

## THE "ALTERNATIVE" RÉSUMÉ FOR AN "ALTERNATIVE" CAREER *Targeting Consulting*

By Doug Morrison, MRW, CPRW  
Career Power Resume

Developing an alternative career requires conviction. It also requires an alternative résumé.

Recently, a client striking out on her own — as an economic development consultant — asked me about preparing her résumé. I questioned her regarding her work, credentials, length of experience — and I suggested a different approach: an "alternative" résumé.

You can design an alternative résumé as a simple tri-panel brochure, or in an 8-1/2" x 11" format, or even as a web portfolio to effectively market yourself as an independent consultant.

Your simple brochure should begin with your business name (for example, John Doe Associates), business or home address, e-mail address and telephone number. It should also profile your products/services or specialties and include a biographical sketch of your professional qualifications. Follow with a full or partial client list or perhaps three to five project accomplishments.

To make a career move as a consultant, however, you just don't go and hammer out your alternative résumé. You need a marketing plan.

How do you develop an alternative career? Acquire new skills and accomplishments through designing a Master Plan, keeping these points in mind as you craft it:

- Year One — Inventory your skills and experience. Identify weaknesses like over-specialization, industry decline, changing technologies, and propensity for corporate downsizing or restructuring. Establish your goals; plan a route. Broaden business and personal contacts; find mentors or advisors. Get started!
- Year Two — Choose one or two sidelines, develop needed skills, and start earning money using them. Meet quarterly with each mentor. Expand your core or primary career; even change jobs, if career growth is blocked.
- Year Three — Build your sideline business and reinvest this income. Reassess all your skills, ensuring total integration. Balance a career plateau with growth in your sideline or vice versa. You're cruising!

As you build sufficient credentials to turn a sideline career into a full-time job, you can begin to develop your new résumé. The standard chronological résumé displaying a progression of jobs with specific accomplishments will work for someone who is trying to move, for example, from Manager of Economic Development to Director of Economic Development to Vice President of Economic Development.

On the other hand, if you're trying to move from financial analyst to corporate facilities manager, this approach may lead to disappointment. Instead, use a hybrid or combination résumé, topically oriented to emphasize transferable and related skills acquired through a hobby or outside interest. Such a format will highlight skills rather than job history.

For pursuing a sideline career, as cited above, create a two-page résumé highlighting skills and accomplishments up front and downplaying job history, placing it on the second page. For example, showcase skills relevant to the new job, such as facilities planning (presenting the financial side), project management (emphasizing the ability to manage multiple tasks and budgeting, as well as knowledge of

building codes and construction), operations (analysis of land acquisition and capital improvement costs), and contract negotiation (the sales/communication side).

Whatever approach you take, remember that you're trying to differentiate yourself — or your business — from everyone else, so show the reader why you're better than the competition.

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