

RÉSUMÉ writers Digest

Winter 2011 (January – March 2011)

Working With Recruiters

Excerpted from “Developing Strategic Alliances and Partnerships With Recruiters,” a special report from Résumé Writers’ Digest. Ordering information can be found at the end of the article.

Have you considered partnering with a recruiter (or recruiting firm) to provide résumé development services for his or her clients?

Recruiters can be an excellent source of referrals for résumé writers — and, consequently, income. Cultivating relationships with recruiters can be a small — or significant — source of new business for your résumé writing practice.

Developing the wrong kind of relationships with recruiters, however, can put your business at significant risk. They can make promises to you about providing a volume of clients that can be enticing — but can they deliver? And at what cost (both in terms of finances and the commitment it will require from you)?

Going into these relationships armed with knowledge and information can help assure you pick the right recruiters to work with — and negotiate an agreement that works for you — and for them.

Sometimes, recruiters will want something different than what you offer. One résumé writer related the story of a contact she made with a

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RWD Industry Survey Results

The Résumé Writers’ Digest Industry Survey is an opportunity for résumé writers to benchmark their progress compared to their peers. The survey was first conducted in 2001.

The 2010 Résumé Writers’ Digest Industry Survey was conducted in December 2010/January 2011. Those who responded to the survey fit the following profile: 68 percent are self-employed full-time (17 percent are self-employed part-time). Seventy-six percent work from a home office only, while 12 percent have both a home and business office. Twenty-two percent have been writing résumés for fewer than five years, 37 percent for 6-15 years, and 35 percent for more than 16 years.

January is the busiest month for these writers, followed by February, May, September, and October.

Money is always an interesting benchmark for writers. Rates charged by writers range from \$25-\$450 per hour, with the most frequently rate cited as \$50/hour.

Another question is how many résumés are written each week, on average. The most frequent response is three résumés per week, although several respondents write up to 10 per week. The average, however, was 3.68 résumés per week.

Not surprisingly, the “average” résumé sale includes a résumé and, very often, a cover letter. An increasing number of respondents report their



sale also includes brand development (6 percent) and/or a social media profile (7 percent).

The amount of the “average” résumé sale reached its highest peak ever — \$509.36. This is up significantly from previous years. Amounts ranged from \$100 to \$5,000 (the highest and lowest amounts were thrown out when calculating the average) — but most significant, the most frequently reported averages this year were \$400, \$350, and \$300.

Affiliations

The number of résumé writers who are certified has increased a bit from past surveys. Thirty-seven percent of those responding are certified as a résumé writer. Just over 7 percent are certified as a career coach. Thirty-four percent hold dual certifications in résumé writing and career coaching. But a full 21 percent are not certified at all.

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From the Editor: 'Highly Distractable'

By Bridget (Weide) Brooks, CPRW

In late January, I wrote a post on the Resume Writers' Digest blog (<http://rwdigestblog.com>) outlining the history of the newsletter and blog. For those of you who missed the post, I'm excerpting part of it here.

I sometimes say that I have "mild ADD" — I think most business owners do. We enjoy wearing lots of hats, and don't like doing the same thing every day. I think it's what makes us great résumé writers — I know a little bit about a lot of subjects, and I'm naturally very curious ... which makes it easy for me to get interested in the wide variety of professions that I've written résumés for. It also makes me very distractable.

Which brings me to this blog post. I started Résumé Writers' Digest about 12 years ago. It started as a print newsletter, six issues a year for \$36. It was initially 8 pages. At some point along there, I started putting out 16 and 20 page issues ... one was even 28 pages. I raised the subscription fee to \$60/year (\$10 an issue, six issues). It was wildly successful. We "covered" all the major conferences. I solicited paid articles from the top names in the business. (I particularly loved Louise Kursmark's column in each issue.) We had advertisers...lots of them.

But then I got distracted. I can't even remember why now, but I had another project (or another client) that took up so much of my time that I couldn't keep on top of the newsletter. So I let it die out. I was sad to see it go, but I had a lot of other stuff going on. (If I recall correctly, it was also around the time that I got married and moved my business into my home.)

