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## ■ News Bits

### U.S. Job Growth, 1989 to 1999

The change in the number of Americans on company payrolls, full or part-time, from July 1989 to July 1999. Figures exclude proprietors, the self-employed, farm and domestic workers and volunteers. Numbers from each sector do not equal total, due to rounding.

- **Services:** 12,347,000 jobs gained.
- **Wholesale and retail trade:** 4,272,000 jobs gained.
- **Government** (federal, state and local): 2,215,000 jobs gained.
- **Construction:** 1,153,000 jobs gained.
- **Transportation:** 1,049,000 jobs gained.
- **Finance, insurance and real estate:** 994,000 jobs gained.
- **Communication and public utilities:** 119,000 jobs gained.
- **Mining:** 147,000 jobs lost.
- **Manufacturing:** 946,000 jobs lost.
- **Total:** 21,058,000 net jobs gained.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Balancing Work and Life

Work/life balance issues play a more important role in retaining employees than they did five years ago, according to a new survey developed by RHI Consulting, which specializes in providing information to technology professionals.

The survey includes responses from 1400 chief information officers in companies with more than 100 employees. Approximately 88 percent of those interviewed say flexible hours and paid personal days lead the list of benefits offered.

For more survey results, visit [www.rhic.com](http://www.rhic.com).

# RESUMÉ writers Digest

<http://members.aol.com/rwdigest/index.html>

January/February 2000  
\$6.00

## ■ Interview

### Serving the High-Income Job Searcher

*Editor's Note: In this article, we interview Louise Kursmark, CPRW, JCTC, author of "Sales and Marketing Résumés for \$100,000 Careers." Louise is the founder and president of Best Impression Career Services, Inc.*

By Bridget Ann Weide

**RWD:** In your book, "Sales and Marketing Résumés for \$100,000 Careers," you state that a résumé for a \$100,000 position "should be different from one used for any entry-level or beginning management position."

*But in looking at the résumés you present in the book, it appears that the basic techniques – appearance, use of accomplishments, etc. – are standards that can be used by professionals in any field, at any level of experience. While it's true that someone making less than \$100,000 may not have the volume of experience that a "senior-level" candidate might have, shouldn't résumé writers try to use these tactics, no matter what the level of experience their client has?*

**LK:** Ah, I see you've discovered my secret! You noticed that in the résumés I write, there is not really a difference in format, style, etc. between executive-level and less-experienced candidates. The primary difference is quantity of material and, perhaps, a bit more detail in the senior-level résumés. But I believe that every candidate needs to focus on what they can bring to the organization, and highlighting accomplishments is the best way to do this.

Most of my work with clients begins with a review of their draft résumé, and

almost universally, when they write their résumé, clients fail to distinguish between job responsibilities and accomplishments, sometimes don't include any accomplishments at all and certainly don't make their accomplishments the

focus of the résumé. Additionally, most drafts I review do not do a good job of selling the candidate in the summary or profile (if one is even used; I still see a lot of bland objective statements).

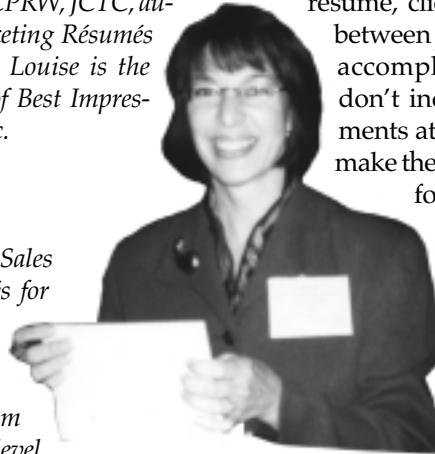
So, despite the plethora of articles, books and online information available, most job seekers are not really capturing the essence of good résumé writing, and that's why I think nearly every job seeker can benefit from the services of a professional résumé writer.

**RWD:** In Chapter 1, you talk about writing a "Career Target Statement" to focus the job search process. Do you require your clients to prepare these statements in your private résumé-writing practice? How receptive are clients to this type of "homework"?

**LK:** While I don't require my clients to write a career target statement, I do make sure that the first question I ask during our consultation is, "What is your career target?" This launches a discussion about the client's ideal job and/or the kinds of jobs he or she will be seeking.

