

How to Write a Human-Voiced Resume

Imagine that your friend tells you "I'm meeting with a guy I know who's the VP of Marketing at that up-and-coming startup, Appliantology Inc. He and I are having lunch at Chez Bruyant down the street. If you stop by our table at 12:15 I'll introduce you, and you and he can chat for a moment."

You jump on the offer. You're excited to meet the Marketing VP, if only for a moment, and especially via an introduction from your friend who is so credible and who regards you so highly.

Here's the question you'll ponder between now and your mini-introduction at Chez Bruyant: what will you say to the Marketing guy when you meet him? What would you most like to convey in one or two minutes, to let the Marketing VP know who you are and how you could help him?



What to say to a prospective hiring manager is the burning question for every job-seeker.

The traditional resume format does the world's worst job of conveying your heft and power. What can the traditional resume communicate that the hiring executive hasn't heard a million times already?

"Oh wow, look here, this guy is a Results-Oriented Professional. I've never seen one of those before!"

When we repeat the same old tired cliches that every other job-seeker uses in his or her resume, we diminish our own power -- and worse than that, we sound like everyone else.

The whole point of branding is to sound like ourselves, not every other monkey in the barrel!

You don't have to sound like a zombie in your resume. You can sound like a human.

I know what you're thinking. "But Liz, those Applicant Tracking System Black Hole systems want to see my resume stuffed with keywords."

I'm glad you brought that up. You are done with that Black Hole nonsense. Those systems don't work. Your likelihood of hearing back after lobbing a resume into the Pit of Resume Death is about the same as your odds of winning the lottery for ten million dollars.

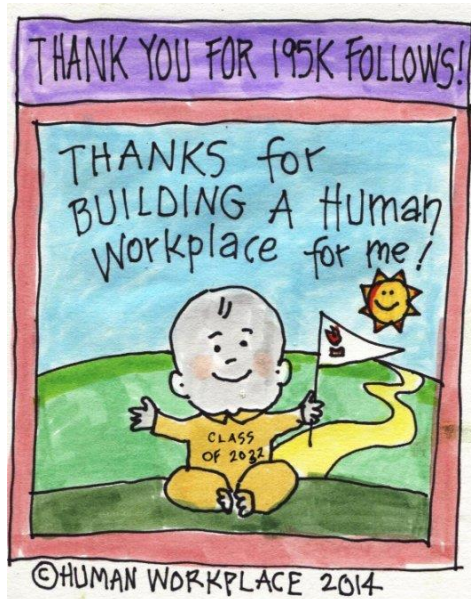
I take it back. Your odds of winning the lottery are better, because by law the lottery commission has to pay out. Employers don't have to hire anyone. They don't have to invest the eight-tenths of a second that it would take them to reply to your resume pitched into a Black Hole.

That channel is useless for job-seekers, and my advice is to abandon it, pronto.

The only thing that's going to get a hiring manager's attention is a direct communication that mentions the obstacle the manager is trying to get over. We call that obstacle the Business Pain in the manager's hiring equation.

Employers don't talk about the Business Pain in their job ads. If you read the job ad unskeptically, you might get the idea that this employer has no problems at all and that

everything is hunky-dory and perfect throughout the company. You might start to believe that the employer was doing you a favor by considering you for employment.



Don't believe that nonsense. If there were no pain, there wouldn't be a job ad! Why do companies hire people -- for their health? No. They hire people when the cost of hiring a new person is much less than the cost of the Business Pain they're already experiencing.

Your job is to identify that Business Pain, not exactly, but in general, and mention it in a Pain Letter that you'll send directly to your hiring manager's desk through the postal service.

Yes, the most effective job search channel in 2014 is the old-school letter sent in the mail!

You can't send a Pain Letter by itself. You'll send it with your Human-Voiced Resume stapled to your Pain Letter with one staple in the upper left-hand corner.

A Human-Voiced Resume is like a traditional resume except that the words on the page sound like a human being instead of a Star Wars battle drone. (There's a sample Human-Voiced Resume below to give you the idea.)



Imagine that you're a busy hiring manager with just one precious job opening to fill. It's imperative that you hire someone smart and nimble, someone who understands what you're up against and has been there. Who are you going to look at most seriously: the sheepie candidate whose resume arrives in a resume pile spewed out of your company's Black Hole, or the candidate who took the time and initiative to research you and your firm and write to you directly - not about him- or herself but about you and your business issues?

That's why Pain Letter-Human-Voiced Resume packets sent through the mail work so well. The manager is in pain, s/he opens the day's mail, and look! Here is Doctor You with the morphine.

A Human-Voiced Resume starts with a Summary. The Summary is the most important part of a Human-Voiced Resume, because it frames your background and your next career steps for the hiring manager's benefit. Once your reader (your hiring manager) reads your Summary, he or she understands who you are and how you roll. Your job history follows the Summary and amplifies the frame you shared in the Summary.

You won't list tasks and duties in a Human-Voiced Resume? Who gives a fig about your tasks and duties? What's important is what's in your wake at each job. What did you fix, discover, create or upgrade at each assignment? How did you leave your mark on the place?



You'll share your past accomplishments in the form of quick Dragon-Slaying Stories. Each Dragon-Slaying Story has three parts.

First, you'll explain what was missing or broken. Next, you'll share your solution -- what you did to solve the problem. You'll finish a Dragon-Slaying Story with an explanation of the impact of your smart thinking and your actions. We want to let the manager know why your solution was the right one for the situation!