But I couldn't let it go. A few years ago, in September 2007, I brought it back again — this time as a free online issue, supported by advertising and the sale of my special reports. But sev-



Bridget Ann Brooks, CPRW

eral of the earlier advertisers weren't around anymore, and I got a lot of pushback from one résumé writing association in particular, who were upset about the conference coverage write-ups. (They felt that session write-ups would keep people from attending the conferences themselves. My response, that the write-ups were coming after the conferences were over, and that there are many other reasons to attend a conference other than just the content, fell on deaf ears.)

Lots of family issues from 2008-2010 kept me from staying focused on Résumé Writers' Digest. The laptop I blogged on died. My former sister-in-law had a midlife crisis and cheated on my brother. My aunt (of whom I'm a primary caretaker) had a stroke. All of these, combined with the need to keep my "main" business going, led to a lack of attention to Resume Writers' Digest. I got distracted.

But I want to get back to making Résumé Writers' Digest a priority again. I have a database of about 4,000 professional résumé writers and career professionals ... more than 800 of them subscribe to the Résumé Writers' Digest newsletter. I receive a couple of e-mails a week from folks wondering where the next issue is. I've got dozens of articles



Résumé Writers' Digest is a trade newsletter designed to help résumé writers keep on top of changes in the human resources field, new developments in technology, and trends across 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.

Some of the links in this newsletter are affiliate links — meaning, if you buy a product using my link, I get a small commission for making the recommendation. That said, I don't recommend any products or services that I don't believe in, or haven't personally used.

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Editor: Bridget (Weide) Brooks, CPRW
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that are ready to go ... ideas and even some full-fledged special reports ... but not enough hours in the day.

I don't really have any grand announcements in this blog post. I mostly just wanted to let you know that I'm working on it. I need to put a plan and a timeline in place ... and say "no" to some other things so that I can get back to what I really am passionate about ... supporting résumé writers. That's been an interest of mine since I started my business in 1996 ... and 15 years later, I'm still passionate about it. It's time I put my focus back on Résumé Writers' Digest.

RWD Industry Survey Results

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The Professional Association of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches (PARW/CC) continues to lead the pack as the professional association with the most survey respondents who belong (21 percent).

It's followed by the National Résumé Writer's Association (15 percent), Career Management Alliance (13 percent), and Career Directors International (12 percent).

PARW/CC numbers are down, however, from previous surveys, while National Career Development Association (4 percent), Résumé Writing Academy (5 percent), and Profiling Pro (5 percent) show the biggest gains over prior years.

A new question on the 2010 survey asks how résumé writers get their clients. Referrals (19 percent) lead the pack, followed by website (14 percent), online directories of résumé writers (most sponsored by professional associations), social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter), and

Yellow Pages. Other significant sources of new business include writing articles, subcontracting, and strategic alliances. Only three percent of résumé writers report getting clients from online advertising (AdWords, Facebook Ads, and Search Engine Optimization).

What Are Résumé Writers' Least Favorite Parts of Their Job?

The top complaint from résumé writers can be broadly labeled "difficult clients." Résumé writers reported "dealing with clients who don't understand the art of writing a résumé" and "clients who pay you because you are the 'expert' but then don't respect your expertise."

Some lament "the economy (is) such that people now question what they will get in the way of a résumé — they can't understand why 2-3 pages could cost hundreds of dollars."

Others struggle with non-compliant clients — those who "feel you can write their résumé without them providing detailed information" or clients who are "rude, tardy, no-shows, etc."

Many résumé writers struggle with time management concerns — from wishing they could write résumés faster, to "working too many hours for not enough money." Dealing with administrative, billing, and bookkeeping work — while handling "small tweaks or questions" can also be draining.

Sales and marketing are also ongoing issues. "Periods of slow business" and "feast and famine" conditions are common. One writer finds "answering sales requests and responses from potential clients who come across as skeptical about résumé writing services (or the industry as a whole" to be the least attractive part of the job.