Without this information, I can't really write a hard-hitting, focused résumé. As I tell my clients, the résumé is a vehicle designed to help them reach a spe-

■ see INTERVIEW page 5



## ■ From the Editor

# Are You Ready for Some WOW!?!

A recent article in *Entrepreneur* magazine, dubbed "Millennium Watch," described the future, circa 2005. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts the U.S. population will grow from 272 million in 1999 to 286 million in 2005. These consumers will have a median age of 36.6. The 40- to 44-year-old age group will be the largest, followed by the 45- to 49-year-olds.

California will still be the most populous state, with at least 34.4 million folks residing there – a 5.9 percent increase over 1999's population. Texas will see a major racial shift, with the Latino population contributing to the state becoming a "minority-majority state" in about 2008.

### How will these changes affect you?

I predict that the need for résumé writing services will only grow as competition for jobs increases.

Already, people are putting off full-time retirement and choosing to enter into "post-work careers." This is resulting in a need for "transitional work résumés" – similar to job-changer and return-to-work résumés being created for younger workers today.

I predict the length of résumés will also increase as employers need more information to evaluate a candidate's abilities to manage what are becoming increasingly technical responsibilities.



*Résumé Writer's Digest* is a bi-monthly subscription newsletter to help résumé writers keep on top of changes in the human resources field, new developments in technology, and trends in the résumé writing field.

Each issue provides information about what successful résumé writers across the nation and around the world are doing, along with concise, timely information culled from a review of select periodicals.

How you interact with clients is also likely to change. On the PARW and NRW Onelists, more and more résumé writers are sharing how they are using technology to interact with clients.

From talking to a lot of other (non-posting) résumé writers, however, I know that many résumé writers (*including me!*) are unwilling to give up on face-to-face interactions entirely. I personally prefer to work with clients in person, although I *have* done long-distance and Internet-based consultations in the past.

The key issue is meeting your client needs. There will be clients who are unwilling – or unable – to meet with you in person. There will be other clients who do not have the technology to work with you by computer. Each résumé writer will be able to carve out a niche that will suit his or her needs.

Despite all the hype about the Internet, not *everybody* is online yet. We all have clients who have virtually no computer skills. They will need to "upgrade" themselves to meet the changing demands of the workforce ... just as the résumé writing profession will need to change to meet the demographic trends of the new millennium.

*Let me know what's on your mind – what do you see as the trends of the future?*

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Letters to the editor are welcomed!

However, comments may be edited.

# Job Offer Dictionary

Wouldn't your résumé clients like to know what employers *really* mean when they say...

### Competitive salary:

We remain competitive by paying you less.

### Join our fast-paced company:

There's no time to train you.

### Casual atmosphere:

We don't pay enough to expect you to dress up.

### Must be deadline-oriented:

You'll be six months behind schedule on your first day at work.

### Some overtime required:

Some each night, and some each weekend.

### Duties will vary:

Whatever needs done, you'll be doing it.

### Must have an eye for detail:

We have no quality control.

### Career-minded individual wanted:

Forget about having a family.

### Apply in person:

If you're ugly, don't bother to apply.

### No phone calls, please:

We've already filled the job; our call for résumés is a legal formality.

### Seeking candidate with wide experience:

You'll need it to replace the three people who just quit.

### Problem-solving skills a must:

You're walking into a company in perpetual chaos.

### Good communication skills:

Management talks, you listen.

– Author unknown

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# New Year's Resolutions – For 2000 and Beyond

*Reprinted with permission of  
Dr. Donald E. Wetmore*

At the beginning of each year, so many of us commit to changes and worthy goals to be accomplished in the next 12 months only to be disappointed come next Dec. 31 when we discover we are no closer to achieving those resolutions than we were on Jan 1. The noble resolutions we made early on became unstuck. So I looked at this dilemma and created four useful suggestions to increase the probability that your New Year's resolutions will stick this year.

1. **Quantify It.** Sometimes we are just too vague about what we want. Therefore, a resolution such as, "I want to lose weight this year," will probably fail. It is too vague. How much weight? Be specific. What would your ideal weight be, less what you weigh now, is what you are going after. It is not enough to resolve that, "I want enough money in the bank this year." Quantify. What specific amount would soothe your soul?

