BRAG BOOKS – DON’T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT THEM

By Robert Mandelberg, CPRW

A brag book is a portfolio of your achievements that you use during the interview process. It contains evidence of your past accomplishments. You use a brag book to support your claims of "greatness" and to demonstrate your abilities and potential to a prospective employer.

What to Include in your Brag Book:

If you believe what you read on resumes, then 75% of all salesmen are ranked in the top 10% of their companies. Although accomplishments are a vital component of a resume, **substantiated claims have a much stronger impact than unsubstantiated ones.** One of the most important features of a brag book is that it verifies statements made on your resume. Of course, the contents of brag books will change depending upon the industry, position, and individual.

The following is a partial list of materials that are appropriate for a brag book:

- **Are you one of the 75% who claim to be in the top 10% of your company? Then prove it!** Do you have the printout showing employee rankings? Or how about an e-mail from your boss congratulating you on your achievement? Either one of these documents will verify your claim. Any time you mention a statistic or ranking on your resume, try to back it up with documentation.

- **Did you win an Employee of the Month award?** A photocopy of your award would be a great inclusion to your brag book. **Proof of any award or honor** looks impressive in your portfolio.

- **Letters of commendation,** letters of recommendation, favorable client e-mails, written accolades from peers, performance evaluations, press clippings, and other positive documentation attesting to your superior performance or skill also should be included in your brag book.

- **Quantifiable data** - such as reduced costs, increased profits, improved shareholder value, and greater productivity - makes a strong impact. Evidence demonstrating "before and after" results is also impressive.

- **If you are a student (or recent graduate)** and have a favorable GPA, then include a copy of your college transcripts. You can also make copies of any academic honors, internship evaluations, and recommendations from professors.

Don't forget to include the basics: Copies of your resume, diplomas, licenses, training certificates, a list of your references, and a copy of your salary history. You won't be presenting all the materials during an interview; only the ones that are relevant to your discussion.

Presentation:

Office supply stores generally carry a variety of binders and portfolios that are perfect for brag books. Select one that feels right to you and matches your style or personality. You may want to have a book that is sectionalized and tabbed for better organization. It is also a good idea to separate each document in transparent plastic sleeves.

Make sure you familiarize yourself with the contents of your brag book. The last thing you want to do is ruin the flow of the interview by sifting through papers. "*I could have sworn my 'company award for being prepared' was here somewhere -- just give me a minute to find it."*

Just imagine how confident you will feel having a well-organized, documented book of your achievements. Once you start using a brag book, you will wonder how you ever went to an interview without one.

Robert Mandelberg founded The Creative Edge Resume Service in 1987. Since that time, he has helped thousands of clients reach their career goals. Rob is a published author, a Certified Professional Resume Writer (CPRW), and a Certified Employment Interview Professional (CEIP). Contact Rob at Rob@ResumeRob.com or (732) 544-1285.