Résumé Writers Reveal Their Biggest Challenges

Some challenges named by résumé writers are client-oriented ("controlling that occasional anal client"), while others are process-oriented ("individualizing the résumé").

Many of the issues cited as "biggest challenges" are the same reasons

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Industry Survey Results

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why *Résumé Writers' Digest* originally came about:

- "Keeping up with best practices" (in résumé writing)
- "Staying up with different professions, latest keywords, etc."
- Time management concerns
- "Getting new clients"

Other challenges have been the subject of *Résumé Writers' Digest* Special Reports over the years:

- "It takes me a long time to write. I wish I could get faster." ("Write Great Résumés Faster" Special Report, \$14)



- "Finding one good subcontractor to compose winning résumés for my clients." ("Making Money as a Résumé Subcontractor" Special Report, \$20)

- "Developing sound and successful marketing strategies for clients in this challenging job market." ("Best of the Conferences" Special Report, \$8)

Several respondents mentioned the special challenge of sales and marketing in a down economy. One wrote, "It is disheartening to talk to prospects who need help, but are either holding tightly to the purse strings or flat out cannot afford pro-

fessional services. It hurts business, but I hurt for their situation."

Another key challenge is that résumés are customized for clients. This results in:

- "Working too many hours for not enough money."
- The need for "getting customers to understand the value of a professionally written (relatively expensive) résumé."
- The pressure to "ask the right questions, because the end product is so dependent on that."
- Sometimes that requires "working with unresponsive clients," requiring "much digging to obtain information."
- In a few cases, clients aren't unresponsive — they're *too* responsive. One writer talked about "working with clients with self-confidence issues and working with clients who choose to use our meeting time to badmouth their past employers and to complain about their previous jobs rather than helping me help them by providing me with the information I am actually asking them about."

Making Progress...Or Not?

Another new question this year was, "Compared to last year, my business is..." — with the opportunity for résumé writers to fill in the blank.

Sixty-three percent of those responding said business is up ("booming," "doubled," "growing," and "rocking"); 16 percent said it's down ("Down a bit," "slower, so far," "about 10-15 percent lower in revenue than 2009"); while 19 percent said it's the same.

In 2010, I:

Purchased one or more career-related books	10%
Wrote a career-related article or blog post	9%
Updated my website	9%
Attended/listened to a free <u>webinar</u> related to a career topic	8%
Attended/listened to a free <u>teleseminar</u> related to a career topic	8%
Gave a presentation on a career topic	8%
Attended/purchased a paid <u>webinar</u>	7%
Attended/purchased a paid <u>teleseminar</u>	7%
Posted about a careers-related topic on Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter	7%
Explored a strategic alliance to benefit my careers business	7%
Made a new connection with a recruiter	6%

— Source: 2010 *Résumé Writers' Digest* Survey

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Developing Referral Relationships with Recruiters

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recruiting firm with approximately 100 recruiters on staff. Her contact was willing to introduce her to the owner. She was anticipating working with the recruiters on general résumé referrals. However, the business owner had a completely different idea — he wanted her to start a career coaching service on the recruiting firm’s website.

What she didn’t know at the time was that the recruiting firm had begun laying off recruiters, and the owner was looking to the career coaching service as a profit center to bring in revenue from candidates, even if they couldn’t place them in jobs.

That didn’t fit in with the résumé writer’s business goals, so ultimately they didn’t work together.

Another common issue résumé writers encounter when working with

recruiters is estimating the number of clients you’ll be working with.

Recruiters are used to thinking big and many are used to working with a high volume of candidates simultaneously. Sometimes this can lead to overconfidence in estimating demand for your services, especially when the client will be paying. (Remember, recruiters get paid by the contracting company, so recommending a \$400 résumé may not seem like a big deal to them — they might be earning a \$4,000 commission on the placement — but the client may not be willing to spend the money.)

