

# How to Write a *STELLAR* Executive Resume



## 50 Tips to Reach Your Job Search Target

.....  
by Brenda Bernstein, JD, CMRW, CARW

# **How to Write a STELLAR Executive Resume**

**... 50 Tips to Reach Your Job Search Target**

by

**Brenda Bernstein, The Essay Expert**

Author of the #1 best-selling e-book,

[How to Write a KILLER LinkedIn® Profile ... and 18 Mistakes to Avoid](#)

and

**How to Write a WINNING Resume**

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**THIS EXCERPT CONTAINS 14 OF THE ORIGINAL 50 TIPS FOUND IN THE FULL VERSION**

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## About the Author



Certified  
Master  
Resume  
Writer



Certified  
Advanced  
Resume  
Writer



Certified  
Executive  
Resume  
Writer



2013 Best International Resume Nominee

2013 Best  
International  
Resume 2nd  
Place Winner



2013 Best Sales Resume Nominee

2013 Best  
Sales  
Resume  
Nominee



2012 Best New Graduate Resume Nominee

2012 Best  
New Graduate  
Resume 3rd  
Place Winner



2012 Best Re-Entry Resume Nominee

2012 Best  
Re-Entry  
Resume  
Nominee



2011 Best Creative Resume Nominee

2011 Best  
Creative  
Resume  
Nominee

Brenda Bernstein, Founder and Senior Editor at The Essay Expert LLC, is a #1 best-selling author, an in-demand speaker & consultant, and one of only a handful of career professionals worldwide with both the Certified Master Resume Writer (CMRW) and Certified Executive Resume Master (CERM) credentials. Her #1 best-selling book, *How to Write a KILLER LinkedIn® Profile*, was featured in Fortune and Forbes Magazines and commanded the top ranking in Amazon's business writing skills e-book category for two years straight. Brenda espouses the belief that resume writing does not have to be a drag, as evidenced by her signature presentation [Top 10 Ways to Make Resume Writing FUN!](#)

Brenda realizes that many people struggle when it comes to writing about themselves. Her services, which include resume writing, LinkedIn profile writing, professional bio writing, and coaching on personal statements for college, enable clients to break through their resistance and look great on paper!

An English degree from Yale University and a J.D. from the NYU School of Law have given Brenda fantastic training in targeted writing. She has used her skills for the past fifteen years to coach professionals and companies on their writing projects.

For help today with your Resume, LinkedIn Profile, Personal Statement or Business Writing Projects, contact The Essay Expert.

- Email: [BrendaB@TheEssayExpert.com](mailto:BrendaB@TheEssayExpert.com)
- Web: [TheEssayExpert.com](http://TheEssayExpert.com)
- LinkedIn: [Linkedin.com/in/brendabernstein](http://Linkedin.com/in/brendabernstein)
- Facebook: [Facebook.com/TheEssayExpert](http://Facebook.com/TheEssayExpert)
- Phone: 608-467-0067

# **SECTION 1**

## **Context**

## **Tip #1**

### **Write for the FUTURE**

It is a misconception that resumes are about your past. Resumes are about your FUTURE.

In other words, your resume will work if you think about what a potential employer would want to know about how you WILL perform. What experience do you have that will enable you to make a contribution to their firm or organization?

If you are writing from the perspective of the FUTURE, here's what will happen:

1. You will write detailed bullets that demonstrate your capability to achieve measurable results. Your readers will infer that you can produce similar results for them.
2. You will think about the purpose and priority of each item on your resume, then choose and place your sections and bullets accordingly.
3. You will delete anything that is irrelevant or of minimal importance to your future.
4. You will include positions from as many years back as necessary to share information that's relevant to your next position—there is no absolute rule about how many years to include!

Keep reading for more resume tips that will help you write a well-formatted, attention-grabbing, future-based resume!



## **Tip #2**

### **Know Your Target.**

If you're not sure what position you are aiming for, how are you possibly going to get it?

Make sure you know what your ideal job is, and write your resume as if you are going 100% for that job. If there are two types of jobs you want, write two resumes. If there are three types of jobs you want...? You guessed it!