You won't use self-praising terms like Savvy, Seasoned, Innovative, Disruptive (sorry - threw up in my mouth there a bit as I was typing) or Creative in a Human-Voiced Resume. You aren't going to stoop to praise yourself. Only fearful people do that. You're simply going to tell your story.

What if a hiring manager has a stick lodged where it shouldn't be and doesn't appreciate your direct approach? What if someone is miffed that you skirted the Black Hole tar pit and took communication with your future boss into your own hands? In that case you won't hear from them. That's a good thing! You can cross that manager off your list.

Only the people who get you deserve you. Not everyone will get you! That's okay. Your brand, like every brand, is a magnet. A magnet has two poles. Your goal is to attract the right people and repel the rest!

Here is an excerpt from a Human Workplace 12-week virtual coaching group lesson. This excerpt includes a sample Human-Voiced Resume for job-seeker Melissa James, and an explanation of the most significant differences between a traditional resume and a Human-Voiced Resume.

Melissa James

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Public Relations Manager

Since I started covering business stories for my campus newspaper, I've been a zealot for business storytelling and its power in shaping audience behavior. As a PR Manager I've gotten my employers covered by CNN, USA Today and the Chicago Tribune. I'm in search of my next Public Relations challenge with a consumer products firm looking to grow.

Career History

Angry Chocolates, Elmhurst, Illinois

2009 – 2013

Public Relations Manager

I was recruited to Angry from Jujube, the PR agency where I'd been their account executive for four years. I got Angry its first national press and an interview on the NPR radio show "Fresh Air," and created Angry's first PR strategy and media outreach campaign. Now that Angry has become a division of Mighty Big Chocolate I'm on to my next adventure.

Jujube Public Relations, Chicago, Illinois

Account Executive

2005 – 2009

Jujube was formed when Goliath Pizza spun off its in-house PR and marketing group. From 2005 when I joined Jujube to 2009 when I left, we grew from \$1.8M in annual

billings to \$25M and became one of Chicago's most well-known firms. I left to join my favorite client's team at Angry Chocolates.

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Massive Uncreative Industries, Chicago, Illinois

Marketing Coordinator, 2006 – 2009

I joined Massive straight from college and got a tremendous education in marketing there. I put together the Massive trade show program, worked on fifty different promotion campaigns and built our first email newsletter database and calendar.

My proudest accomplishment at Massive was a collaboration with Human Resources to develop a grass-roots employee and customer referral program that brought us 47 new employees in one year. We cut our division's \$1M recruiting budget in half and got the highest new-employee-satisfaction ratings in the company's history.

Education

Northeast-western Illinois University

B.A. Communications, 2006

I was the Business Reporter for the Northeast-western weekly newspaper, "The Scourge." I won a journalism award in my junior year and was a Resident Advisor to freshmen in my senior year.

Interests

I'm an amateur jazz pianist. I play with a combo at the Limerick Tavern on Friday nights. I enjoy playing Frisbee Golf and doing agility trials with my spaniel, Igor.

What did you notice about Melissa's Human-Voiced Resume™ that differentiates it from a traditional resume?

Here are some of the differences between a Human-Voiced Resume™ and a traditional resume:

- A Human-Voiced Resume™ tells a story. We can see the resume-owner's career moving forward (from the most recent job to a more distant one – that is, in reverse) as we read through the resume. The 'connective tissue' is included in the resume, to explain what hiring managers want to know more than almost anything, namely, why did you leave each job and take the new one?
- A Human-Voiced Resume™ uses the word "I" and a conversational tone. When you read a Human-Voiced Resume™ you feel as though you are reading a person's spoken words. We want to bring you across on the page in your Human-Voiced Resume™!
- A Human-Voiced Resume™ uses full sentences. There are situations where we can use sentence fragments in a Human-Voiced Resume™, but we never use the dry, boring, governmental language that characterizes the typical traditional resume.
- A Human-Voiced Resume™ tells stories. In each past job included in your Human-Voiced Resume™, we can almost see you in action in our minds. A Human-Voiced Resume™ aims for a visual, cinematic effect – we want your next boss to see you in his or her mind's eye, starring in the movie called Your Career!
- A Human-Voiced Resume™ tells your hiring manager right away in your Summary what you plan to do next and why. Your human voice is already present in the first line.
- A Human-Voiced Resume™ doesn't use a street address like "123 Pine Street." Employers don't need that information these days, so we jump straight to your city and state. We don't need your ZIP code or postal code in the resume, for the same reason.



Our company is called Human Workplace. We are a publishing, coaching and consulting firm based in Boulder, Colorado. Our mission is to reinvent work for people.

Our popular 12-week virtual coaching groups like Put a Human Voice in Your Resume, Job Search after Fifty, Launch Your Consulting Business and Grow Your Thought Leadership Flame teach the same new-millennium career skills in weekly lessons that Liz Ryan teaches in her columns.

New 12-week virtual coaching groups from Human Workplace are launching on Saturday, June 28. [Check out the list of courses here!](#)

Human-Voiced Resume MEGA Pack is Free With Registration

With your registration for any Human Workplace 12-week virtual coaching group in June 2014, you'll receive our \$340 Human-Voiced Resume MEGA Pack with tons more job-search, branding and career advice.

[Download the Course Descriptions here!](#)

Here is Human Workplace CEO & Founder Liz Ryan explaining how (and why) to break rules in your job search!