One recruiting firm decided to offer low-cost, in-person job search seminars as a lead generator for their résumé assistance service. The owner paid a marketing/public relations agency to promote the seminar, held at a local hotel. More than 650 people

RSVP’d that they would be attending — but on the day of the seminar, only 34 showed up. They paid \$5 each. The recruiting firm made \$200, but paid thousands of dollars to the marketing firm and to the hotel.

The recruiting firm had estimated it would sign up 25-30 clients per week for résumé services as it followed up with the job seekers they anticipated attending the workshops. They ended up converting only a handful of attendees into résumé clients.

Knowing which questions to ask a recruiting firm when you’re approached about a relationship — or if you want to pursue a recruiter about referrals — is critical.

The “Developing Strategic Alliances and Partnerships With Recruiters” Special Report is available for \$27. Visit www.bit.ly/rwdpartnerships for more information.

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Action Marketing

Setting Yourself Up for Keeping in Touch

It's one thing to develop a keep-in-touch content strategy and format. It's quite another to make it work month after month. There are a lot of things you need to do to make sure your mailings and/or e-mailings are producing the desired effect: new and repeat clients.

Build Your Database

The best people to send to are the people you've already met. To accomplish this, you need to set up a database with names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of your contacts.

Before you do this, it's a good time to plan your keep-in-touch strategy. Are you going to be primarily e-mailing folks? If so, you might want to choose an e-mail-focused program, like Constant Contact [<http://bit.ly/ConstantCRWD>] or Vertical Response [<http://bit.ly/VertResponseRWD>].

If you're primarily going to be using offline contact (snail mail), you might want to use a program like Google Docs [docs.google.com], Filemaker [www.filemaker.com], or an even more robust option, such as Salesforce.com (which starts at \$5/month) [www.salesforce.com].

You want to make sure the program has fields which you can use to sort the database any way you want. Include the basics, such as name, address, phone, e-mail, etc. But also include "source" — where that name came from., or how they heard of you.

Many online applications allow you to set up an e-mail opt-in system, which you can use to collect in-

formation on prospective clients who choose to receive e-mail from you.

Enter Old Data

Go through your Rolodex, client records, and that pile of business cards at the bottom of your drawer. Enter everything. You can even buy one of those cool business card readers, if it makes it easier for you.

Enter New Data

When you get a new client, meet a new prospect, or collect cards at a networking event, enter all their data into your database. Pretty soon, you'll have a database that will be very useful in all your marketing.

*Note: To comply with CAN-SPAM laws [<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/spam>], you'll need to ask folks if you can send them e-mail. The easiest way to do this is to enter the data, then send an e-mail asking them to join your list. Give them a reason to respond! Tell them what they can expect in e-mails from you — timely information, special offers, invitations to events — whatever.

If they don't respond, you can keep their "snail mail" information, but don't send them e-mails. You can also e-mail them this message and ask them to contact you if they don't wish to receive further e-mails from you, and remind them they can opt-out of future e-mails at any time. (*Editor's Note: This is a little bit of a gray area — generally, you are not supposed to add people to your e-mail lists unless they specifically request to join it, but*



Robert Middleton

if you have a previous business relationship with folks, they generally won't mind receiving occasional e-mails from you.)

Sort and Utilize

The usefulness of this database will become obvious when you do keep-in-touch marketing. You can create mailing labels in an instant or send a quick e-mail message with a special offer. Perhaps you want to hold a special event just for clients. It will be a snap putting together the names and perhaps creating a mail merge letter. You'll save huge amounts of time and effort.

Having a good database can literally mean the difference between success and failure in your marketing. Your database is one of your most valuable business possessions. Safeguard it, back it up, and use it often to multiply your marketing results.

LIMITED TIME OFFER

If you've enjoyed the tips shared by Robert Middleton, I invite you to join his Fast Track Program. You get access to incredible marketing materials that will help you grow your résumé writing business. Join by April 30 and you'll lock in a \$29/month rate. After May 1, it's \$49/month — still an incredible value. More info here: www.bit.ly/rwdmiddleton

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