2. **Set a deadline.** Resolutions that are to be achieved "as soon as possible" wind up in the heap of "Someday, I'll..." Deadlines are commitments. Without a deadline as a self-imposed pressure point, getting started is easily postponed. You see, deadlines put us on the line and define when failure occurs. Deadlines also help us break the resolution down into little bite-sized pieces. For example, if your goal is to lose 25 pounds by June 30, that translates into approximately four pounds per month, one pound per week, or a daily reduction of caloric intake of just 500 calories per day. Now that's manageable. Until we quantify our goals, set a deadline, then break it down to its daily requirements, the resolution will forever seem unattainable.

3. **Change one or two things at a time.** We generally do not like change in the first place. We seek the familiar and avoid the strange. The more change you put yourself through, the higher the probability that your campaign will collapse. Focus in on one or two of the more important resolutions you seek to accomplish this year. When you achieve one or

the other, start on the next one. Don't overwhelm yourself with too much change all at once.

4. **Be realistic.** There's just something about the start of a new year that gets us all wound up for changes in our lives, sometimes extraordinary and unrealistic changes. We become much like the child

in the candy store whose eyes are bigger than his stomach. Be realistic. You can only accomplish a certain amount within a period of time. Don't saddle yourself with unrealistic resolutions that will only spell failure later on.

*You can contact Dr. Wetmore at  
ctsem@msn.com. Or check out his web site  
at www.balancetime.com*

*We asked résumé writers what their New Year's resolutions were,  
and here are some of the responses we received:*

"My New Year's resolution is to 'stop giving it away' and consistently implement sound management practices. I will focus this year on achieving 100% compliance relevant to securing signed service agreements/contracts, retainer fees of at least 50% of total and authorization to print forms. Part of this profit enhancing strategy will include changing my management mindset to concentrate more on providing excellence in terms of product and service and less on trying to develop a 'working friendship' with the client."

*– Elizabeth J. Axnix, CPRW, JCTC  
Quality Word Processing*

"I don't make New Year's resolutions. I find it's a waste of my time. What I do do, however, is to go over my business plan and review it, review my financials, and do some brainstorming for future actions. Personally, I try to set goals rather than resolutions. Goals have steps, whereas resolutions are inflexible. I like flexibility!"

*– Tracy A. Bumpus, CPRW, JCTC  
Executive Director, RezAMAZE.com*

"I will rise earlier to meditate, walk my dogs regularly, balance my daily résumé work with my personal and household tasks, and end the evening in bed with my husband instead of working on business. (Alternately: buy a laptop so I can work in bed.)"

*– Roleta Fowler Vasquez  
Wordbusters Résumé & Writing Services*

"Triple my business the coming year, organize my work area and offer even better service to clients."

*– Kim Little  
PCR Services Unlimited*

"1) Earn \$25,000 more than in 1999. 2) Restructure my business to a virtual office and work with local clients strictly via e-mail, telephone and fax. 3) Earn designation as JCTC and complete several of PARW's training workshops. 4) Reduce hourly workhours while concurrently increasing annual sales. 5) Offer more 'add-on' services to clients."

*– JoAnn Nix, CPRW  
Beaumont Résumé Service*

"I am committed to continuing my endless journey toward discovering the ultimate time-management plan that will increase my sales receipts, yet allow me more time to enjoy other aspects of my life!"

*– Pat Hadley-Miller, CPRW  
The Write Word, Inc.*

"To increase business by crafting résumés 'over the phone.' Currently, all my work is done with the client in my office on a 'while-u-wait' basis, and 'over the phone' would be a natural transition for me. Where would I locate clients? Via a newsletter and through my network of existing résumé writers, who may be unable to serve clientele due to scheduling conflicts. Benefit: A client and I can now work together even if the client needs to remain home due to inclement weather or distance travelled. The client saves time, and I generate higher revenues."

*– Marian Bernard, CPS, CPRW  
Regency Secretarial*

"To ask every client to send me a note about my services and send me at least one of their friends or relatives."

*– Mike Fernandes  
Résumés and More*

## ■ Contest!

# What's WOW About Your Résumé-Writing Business?



In this month's Letter from the Editor (see page two), we talk about the "WOW Factor" – how you can set your business apart from the pack and knock the socks off your clients. What WOW Factors have you introduced into your résumé-writing business?

