO**, Ann Arbor, Michigan  
**Dual Majors in Management & Human Resource Administration** (2 years)

**No-College Format:**

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Management Training & Development**.....KELLOGG SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

**Leadership Excellence**.....KELLOGG SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

**Management Communications** .....PACE LEADERSHIP TRAINING



**EXERCISE #6: WRITE THE EDUCATION SECTION  
OF YOUR RESUME**

Select one of the formats we've provided, and add your educational credentials to your resume.



***The "Extras"***

What else should you include in your resume? While the Executive Summary, Professional Experience, and Education are the most critical sections, it may be valuable to include a number of additional bits of information. Consider:

- **Business leadership positions** (such as Board of Directors or Board of Advisors roles) reinforce your brand image as a business leader. Additionally, these roles can showcase experience in an industry or function that is relevant to your current objectives.
- **Community leadership positions** (such as civic leadership boards, nonprofit boards or committees, or major fundraising initiatives) showcase your value to your community. If these

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positions are highly visible or with prestigious organizations, they also communicate that you have a broad network among influential people in your locality.

- **Publications and presentations** enhance your credibility as an expert in your field.
- **Language fluency and international travel** are highly regarded in our global business culture.
- **Technical proficiency** may be important to communicate, and adding a brief technology section at the end of the resume is more strategic and reader-friendly than including this information in your Career Summary. However, if you are a hands-on “technologist,” this information should be presented in your summary.
- **Family/school/community activities** (such as Little League coach, room parent, or school volunteer) may send the message that you give back to your community or that you understand the importance of work/life balance.
- **Personal activities, hobbies, and interests** may provide talking points for interviews or show that you have diverse and eclectic tastes.

Note that we do not necessarily recommend that you include all—or any—of these “extras.” You must make a judgment call about whether the information helps, harms, or has a neutral effect on the rest of the resume. You should consider space and the importance of any additional material to be certain that it doesn’t overshadow professional accomplishments and activities.

As a rule, we recommend that the “extras” be brief and relevant. Do not include truly personal information such as marital status, number of children, whether you own or rent your home, or height/weight data. Use the extras to round out the professional portrait you have painted in the rest of your resume. These examples illustrate our preferred formats.

### ***Best-in-Class Formats: The Extras***

#### **Professional Affiliations Format:**

##### **PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS**

**Director**, University of New England MESA Advisory Board

**Director**, Dover County Business and Labor Council

**Director**, Trenton Area Urban League

**Leader**, New York and New Jersey Industrial Relations Councils

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**Board Affiliations Format:**

**BOARD POSITIONS**

Chairman of the Board—Jewels & More, Inc.—2004 to Present  
Board Member—Burk Farm Association—2002 to 2005  
Board Member—Mt. Olive Heart Research Foundation—1991 to 2001  
Chairman of the Board—Gooding, Inc.—1998 to 2000

**Technology Portfolio Format:**

**TECHNOLOGY PORTFOLIO**

**Operating Systems:** Windows 98-XP, AIX, Solaris, RedHat, Linux, UNIX

**Development Tools:** Java, JDBC, C/C++/Visual C++, MFC, WebSphere, J2EE, RAD 6, JMS, Visual Studio.NET, COM/DCOM, COM+, MTS, SQL, ODBC, CVS, ClearCase, Rational Rose, OWL, LISP, Xlib, HTML, XML/XSL, JMS, RogueWave, DBTools, H++, ATL, Stingray Objective Studio, FIX

**Applications:** MS Office, Project, Visio, Oracle 8i/9i, SiteMinder, Sybase, Sonic MQ

**Professional Profile Format:** We often use this approach that combines multiple “extras” under one heading. It is a space saver and a distinctive, distinguished presentation.

**PROFESSIONAL PROFILE**

**Education** **B.S. Accounting, Minor in Business:** SUNY New Paltz, NY  
**B.A. English Literature:** Bangalore University, India

**Management Development** Biopure: Management Training Program  
American Management Association courses:  
– Financial Analysis  
– How to Conduct a Successful Internal Audit

**Languages** Proficient in Hindi, several Asian Indian languages, and Spanish; ongoing study in Spanish includes 2-week immersion courses in Panama (2002) and Venezuela (2004).



## **EXERCISE #7: WRITE THE “EXTRAS” SECTION OF YOUR RESUME**

What else do you want to include on your resume? Consider the various areas where you might have additional material to share, and add them to your resume now.



## **GO FROM DRAFT TO FINAL**

Now that you’ve completed the draft, it’s time to polish your resume.

- Proofread once for typos, misspellings, inconsistencies, and odd language construction. Double-check spellings of all company names; triple-check all dates, your phone numbers, your email address, degrees, and other details and credentials.
- Read again and edit to improve flow, tighten language, and better organize the material.
- Carefully consider the visual impact of your resume. Can it be quickly scanned for key information? Do your most impressive achievements jump off the page? Keep in mind, very few people will read the resume in great detail. Make sure your value is unmistakable! Review the sample resumes in the Gallery to get ideas for graphics (charts and tables) as well as formatting enhancements that can help your key information stand out.
- Check the format and overall appearance of your resume both onscreen and printed on paper.
- Check your page breaks; we recommend inserting “hard” page breaks rather than relying on natural page breaks that may change from recipient to recipient.
- Sleep on it and revisit the entire document the next day. You’re bound to find an error or two as well as a better way to write some of your information.
- Share your resume with two or three people you trust—such as spouse, mentor, colleague, or close friend. Take their reactions seriously, but don’t feel you must make every change they suggest.
- Spell-check and proofread thoroughly yet again.
- Save your resume using a professional and meaningful file name (such as Kursmark-resume.doc) so that when you send it to others they will know what it is and to whom it belongs.
- Create an ASCII text file (as explained on page 15). Save this file as Kursmark-resume.txt.
- Store all of the versions of your resume in an easily accessible folder on your computer.

