

SUCCESSFUL RÉSUMÉ STRATEGIES

The Importance of Key Accomplishments

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A-1 Quality Resumes

In today's employment marketplace, there are a higher number of executive candidates than there are jobs. So, it is critical to have a résumé that gets the attention hiring managers, instead of relegated to the trash bin. There are many obvious ingredients that make up a good résumé, such as clear content, appropriate formatting, correct grammar usage, and zero spelling errors. However, to stand above the crowd, executive candidates **must** include **key accomplishments** in their résumés, besides a mere listing of job responsibilities. This single factor alone transforms a "good résumé" to a "great résumé" -- giving candidates a substantial edge over their competition.

Key accomplishments show prospective employers your value

So, what exactly are "key accomplishments"? My definition is: "activities that executive candidates have engaged in throughout their careers, which have impacted their employers' bottom lines, in sales increases, cost savings, productivity acceleration, customer service improvement, and other factors affecting company profitability." Hiring managers want to recruit executives who can hit-the-ground-running, quickly contribute to their companies' business growth, and deliver solid return-on-investment (ROI) in exchange for salary and benefits. Including key accomplishments in a résumé is the best way for executives to showcase this type of value, to attract the attention of hiring managers.

Key accomplishment statements are industry-specific

Key accomplishment statements in a résumé will vary, depending upon a candidate's profession and industry. In these three examples, note that each statement explains in tangible metrics how the candidates contributed to their employer's bottom line:

1. A regional sales manager's accomplishment might read: "Through concerted team effort, increased \$2 million territory by 25% (\$500,000) in 12 months, by reactivating 50 dormant accounts."
2. A corporate restaurant executive's might be: "Reduced annual food costs (target 31.5%/actual: 30.1%) on \$3.8 million in food sales and labor costs (target: 15.5%/actual: 13.9%) on \$5+ million in overall sales."
3. For a facilities management executive, a realistic accomplishment could be: "Successfully managed workflow during \$100 million expansion project, without hiring additional staff."

Use the "Challenge-Action-Results (C-A-R) Model" to formulate key accomplishments

If you're stumped about how to formulate key accomplishments, here's an exercise that can help. First, write five stories of your greatest career accomplishments; 1-3 brief paragraphs are sufficient. Then, choose one story at a time and break it down into three parts: "Challenge-Action-Results." To illustrate this point, let's apply the "regional sales manager" example above.

1. **Challenge:** This man was expected to increase sales in his region, as sales had been stagnant for three years.
2. **Action:** He contacted all accounts in the region, and learned that many hadn't ordered products, because they found a competitor, offering a cheaper product; however, they weren't as happy with its performance. He then offered a 3-year service agreement with all new orders and many accounts expressed that they definitely would consider reordering from the company.
3. **Result:** After reviewing his team's sales figures over 12 months, he was pleased to discover that his efforts netted a \$500,000 increase, evident by new sales in 50 key accounts contacted by his sales force. Thus, he was able to confidently write the achievement statement: "Through

concerted team effort, increased \$2 million territory by 25% (\$500,000) in 9 months, by reactivating 50 dormant accounts."

Accomplishment-oriented résumés can lead to interviews!

Taking the time to do the C-A-R exercises and adding key accomplishment to a résumé is time well-invested. It's far better than wasting time ruminating over why your résumé isn't producing interviews with hiring managers. This strategy will always increase the likelihood of your résumé getting noticed amidst the plethora of mediocre ones in today's labor market.

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