Fax or e-mail your response by February 21, 2000, and you could win a copy of Tom Peters' book, *"The Tom Peters Seminar"*

ON LETTERHEAD, FAX TO:  
402.393.4603

OR E-MAIL TO:  
RWDigest@aol.com

Contest winner will be announced in the March/April 2000 issue of *Résumé Writer's Digest!*

*Last Issue's Winner...*

## What Changes Do You See?

*Last issue, we wanted to know...*

**What is the biggest change you've seen?**

**What one change has had the most impact on your résumé-writing business?**

*Our Winner is: Kelley Smith, CPRW*

*Advantage Résumé Services – Sugar Land, Texas*

*Kelley wrote:*

"The biggest change I've seen, which had the biggest impact on my business, is the change in attitude toward home-based businesses. When I officially started my business in 1996 (I was operating unofficially for several years), I felt like I needed a commercial office space in order to project a professional image. With the proliferation of home-based businesses, the media attention they have received, and books and magazines targeting home offices, the attitude has changed dramatically. I moved my business from a commercial office to a home office in December of 1998 and have experienced little resistance from prospective clients. I try to avoid seeing clients in my home by pushing my "virtual office" as a convenience. This has impacted my business by significantly reducing my overhead, as well as my dry cleaning bill!"

# Salary Negotiations and Your Client

**Dear Sue:** What is the appropriate way to respond when asked about salary history or salary requirements when applying for a job?

– *Curious*

**Sue Says:** I asked Lawrence Alter, president of The Arthur Group, a Minneapolis career development company, to help answer your question. He does not recommend exposing your existing, previous or desired compensation levels. When you tell someone what you are earning or what you wish to be earning, then you could be limiting yourself. It is not uncommon for a candidate to be eliminated by their previous or desired level of compensation because the employer feels that they are not an affordable option, or that they have not been at a high enough level of responsibility.

If the figure disclosed is on the low side, it could limit the amount of salary the new employer might be willing to offer. For example, if an employer has a budgeted range of \$65,000 to \$70,000 and

you say that you've been earning \$55,000 or would like to earn \$55,000, you are not going to be effective at negotiating. Chances are you will be brought in at or below the minimum of the budgeted range.

Today there is a concept that if an individual (especially one seeking a management opportunity) cannot effectively negotiate their value to a company, that they will not be an effective negotiator for the company.

*Alter offers these additional suggestions:*

1. Never include salary history in a résumé or application, even when requested. If your background is strong enough and you meet the majority of the qualifications, the company will most likely contact you anyway.
2. When filling out an application, when you are asked for your current compensation, write, "Will discuss in interview." If asked for desired compensation, indicate "negotiable."
3. When asked about your current sal-

ary in an interview, you can respond by saying, "Frankly, I would like to see my income with your company based on the responsibilities of this position and what you believe my skills are worth to your company, not on what I have been earning." Then follow with this question, "What is the range you have budgeted for this position?" Or you might respond by saying, "I'm really not comfortable addressing my previous [or current] income, because it isn't a fair indicator of the strengths I bring to this new opportunity." Then follow by asking, "What are you looking to compensate someone – what is your range?"

Alter has written a book, *Tomorrow is Today*, which is a guide to managing the job search process.

– *Excerpted by permission of Sue Morem.*

*Sue Morem is a professional speaker, trainer and syndicated columnist. She is author of the best-selling book, "How to Gain the Professional Edge." You can contact her by e-mail at MZBIZNIZ@aol.com or visit her web site at www.suemorem.com.*

## ■ PROFILE *Louise Kursmark: Working With the \$100,000+ Crowd*

continued from page 1

cific destination, and without knowing that destination, I cannot write a résumé that will help them achieve their goal.

I do, however, quite often give clients the “homework assignment” of preparing “CAR stories.” When we meet, they can’t always come up with specific examples of key accomplishments. I ask a lot of probing questions, but sometimes the material just isn’t there. Since the time between consultation and draft is about a week in my practice, I encourage clients to think about their careers and give them a specific format (Challenge-Action-Result – or CAR) for them to “tell me a story” about something they’ve done in their careers. They forward these stories to me by e-mail or fax, and this information is usually included, to some extent, in the résumé.