*One size does NOT fit all in the world of resumes!*

If you try to write a “universal” or “general” resume you will almost always fail. You will feel scattered and unfocused as you write, and you will most likely not succeed in obtaining job interviews.

If you are applying to multiple types of jobs because you are not sure what direction you're headed in, take a step back and consider whether you might want to get some career coaching before you sit down to write your resume or pay someone else to write your resume. Clarity of purpose is key when you start your job search. You might still apply to more than one type of job; just be clear about your intention when doing so.

If you want a recommendation for a career coach, contact us at [TEESupport@TheEssayExpert.com](mailto:TEESupport@TheEssayExpert.com). We will give you a list of people who can help.

You might want to try some exercises that you can do on your own. We recommend Mary Elizabeth Bradford's Award-Winning program, the [Job Search Success System](#), which provides worksheets and audio modules to support you through every step of your job search.

Once you know your target or targets, you can begin tailoring your resume. Many of the tips in this book will help you think through how to match your experience to your desired job description(s)! Part of knowing your target is determining whether it is an appropriate fit for your skills and experience. Take an honest assessment of whether you are a match for the position. You might discover that you are not the best fit and that your energy would be better spent on a different application. An article in *Forbes Magazine* covered this issue well: [3 Things That Will Get Your Resume Thrown in the Trash](#). While it's good to aim high, it's important to achieve a balance between reaching for the next challenge and barking up the wrong tree.





# **SECTION 2**

**Getting**

**Started**

## Tip #5

### How Long Should My Resume Be?

#### And How Many Years Should I Include?

A question that comes up extremely frequently with job seekers is whether their resume can be more than one page—or more than two pages. During my [Top 10 Ways to Make Resume Writing FUN](#) webinars I am often asked questions such as, “Can my resume be automatically rejected by a company simply for being too long?” I am happy to report that these fears are for the most part unfounded.

Let’s get it from the horse’s mouth: Career Directors International conducted a survey of recruiters, human resource professionals and hiring authorities, entitled [Global Hiring Trends 2012](#). The report is summarized in my blog article, [What Do Recruiters Want in a Resume? Answers Within...](#)

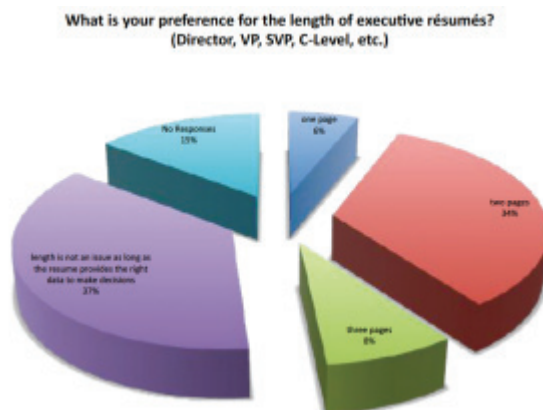
I encourage you to read the entire report if you can. It is a quick read, full of illustrative graphs and charts. Many topics are covered, including recommended resume length.

Here’s what the report found:

#### Page Preferences for Executive Resumes (VP, GM, Director, C-Level)

In the survey, 37% of respondents stated that “length is not an issue as long as the resume provides the right data to make decisions”—and 8% actually *preferred* a 3-page resume, vs. 6% who preferred a 1-pager! (Only 34% preferred a 2-page resume.) Perhaps most important, 58% of respondents stated that they would NOT penalize an executive candidate for having a resume that did not meet their preferences (only 5% stated they would do so).

Ready for a surprise? Several respondents stated that 5 pages was the maximum length they would read! Did you hear that, ladies and gentlemen? A 5-page resume! This reality check is a good one for any executives attempting to squeeze their resume onto 2 pages. Clearly it is more important to include essential information such as achievements and experiences than to meet some mythical page requirement. A hard-hitting resume with a compelling message about what the executive will do for a company will almost always be read, regardless of length.



Conclusion: It's not size that matters—it's content! A hefty 54% of respondents said the length would not really matter if the resume were well-written and highly focused. As one stated, *"As long as the person has a reason for several pages and I can find value in what is written, I don't care. However, if the resume is filled with nothing but job duties on 80 separate lines, it is a waste of space and my time."* (The same could be said of a 1-page resume that doesn't deliver the goods.)