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- Print half a dozen copies on high-quality resume paper, which you can purchase at any office supply or stationery store. We recommend that you use white, off-white, ivory, or light gray paper to convey a polished executive appearance.
  - Use the same typestyle, format, page heading, and overall appearance for any cover letters or add-on documents; if printed, print them on your resume paper.

## YOUR EXECUTIVE JOB SEARCH

The final step, of course, is to put your resume to work, and this is when all the *real work* begins. Job search is a job and generally requires a great deal of time, effort, and dedication, particularly when you're looking for just the *right* executive opportunity.

You must be realistic with your expectations and know that an executive search takes time. Don't expect to land ten interviews in two weeks and have five offers a week later. Those years are long gone! Instead, expect that your job search will take several months and scores, if not hundreds, of resumes. If you approach your search with appropriate expectations, you will reduce your frustration and appropriately deploy your resources of time, energy, and money.

To help you plan and orchestrate a successful search campaign, here are some brief recommendations to ensure that you achieve the best results:

- Don't rely on just one source for job leads. Job search is just like any other sales process; therefore, you want to *advertise* the product (you) to as many potential buyers as you can reach.
- Use an integrated approach and multiple marketing channels. The more broadly based your search campaign and the more marketing channels you use, the better your results will be. The three primary sources for finding a new position are companies, executive recruiters, and venture capital/private equity firms.
- Concentrate your efforts on strategies such as networking and targeted search rather than simply responding to posted opportunities. Although stranger things have happened, very few executives land great new opportunities through an online resume posting.
- Subscribe to one or more of a select group of executives-only job sites. You'll find these listed in the accompanying Resource Guide.

While searching for a new position is not rocket science, it can be complex and demanding. Should you become stuck, or wish to accelerate your efforts right from the beginning, consider working with an executive career coach, who can help you map out a strategy and will hold you accountable for your performance. The Resource Guide lists some recommended coaching resources as well as several of our books and additional sources for more information on executive job search. Also, listen to the audio broadcast, "My Resume's Not Working!", that is included in the Toolkit; it is a brief overview of our accumulated wisdom for moving a search that seems stuck.



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## THE NEXT STEP ...

Our sister publication, *Enelow-Kursmark Executive Cover Letter Toolkit*, is a high-quality companion to what you're holding and will prove vital as you plan and manage your successful executive search campaign.

## Resume-Writing Exercises: Fill-in-the-Blank Forms

On the following 11 pages, you will find blank exercises that you can use to capture the details of your career in preparation for writing your resume. These are the same exercises that you have seen in the gray boxes within the earlier pages of this Guide.

Should you prefer to type rather than hand-write your input, you will find the exercises included in the MS Word file titled "Worksheets."

Carefully completed, these pages will become a valuable permanent record of your career history, experiences, and accomplishments. You will extract the most pertinent data to create your resume, of course, but we suggest that you keep your completed worksheets even after your resume is complete. Then you can easily refer to the existing material should you need to change the focus of your resume, fill out a detailed job application, or recall a career experience in detail.

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**EXERCISE #1: DEFINE YOUR CAREER TARGET**

Target Job Title(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Job Scope \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Type of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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Preferred Industries \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
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Compensation Expectation \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## EXERCISE #2: DEFINE YOUR EXECUTIVE BRAND

**How would others describe me?** What have others said about you? What characteristics have repeatedly cropped up in performance evaluations? What are you “known for” in your company or professional network or industry?

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**How would I describe myself?** What do you think are your strongest qualities? What makes you different from your peers? Why do you think you have been successful?

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**Thinking back on my career, what trends can I identify?** What has been consistent in how you approached challenges, how you handled difficult personnel situations, what you were recognized for, the kinds of results you delivered, and more?

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**What kinds of challenges do I most enjoy?**

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**What do I love to do?**

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**When and why have I been successful where others have failed?**

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**What factors and traits have contributed most to my success?**

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Review all of the information you've gathered, highlight common themes, and "gut-check" for authenticity. What characteristics, themes, and trends stand out? These become the foundation for your executive brand.

Now, write several brief statements that incorporate your most significant brand characteristics, and then consolidate all of those statements into one integrated brand.

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**EXERCISE #3: WRITE THE CONTACT INFORMATION  
SECTION OF YOUR RESUME**

Select the bits of information that you want to include and arrange them in a format that is visually pleasing and easy to pick out each item.

Play around with fonts and format to achieve a look that you like. This information becomes the header for your resume, your cover letters, and other documents that you will prepare during your job search.

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**EXERCISE #5: WRITE THE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE  
SECTION OF YOUR RESUME**

Fill out the following for EACH of your past positions (photocopy sheets as necessary):

NAME OF COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY AND STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL TENURE (year begun–year ended, or year begun–present): \_\_\_\_\_

JOB TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATES OF POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_

SCOPE (P&L responsibility, number of direct and indirect reports, departments managed, budget size):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Specific business challenges you faced:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What you did about those challenges/what you accomplished (written In CAR story format) – Challenge / Action / Result – to include long-term strategic impact:

CAR #1 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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CAR #2

CAR #3

CAR #4



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**EXERCISE #6: WRITE THE EDUCATION SECTION  
OF YOUR RESUME**

Select one of the formats we've provided, and add your educational credentials to your resume.

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**EXERCISE #7: WRITE THE "EXTRAS" SECTION OF YOUR RESUME**

What else do you want to include on your resume? Use these prompts to consider various bits of information that might add value to your career presentation.

**Business leadership**  
**Publications and presentations**  
**Technical proficiency**

**Community leadership**  
**Language fluency, international experience**  
**Family and personal activities**

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