As I also tell clients, preparing these stories will be excellent practice for interviewing; they’ll have specific examples at the tip of their tongues and they’ll have learned a story-telling format that is easily understood by the listener and can be called upon quickly during the interview, in response to a whole host of questions. So the “homework” time is never wasted.

**RWD:** *What is the greatest challenge about working with the \$100,000 professional?*

**LK:** The greatest challenge in working with six-figure executives is the expectation of excellence. These are, for the most part, experienced individuals who have seen a lot of résumés, done a lot of hiring and reviewed a tremendous amount of sales and marketing materials. So they know effective copy when they read it (though they can’t always write it themselves).

I am always on my mettle to produce my best work. In general, I do not find this clientele to be difficult or demanding; they are accustomed to delegating, and once they have made the decision to entrust me with their résumé, they don’t micro-manage the process. They will ask my opinion and respect my expertise.

So they’re not difficult to work with, but I do challenge myself to earn their high regard.

**RWD:** *What is the greatest reward about working with the \$100,000 professional?*

**LK:** The reward comes from meeting the challenge. It is tremendously satisfying to meet the high expectations of these clients. Also, they are typically very accomplished individuals, so it’s not a matter of “pulling teeth” or “creative writing” to find material for the résumé!

The difficulty sometimes lies in pruning the material to keep the résumé to two or three pages. I thoroughly enjoy working with this level of clientele and normally establish excellent rapport with clients, whether we work face-to-face or by phone and e-mail.

Also, they are open to suggestions for additional services and not at all hesitant about investing the resources necessary for a comprehensive job search.

So it’s satisfying to recommend, for instance, an e-mail distribution to venture capital firms and have the client readily agree to a several hundred-dollar fee for the service.

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**“Résumé writing is not the kind of profession that you can learn once and then relax and assume you know it all...”**

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**RWD:** *Your book is aimed at the do-it-yourself crowd – a book designed to help \$100,000+ sales and marketing professionals to write their own résumés. With this in mind, how do you see your résumé-writing colleagues benefiting from reading this book?*

**LK:** As a professional résumé writer myself, I’m always seeking to expand my knowledge and expertise. I own a whole stack of résumé books aimed at the job-seeker market; I find terrific examples, rationale for specific approaches, language for unfamiliar industries and other helpful information.

Résumé writing is not the kind of profession that you can learn once and then relax and assume you know it all and you’ll know it forever. So I do think other résumé writers can benefit from my book, particularly if they want to expand

their expertise, or if they feel uncertain about writing résumés for senior sales and marketing people or executive clients in general.

**RWD:** *Does putting such a thorough, well-written book together threaten the professional résumé writer who otherwise would have been called upon to help these professionals write their résumé?*

**LK:** [Are] résumé books in general – and my book in particular – in any way threatening to the résumé-writing business? *No way!*

I think these books communicate the importance of a well-written résumé and, quite often, help readers to understand that they can’t produce a résumé of the highest quality on their own. There will always be do-it-yourselfers – some readers of this newsletter may do their own taxes, or clean their own houses or change the oil in their cars. But that doesn’t mean that CPAs or house-cleaning services or quick-lube companies are going out of business!

Also, just because someone *can* do something on their own doesn’t mean they want to, or that it’s the best possible use of their time. Our ideal clients realize this – and I firmly believe there are a lot of this kind of client and that the market for our services is huge and will continue to grow.

Just a few weeks ago, I received a call from a client in Arizona who had bought and read my book and then contacted me to help him write his résumé. This reinforces my belief that books on résumé writing will help some people but will prompt others to seek professional assistance.

And I believe they increase the visibility of our profession and elevate the perception of our skills in the eyes of the general public.

– *Sales and Marketing Résumés for \$100,000 Careers* is copyright © 2000, JIST Publishing. It is available at your local bookstore, on many online bookstores (including [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.borders.com](http://www.borders.com), and [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)).

You can also order it directly from JIST Works, Inc. at [www.jist.com](http://www.jist.com).