A more important question than "How long should my resume be?" is "How much should I include about my past positions?" The answer to this question depends on the relevance of those positions. It might be sufficient to reach back ten years and then stop. However, if your most relevant experience was more than ten years ago, don't hesitate to write about it. Some people write more about older positions than about more recent ones because they are targeting a type of position or industry they worked in many years ago.

There are no rules when it comes to length or how much to include ... other than to present information in the most effective way for your specific situation.



## Tip #6

### Resume Tetris: What Order Should My Resume Be In?



Putting a resume together is like a game of Tetris. You want to create a solid, impermeable block; and each piece must fall in the right direction, at the right time, in the right order. Here are some tips on how to win the game:

1. Every resume starts with your **CONTACT INFORMATION**: Your name, city and state, phone number, email address, and LinkedIn Profile URL (See [Tip #8](#) for more on the LinkedIn URL). Do **NOT** put your contact information at the bottom of your resume! Recruiters as well as ATS (Applicant Tracking System) programs prefer your contact information at the top, and may not bother looking for it at the bottom. This is not the place to get original! You do not need to include your street address; city and state are generally sufficient.
2. Choose a **HEADLINE** that states who you are (e.g. CEO, Director of Marketing, Supply Chain Executive, Asset Management Executive, VP Finance, #1 Ranked Medical Device Sales Leader.) (See [Tip #7](#) for more on how your headline might look).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you are submitting to online systems where your resume will be read by a computer, you must put the word **SUMMARY** before this section so the computers will recognize the section.

3. Under the headline, you might want to write a brief paragraph, preferably no more than 3 lines, describing your most important qualifications and accomplishments (make sure not to use worn-

out phrases like “proven track record” and “team player”! (See [Appendix C](#)). You might follow this summary with some bulleted HIGHLIGHTS of your accomplishments.

4. If appropriate, write a list of your **CORE COMPETENCIES** or **KEY STRENGTHS** or **AREAS OF EXPERTISE**. This can be a bulleted list if you wish, or you may list them with the pipe symbol ( | ) or inserted bullets of your choice between them. Use the TAB key to format these items.

Here’s what the top of a resume might look like taking into account points 1-4:

### VP FINANCE

Revenue-generating Finance Executive with 12+ years’ diverse leadership experience. Change agent known for:

- **Adding value to organization:** Achieved **\$145M** in funding increases through implementing new processes and software.
- **Tenacious problem-solving:** Rocketed sales by **225%** in a declining revenue environment, overcoming obstacles and breaking paradigms to accomplish strategic initiatives.
- **Analytical thinking and clear communication:** Formulated grounded recommendations that **more than doubled** organizational revenue from **\$35M to \$79M** in one year.
- **Team Leadership:** Increased EBIT **\$3.6M** by championing individual and team talent, motivating staff to outperform targets.
- **Customer Relations:** Reached **100%** customer satisfaction by anticipating customer needs.

#### EXPERTISE

- Business Strategy
- Financial Planning / Analysis
- Customer Relationships
- Risk Mitigation
- Change Management
- P&L Responsibility
- EBIT Analysis
- Earned Value (EVMS)
- Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)
- Team Motivation / Development

5. Your **EXPERIENCE** section will almost always be the first section after the branding section. (Exception: for senior academic positions, Education will almost always come first—and you might want to *skip* the summaries and headlines at the top!)
6. You may then have sections such as **TRAININGS & CERTIFICATIONS; PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS; VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES; PUBLICATIONS; SKILLS & INTERESTS; TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS; LANGUAGES; ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE; PATENTS; BOARD MEMBERSHIPS;** or anything else relevant to who you are.
7. Do NOT include References unless specifically requested by the organization. Generally, references should not be on your resume but instead be listed on a separate document, formatted with your resume header. There is no need for the line “References Available Upon Request” at the bottom of your resume. It just takes up space. Companies will always request references when they want them!

The key: Relevance! Order things specifically for the position you're applying for, and you won't go wrong!

