

Beefing Up an Anemic Resume

By Michael Sterling

To get the most mileage out of your resume, you'll want to emphasize certain aspects of your background. By doing so, you'll present your qualifications in the most favorable light, and help give the employer a better understanding of your potential value to his or her organization. To build a stronger case for your candidacy, try highlighting the following areas of interest:

Professional achievements of particular interest. For example, if you're in sales, the first thing a hiring manager will want to know is your sales volume, and how you rank with your peers. If you've won awards, reached goals or made your company money, let the employer know.

Educational accomplishments. List your degree(s) and/or relevant course work, thesis or dissertation, or specialized training. Be sure to mention any special honors, scholarships, or awards you may have received, such as Dean's List, Cum Laude, or Phi Beta Kappa.

Additional areas of competency. These might include software fluency, dollar amount of budgets managed, or specialized training.

Professional designations that carry weight in your field. If you're licensed or certified in your chosen profession or belong to a trade organization, by all means let the reader know.

Success indicators. You should definitely include anything in your past that might distinguish you as a leader or achiever. Or, if you worked full time to put yourself through school, you should consider that experience a success indicator, and mention it on your resume.

Related experience. Include anything relevant to your prospective employer's needs. For example, if your occupation requires overseas travel or communication, list your knowledge of foreign languages. If you worked as a co-op student in college, especially in the industry you're currently in, let the reader know.

Military history. If you served in the armed forces, describe your length of service, branch of service, rank, special training, medals, and discharge and/or reserve status. Employers generally react favorably to military service experience.

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Security clearances. Some industries require a clearance when it comes to getting hired or being promoted. If you're targeting an industry such as aerospace or defense, give your current and/or highest clearable status, and whether you've been specially checked by an investigative agency.

Citizenship or right to work. This should be mentioned if your industry requires it. Dual citizenship should also be mentioned, especially if you think you may be working in a foreign country.

In a competitive market, employers are always on the lookout for traits that distinguish one candidate from another.