## ■ Book Review

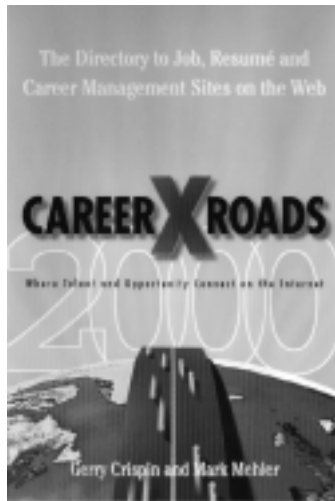
### *CareerXRoads: Add It To Your Bookshelf!*

When I received this book to review, I thought it looked pretty interesting. Then I started using it with my clients, and now I can't do without it!

My clients are impressed that I have – at my fingertips – a comprehensive resource guide for many of the major career-oriented web sites.

The book is “*CareerX-Roads 2000: Where Talent and Opportunity Connect on the Internet*,” by Gerry Crispin and Mark Mehler. (*CareerXRoads* is pronounced “*Career Crossroads*.”)

Co-author Mark Mehler describes their book as the “Consumer Reports” of career web sites. That is, none of the more than 500 sites reviewed, nor any of the more than 1500 sites catalogued, have paid for their presence in the book. Therefore, résumé writers can be assured of complete honesty in each site's rating.



“Accounting & Finance Jobs” site. The site offers the opportunity to view résumés for free, so I pulled up the site and printed out the profiles for several similar candidates. My client was happy to see what we had emphasized for him was also emphasized in these résumés, and we culled a few additional keywords that he hadn't thought to mention.

Another benefit is the “Corporation Staffing Pages” index. A client wanted to apply to Lucent Technologies, and I found [www.lucent.com/work/work1.html](http://www.lucent.com/work/work1.html) among the 381 URLs for *Fortune 500* companies listed.

#### Obscure Technical Specialties

Another client was looking for a position in medical product sales, so I turned to the index and located “[MedicalDeviceJobs.com](http://MedicalDeviceJobs.com).” He was impressed with how fast I found an appropriate listing (and I didn't even have to spend half an hour sorting through the results brought up by a search on Yahoo!).

#### Identifying Specialized Sites

The depth of the listings shows how much time the authors have devoted to compiling this directory. (This is the fifth edition.)

For example, if I worked with research & development clients, I'd recommend [www.sciencemag.org](http://www.sciencemag.org) (the web site of the Science Professional Network).

Work with “sales agents and land barons”? Consider [www.real-jobs.com](http://www.real-jobs.com) (Real Jobs-Real Estate) or “Real Estate Job Store,” [www.RealEstateJobStore.com](http://www.RealEstateJobStore.com).

Working with recent college graduates? They'll be happy with the list of “excellent opportunities to find that first job,” including “*College Grad Job Hunter*” ([www.CollegeGrad.com](http://www.CollegeGrad.com)), the *Adguide College Recruiter Employment Site* ([www.adguide.com](http://www.adguide.com)), and “*Graduating Engineer & Computer Careers Online*” ([www.GraduatingEngineer.com](http://www.GraduatingEngineer.com)).

This is a book every résumé writer should have on his or her bookshelf.

## ■ Internet

In our second installment in this occasional series on using the Internet to promote your résumé-writing business, Kevin Skarritt, of Acorn Creative, outlines how to market your web site.

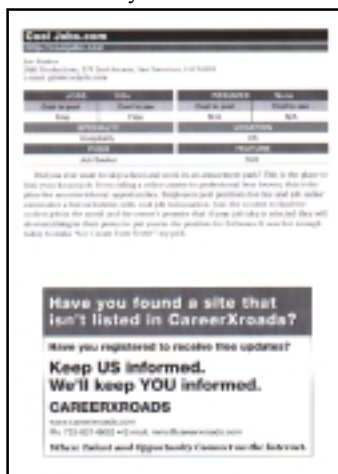
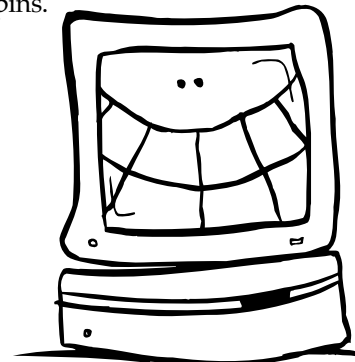
1. **Affiliations and Endorsements.** Establish credibility for yourself and drive traffic to your site, Kevin says. Several of your colleagues have established themselves as resident “experts” online. For example, Kim Isaacs is the expert for [Monster.com](http://Monster.com). (*CareerXRoads*, reviewed on this page, offers hundreds of unexplored opportunities).