For sample resume arrangements, see [The Essay Expert's sample resumes](#). Having trouble organizing your resume? Contact The Essay Expert at [Resumes@TheEssayExpert.com](mailto:Resumes@TheEssayExpert.com) or 608-467-0067 and speak to one of our Certified Resume Writers.



# **SECTION 3**

## **Content**

## Tip #10

### The Dangers of “Functional” Resumes – and the Benefits of a “Hybrid”

Most resumes—and those preferred by recruiters and hiring managers—are organized with the most recent position first and go backward from there. Under each position is a bulleted list describing what the candidate accomplished in that position.

A “functional resume” is organized as a list of accomplishments without dates, and often without attaching the accomplishments to a particular position.

Recruiters and hiring managers are universally suspicious of these resumes, which are often constructed this way in order to hide something.

A much more accepted format is the “hybrid.” In this format, you list all your employers, positions and dates in one section on the first page of the resume; this makes it clear that you are not hiding anything. Then you can choose what to expand upon and what to present first. Here’s an example:

---

#### SELECTED EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

---

CARS R US INC., Flint, MI	August 2007 – Present
ABC PROMOTIONS, Flint, MI	March 2005 – June 2007
VANDERBILT WINDOWS & DOORS, Flint, MI	September 2002 – November 2004
FLINTSTONE REMODELING, Flint, MI	September 2001 – September 2002
CABINETS AMERICA, Charlotte, NC	March 1990 – April 1994

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#### INDUSTRIAL SALES EXPERIENCE

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CABINETS AMERICA, Charlotte, NC	March 1990 – April 1994
<i>Private German firm; worldwide leader in design and innovation of cabinet hardware. Global sales of \$100B+.</i>	

##### **Senior Regional Industrial / Technical Sales Executive**

*Traveled 40+ weeks per year serving 30 accounts (OEMs and six two-step distributors) in 5½ states valued at \$2.5M+. Identified new OEM sales opportunities and worked with client engineering and purchasing departments to secure specifications for products. Trained distribution sales people to sell to end user.*

**Notable Clients:** Riverside Furniture, UNICOR – Federal Prison Industries, O’Sullivan Furniture, Bush Furniture, Bertch Cabinet Company, Pyramid Products, CDI.

This client’s most relevant experience was from 1990-1994. We gave details about this remote position before providing details of more recent positions; and in order to allay any concerns that she was trying to hide something, we listed her entire work history before anything else. She was successful in obtaining a position in OEM, which was her goal.

There are many ways to present information on a resume; the hybrid format is one option that provides a lot of flexibility. If you have a challenging work history, you would benefit from speaking with a professional to determine the best way to present your particular situation.



## Tip #11

### Create a Compelling Branding Statement and Summary Statement!

The most important section of your resume is the top third—the part the reader will read first. You must grab their attention in 6.25 seconds so that they will read further.

#### Using a Tagline

[Tip #7](#) discussed some of how to craft the top third of a resume. You want a clear headline that states who you are and tells your reader that you are qualified for the position. And you might follow that headline with a tagline or branding statement. Here are some branding statements my clients have used:

- Leading Teams to Performance when the Game is on the Line
- Strategy Architect, Change Agent, and HR Business Partner who blends business acumen with distinctive understanding of people and HR Systems.
- Top-performing marketing executive – Creating compelling campaigns for print and online
- Decisive top performer with multi-faceted knowledge of Asian business culture and processes.
- Multicultural sensibility – Rigorous accountability – Rapid growth
- Success Formula for Operational Excellence and ROI: 80% Execution / 15% Position / 5% Strategy
- Change is the only constant and continuous improvement is the only path. Never accept, “We have always done it that way.”

In determining your branding statement, it might be helpful to answer the branding questions provided in [Tip #3](#). Often when I work with clients I am able to glean a branding statement from their [questionnaire](#). Work personality profiles are another source of information for branding statements.

One thing is clear: You don't want your branding statement to sound like anyone else's, and you don't want it to sound corny. So give it some thought, brainstorm with some people you trust, and don't settle until you love it!

