



## Cathy Alfandre's E-Letter

*Create greater joy and fulfillment in your working life.*

March 2008

### **Greetings!**

I've been involved in a few resume-related activities recently, so figured I'd make this e-letter the "resume issue!"

### ***5 Strategies for Writing a Great Resume***

I put together the following ideas for attendees at a career fair and wanted to share them with you too. Use these points as the starting place for creating a resume that will get noticed and help you get in the door for an interview.

1. **Be future-focused.** One of the biggest mistakes that people make with resumes is to summarize everything they've ever done in the past. Your resume needs to position you for the job you want in the future. Highlight and give the most weight to the experiences, accomplishments, skills, and qualifications that are most relevant for this future position. Tone down or eliminate the information that doesn't serve you. Continuously put yourself in the shoes of your potential hiring manager and ask yourself, "What does (s)he want to know?"
2. **Sell your accomplishments and results.** Your future employer is much more interested in the impact of your work than in a list of the specific duties, projects, or responsibilities you handled. Your resume needs to convey, as tangibly as possible, the value that you brought to previous organizations. What results were you able to achieve? What impact did you have? Quantify the results wherever possible, but qualitative results are excellent too.
3. **Use the right keywords.** Both electronic and human screeners look for specific words to know that you "speak the language" and can do the job you're pursuing. Use job postings, job boards, and resources from relevant professional associations to find the right keywords, and then incorporate them into your resume. Remember that there are "hard skills/knowledge" keywords that are relevant to the job function and the industry, and there are also "soft skills" keywords for leadership and management.
4. **Make it easy to read.** Start by making sure that it's clear, right at the top of the resume, who you are and what kind of position you're pursuing. Use formatting, font, and type size that are easy on the eyes and allow the reader to see the important points. Make sure there are no typos. Your reader should never struggle or be distracted when reading your resume.
5. **Distinguish yourself.** What makes you special? What really distinguishes you from the next person? Figuring out the answer may take some thinking, brainstorming, and talking with others in order to distill the key points. Once you're clear, use your resume to get the message across. A summary or profile at the top of the resume is a great place to highlight your unique experience, capabilities, and qualities. (And by the way, be sure to talk about what distinguishes you in your cover letters, networking, and interviews too!)

I hope you find these pointers helpful. Please let me know if you have questions about resumes that you would like me to address in future e-letters!

All my best -

Cathy

### ***Master Resume Writer (MRW) Credential***

I'm delighted to announce that I recently earned the MRW credential from the Career Management Alliance. This certification was designed specifically for highly experienced resume professionals who combine expert writing and English language skills with a strategic approach to resume development. After completing extensive coursework and independent resume projects through the Alliance's Resume Writing Academy, I prepared and submitted a detailed portfolio of my resume and cover letter work to earn the credential. Many thanks to the clients whose work is showcased in the portfolio!

This bi-monthly e-letter is intended to offer ideas, tips, resources, and questions to ponder on careers, fulfilling work, and career-life decisions. I welcome your reactions and your suggestions for future topics.

To my new subscribers: Welcome! If you would like to see copies of my previous e-letters, please go to my website where they are posted in the "Contact" section.

To all readers: Please feel free to share this e-letter with anyone you think may find it helpful! (Rest assured, though, that I will not share YOUR email address with anyone!)

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email: [cathy@cathyalfandre.com](mailto:cathy@cathyalfandre.com)

phone: 203-445-7906

web: <http://www.cathyalfandre.com>