2. **Reciprocal Linking.** Make your web site a resource for information. Create a separate page for links and explore opportunities for reciprocal links. (See [www.JustYourType.com](http://www.JustYourType.com) for examples.) By the way, it is *not* okay to just copy other people's links.

3. **Register With Search Engines.** Each site has its own protocol. Or you can pay a service to do this for you. For example, check out Microsoft's [BCentral.com](http://BCentral.com) (packages start at \$24.95).

4. **Pay to Attract Traffic.** Sites like [GoTo.com](http://GoTo.com) allow you to “buy” placement on their search engine. Kevin recommends looking for less-used words (“resume writer” is bidding as high as \$.21 per click-through.)

5. **Creative Approaches.** Don't forget to list your URL everywhere in the “offline” world, including on magnetic car signs, mugs, caps and pins.



Each listing includes contact information, the number of jobs available, the cost to post and see *jobs* and the cost to post and see *résumés*.

I have found the book to be helpful in a number of situations. For example, I recently worked with a Certified Public Accountant in a senior management position. He was looking for a similar position with a large company, and wanted to know about the experience and skills that other individuals looking for that type of job were emphasizing.

On page 91, I found a listing for “*Accounting.com*,” – CareerMosaic's

# “Résumés Stink: Start Asking for a Portfolio”

The following article is reprinted with permission from Dr. John Sullivan, Head Professor/Professor of Human Resource Management in the College of Business, San Francisco State University.

Food for thought for those of us whose professions rely on human resource professionals reading the résumés we create. Does it create an opportunity for another profit center? Or a threat to our profession?

We'd love your opinion! E-mail your responses to [RWDigest@aol.com](mailto:RWDigest@aol.com)

Recruiters have been “placing ads and reading résumés” for decades. As an HR professor, I get to review hundreds of résumés and I never have understood why any HR professional would rely on it as an accurate source of information about a candidate. If you really want to find out about a candidate, go beyond the résumé and ask for a “professional portfolio.”

As a candidate for a position, you might also find that a portfolio gives you a competitive advantage above others who merely provide a résumé.

The difference is obvious. Can you imagine how easy it would be to miss an opportunity for calling in Michelangelo, based on a word description of his picture...Mona Lisa? As they say, “a picture is worth a thousand words!”

## Why Résumés Stink

- They are shallow and dull to read;
- They are full of words but they give few details due to their one- to two-page length;
- They are one-dimensional and can't demonstrate technology or visual arts;
- They are focused on the past and not on what you can do in the future;
- Words in a résumé are a poor way of showing what most people can actually produce;
- They are full of mis-truths and omissions because it's easy to “mislead with words”;
- They are often written by others and thus do not reflect the actual writing skills of the candidate.

## Advantages of Portfolios Over Résumés

- They allow you to review actual work in order to assess its quality;
- By looking at actual work samples, you often find candidates that appear to have “insufficient experience” on their résumé actually have capabilities beyond their years;
- They allow you to assess creativity because they give the candidate some leeway in the work they include in their portfolio;
- A portfolio can include videos, pic-



tures, product designs and other three-dimensional items that can't be in a résumé;

- It can include floppy disks, CDs and web pages so that technology and software can be demonstrated;
- This practice gives managers more exposure to the actual work being done by other firms and thus it is a form of benchmarking and competitive intelligence;
- Because portfolios take some effort, they demonstrate a degree of commitment on the part of the candidate that is not required in a résumé;
- It can focus on what you will/can do, as opposed to what you did do in the past;
- A “picture is worth a thousand words”;
- It improves the quality of your hires.

Think about it. If you were going to hire an artist (or a musician or a chef), would you want to read about their paintings...or see them? If you were going to hire a programmer – wouldn't you want to see some actual code they had written? Well, you can see the actual work of your candidates if you request a portfolio in addition to a traditional résumé.