#### Writing a Unique, Achievement-Oriented Summary Statement

The summary statement is possibly the most difficult section of a resume to write. Frankly, there is no requirement that you write a summary at all. If you are going to write one that includes general, puffed-up terms that make you sound like everyone else, you would do better not to write one.

Results oriented executive with entrepreneurial spirit and proven track record of blah blah blah...

Don't do it!

Instead, pull in some actual accomplishments, actual names of companies, and as much detail as you can of your career highlights, right into the summary. Consider writing not one blocky paragraph, but some



compelling bullets instead. As much as possible, tailor your summary to each job description by addressing the job qualifications requested in the job description. Here are some examples:

---

### VP FINANCE

Revenue-generating Finance Executive with 12+ years' diverse leadership experience. Change agent known for:

- **Adding value to organization:** Achieved **\$145M** in funding increases through implementing new processes and software.
- **Tenacious problem-solving:** Rocketed sales by **225%** in a declining revenue environment, overcoming obstacles and breaking paradigms to accomplish strategic initiatives.
- **Analytical thinking and clear communication:** Formulated grounded recommendations that **more than doubled** organizational revenue from **\$35M to \$79M** in one year.
- **Team Leadership:** Increased EBIT **\$3.6M** by championing individual and team talent, motivating staff to outperform targets.
- **Customer Relations:** Reached **100%** customer satisfaction by anticipating customer needs.

#### EXPERTISE

- Business Strategy
- Financial Planning / Analysis
- Customer Relationships
- Risk Mitigation
- Change Management
- P&L Responsibility
- EBIT Analysis
- Earned Value (EVMS)
- Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)
- Team Motivation / Development

---

### HUMAN RESOURCES EXECUTIVE ~ COMPENSATION, EMPLOYMENT, GENERALIST

Strategy Architect, Change Agent, and HR Business Partner who blends business acumen with distinctive understanding of people and HR Systems.

HR Director with versatile experience leading established domestic, international and governmental organizations, as well as subsidiary technology start-ups, to highly profitable results. Measurable contributions to diverse organizations such as Diagnostics Corporation and Major Pharmaceuticals, including launch of a global pharmaceutical and turning around an organization that had been unprofitable for 15 years.

- Conceptualize, design, operationalize and manage human capital systems to positively impact business unit performance.
- Employ innovative strategies to build organizational culture of collaboration, engagement and alignment.
- Committed to relevant and sustainable solutions that seamlessly align HR systems and business systems.
- Work vertically and horizontally with employees across all levels, internal stakeholders, senior management, boards of directors, and business partners.

#### Demonstrated HR Value

- Organizational Development
- Compensation & Benefits
- Talent Acquisition
- Performance Management
- Employee Development
- Employee Engagement/Relations
- Succession Planning

## INTERNATIONAL (ASIA/CHINA) SENIOR EXECUTIVE

CEO | COO | GENERAL MANAGER – B2B MANUFACTURING, TRADING & RETAIL

*Multicultural sensibility – Rigorous accountability – Rapid growth*

Multi-faceted Manufacturing & Operations Executive who takes high-level, all-encompassing goals from Board of Directors, creates focused strategies and objectives, and executes with efficiency.

Poised to take the helm at a U.S. company based in and operating in one or more foreign markets, or foreign company based in and operating in the U.S. *Asia specialization.*

- ◆ **Business Expansion:** Managed ballooning sales (\$300MM in 2009 v. \$50MM in 2002) and 675% employee growth (to 6,000).
- ◆ **Supplier Management:** Created, implemented and maintained successful Supplier Management System for large furniture company's Asia expansion.
- ◆ **Business Development:** Founded and grew a leading boutique interior design and décor business in Shanghai market.
- ◆ **Systems Efficiency:** Overhauled sourcing team and supply chain to achieve significant improvements in all supplier areas.
- ◆ **Team Building:** Recruited and mentored best-in-industry multi-cultural management teams comprised of highly collaborative, results-driven and value-added risk takers.

## SENIOR EXECUTIVE

CEO | President | Executive Vice President

**Success Formula for Operational Excellence and ROI: 80% Execution / 15% Position / 5% Strategy**

*Change is the only constant and continuous improvement is the only path. Never accept, "We have always done it that way."*

### SNAPSHOT of VALUE OFFERED

Entrepreneurial business champion, motivated by challenge, willing to take fast and calculated action to execute and implement programs, processes and structure that drive innovation and growth. Passionate with ability to inspire and energize teams and organizations. Fluent Norwegian (Swedish, Danish) & English; Basic German.

- ◆ **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT:** Key Player in transforming entrepreneurial start-ups into #1 market dominators.
- ◆ **TURNAROUNDS:** Reversed 1,8 MNOK loss to 14,1 MNOK profit in first year at company.
- ◆ **SALES LEADERSHIP:** Motivated teams to outpace all prior performance measures.

When you sit down to craft your summary (if you choose to write one at all), ask yourself: Does this statement truly define who I am as a valued leader at any organization? If the answer is no, you're not done. If this answer is yes, then ask: Could someone else have written this summary? If the answer is yes, you're not done.

Keep at it until you have described yourself in unique terms that wake up the person reading. It's not an easy thing to do, but it's worth it.



# **SECTION 4**

## **Formatting**

### **Your Resume**

## Tip #23

### Why Care About the Format Anyway?

I'll tell you a story. Not long ago, The Essay Expert worked with a client (I'll call him Jim) on his Executive resume. We gave Jim a nice looking format and he had success in obtaining interviews.

Jim's wife (I'll call her Mary) saw Jim's resume and liked the format. She liked it so much, in fact, that she decided to "steal" it and reformat her own resume, using her husband's resume as a model.

The year before, Mary had applied for a job at a university. She was not asked for an interview.

Mary submitted her newly formatted resume for the same position she had applied for the year before. Guess what?

Yep, you guessed right. She got an interview.

Was it her new format that did the trick? It's certainly a possibility.

Remember, it's not just computer scanners that read resumes. Humans read them too. You convey a certain attitude and impression to your human readers with your resume format.

Take the time necessary to create a format that you like and that will make the right impression on the humans who read it. Giving your format the attention it deserves can make all the difference.

[Click here](#) to see samples of winning resume formats from The Essay Expert.

If you are applying to jobs on-line through companies that use ATS (Applicant Tracking System) programs, format matters a lot! I have included formatting tips for ATS software in Section 6 (Technology and Social Media), [Tip #42](#).



## Tip #24

### Don't Use Templates!

Microsoft Word has many choices of resume templates. I encourage you to LOOK at them. Do **not** use the templates unless one of the following is true:

- a. You want your resume to look like everyone else's who is using a Microsoft Word template (I hope you do not fall into this category!)

- b. You are VERY skilled with MS Word and can take the template and change it so it doesn't look like the template.

Option #2 is tricky. The templates in Word are often filled with complex code, tables, columns, etc. For example:

---

**[Your Name]** [phone]  
[Street Address], [City, ST Zip Code] [e-mail]

**Professional Profile**  
[Briefly describe your professional background and education relevant to this position.]

- [Relevant skill]
- [Relevant skill]
- [Relevant skill]
- [Relevant skill]
- [Relevant skill]
- [Relevant skill]

**Professional Accomplishments**

[Field or Area of Accomplishment]

- [Achievement]
- [Achievement]
- [Achievement]
- [Achievement]

[Field or Area of Accomplishment]

- [Achievement]
- [Achievement]
- [Achievement]
- [Achievement]

[Field or Area of Accomplishment]

- [Achievement]
- [Achievement]
- [Achievement]
- [Achievement]

**Work History**

[Job title]	[Company Name] [City, ST]	[dates of employment]
[Job title]	[Company Name] [City, ST]	[dates of employment]
[Job title]	[Company Name] [City, ST]	[dates of employment]
[Job title]	[Company Name] [City, ST]	[dates of employment]

**Education**

[Degree]	[School Name], [City, ST]	[date of graduation]
----------	------------------------------	----------------------

**References**  
References are available upon request.

---

One of my clients had used a template from monster.com. The second page had someone else's name on it and the lines forming the border did not intersect properly. Why risk these deadly snafus?