## Many Fields Already Use Portfolios

There are a number of candidate fields that regularly prepare portfolios. These include artists, musicians, writers, graphic design professionals, illustrators, web designers, etc. Hiring managers in these fields review these portfolios for content, creativity, etc. and since they are

## Joke of the Day: *Read Between the Lines*

1. Bob Smith, my administrative assistant, can always be found
2. hard at work in his cubicle. Bob works independently, without
3. wasting company time talking to colleagues. Bob never
4. thinks twice about assisting fellow employees, and he always
5. finishes given assignments on time. Often he takes extended
6. measures to complete his work, sometimes skipping coffee
7. breaks. Bob is a dedicated individual who has absolutely no
8. vanity in spite of his high accomplishments and profound
9. knowledge in his field. I firmly believe that Bob can be
10. classified as a high-caliber employee, the type that cannot be
11. dispensed with. Consequently, I duly recommend that Bob be
12. promoted to executive management, and a proposal will be
13. executed as soon as possible.

### Addendum:

That idiot was standing over my shoulder while I wrote the report sent to you earlier today. Kindly re-read only the odd-numbered lines.

– Author unknown

■ see **PORTFOLIO** page 8

# “Résumés Stink,” HR Professor Says

■ continued from page 7

experts, they know what to look for. The added content in a portfolio allows managers to go beyond the “number” of years of experience in order to judge the quality of the experience as well!

## Some Things That Might Be Included in a Portfolio

1. A two-paragraph executive summary with bullet points;
2. A table of contents;
3. A traditional chronological résumé;
4. A personal mission and goal statement;
5. A list of your major accomplishments and outputs with a two-sentence description, including numbers, dollars and evidence of quality;
6. A WOW “bullet point” list of facts that illustrate your best competencies and accomplishments;
7. A list of your business competencies with a sentence showing the level of your expertise (categorize by Business, Interpersonal, Communication

- and Other [risk taker, creative, etc.]);
8. A list of your competencies with a sentence showing the level of your expertise (categorize by industry-specific functions);
9. A list of technology- and computer-related capabilities the candidate has; with a sentence showing the level of expertise for each;
10. A link to your personal web page and an outline of what can be found on the web site;
11. A list of special projects that you have completed;
12. Between three and seven one-page outlines of selected projects, showing goals, steps and results;
13. A one-page list of your interests and preferences, including career goals and what makes a great job, boss and company;
14. A one-page summary of your knowledge of the firm, its problems, competitors and opportunities;
15. A one-page summary of your training and education, including topic areas your courses covered in school, projects, papers and presentations;
16. A fleshed-out (three- to five-page) example of your solution to one of

the major problems you will face in your new job. The solution would be tailored to the culture of the target firm;


17. A list of your mentors, contacts and references;
18. Optional appendices include videotapes of your presentations, copies of articles, reports, processes and programs you have developed, etc.;
19. A CD-ROM or floppy disk containing detailed examples and pictures (if appropriate) of your work;
20. A list of your key contact numbers, your address, etc.

## Characteristics of a World-Class Portfolio

- Scannable – in 15 minutes or less;
- It sells you with your work and your ideas;
- It is customized for this job and the firm;
- It includes and highlights your WOW’s;
- It excites the screener.

You can contact Dr. Sullivan by e-mail at [johns@sfsu.edu](mailto:johns@sfsu.edu).

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## The “Buzzword Generator”

“When you’re at a loss for meaningless, but erudite, words,” says Bill Worden, “just think of any three-digit number. Then, select the corresponding buzzword from each column and suddenly you sound as if you know what you’re talking about.”

For example, 455 is “functional logistical concept.”

In their list form, these buzzwords may also add interest to an otherwise lifeless résumé. Use sparingly.

<u>COLUMN 1</u>	<u>COLUMN 2</u>	<u>COLUMN 3</u>
0. Integrated	0. Management	0. Options
1. Total	1. Organizational	1. Flexibility
2. Systemized	2. Monitored	2. Capability
3. Parallel	3. Reciprocal	3. Mobility
4. Functional	4. Digital	4. Program
5. Responsive	5. Logistical	5. Concept
6. Optimal	6. Transitional	6. Time-Phase
7. Synchronized	7. Incremental	7. Projection
8. Compatible	8. Third-Generation	8. Hardware
9. Balanced	9. Policy	9. Contingency

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