As you have probably gathered, I highly encourage you **not** to use templates. Instead, create your own resume format. You will avoid the risk of an employer's recognizing the template. You will also be able to edit your resume yourself, which will allow you to tailor it for each job application.

Here's a sample resume from Monster.com. It is professional but **not** unique.

Once you edit your resume, click here to post it on Monster.com. Log in to an existing account or create a new one then upload a saved copy of your resume and make it public for employers to view. (Double click here to edit this section.)

## JORDAO MORENO

1414 Elm Drive • Philadelphia, CA 02710 • (714) 555-0155 • someone@example.com

### HUMAN RESOURCES GENERALIST

- **Certified Professional in Human Resources (PHR)** with additional state certification in California (PHR-CA) offering a 13-year HR career distinguished by consistent performance and proven results.
- **Extensive background in HR generalist affairs**, including experience in employee recruitment and retention, staff development, mediation, conflict resolution, benefits and compensation, HR records management, HR policies development and legal compliance.
- **Demonstrated success in negotiating win-win compromises**, developing teambuilding programs, and writing personnel manuals, corporate policies, job descriptions and management reports.

#### HR SKILLS

HR Department Startup	Staff Recruitment & Retention	Orientation & On-Bonding
Employment Law	Employee Relations	Training & Development
FMLA/ADA/EEEO/WC	Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)	Performance Management
Mediation & Advocacy	Benefits Administration	Organizational Development
HRIS Technologies	HR Program/Project Management	HR Policies & Procedures

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

##### TREY RESEARCH — Los Angeles, CA

Provides voice and data communications systems for small and mid-sized companies.

##### HR Generalist, 2005 to Present

Recruited to help open new company branch in Los Angeles, guiding the startup and management of a full spectrum of HR operations, systems and programs. Worked with senior management to create HR policies and procedures, recruit employees, create group benefits database, and develop orientation, training and incentive programs. Manage leave-of-absence programs and personnel records; administer benefits enrollment and programs; administer HR budget; and handle HR generalist workplace issues.

##### Key Results:

- Played a key role in ensuring the successful launch of Los Angeles office. Structured and implemented programs and policies in the areas of training, compensation structure, benefits packages, incentives and new-employee orientation.
- Fostered a team/work/open-door environment conducive to positive dialogue across the organization. Personal efforts were cited as the driving force behind branch's employee-retention rate of 89% within an industry where high turnover is the norm.
- Negotiated approximately \$0 salary offers and dozens of sign-on bonuses/relocation packages annually at both the concept and non-concept level.
- Brought workers' compensation program into full compliance. Instituted preferred providers list and trained managers and associates on procedures to follow in case of injury.
- Reduced benefits costs by 15% annually through meticulous recordkeeping and ensuring that company did not pay for benefits for which employees were ineligible.
- Wrote employee manual covering issues including disciplinary procedures, code of conduct, FMLA policy and benefits information.
- Introduced company's first formal performance review program, creating a flexible and well-received tool that was later adopted company-wide.
- Revised job descriptions across all levels and 50+ categories. "Shadowed" and interviewed employees to construct an accurate picture of the duties and skills required for each position.

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

##### CONTOSO, LTD. — Lake Forest, CA

Leading home healthcare company employing 4,500 professionals.

##### HR Representative, 2000 to 2005

##### HR Assistant, 1995 to 1997

Promoted to fulfill a broad range of HR functions, including recruiting and training employees, administering benefits, overseeing disciplinary action and managing HR records. Co-chaired annual Re-enrollment meetings, resolved conflicts between employees and insurance carriers, coordinated health fairs to promote employee wellness and performed exit interviews.

##### Key Results:

- Trained 25-member management team on interviewing techniques and best practices, conducting workshops and one-on-one coaching sessions that contributed to sound hiring decisions.
- Co-developed company's first-ever standardized disciplinary procedures and tracking system that insulated company from legal risk and ensured consistent and fair discipline process.
- Devised creative and cost-effective incentive and morale-boosting programs (including special events and a stored awards structure) that increased employee satisfaction and productivity.
- Reversed new-hire orientation program to include HR information and company resources.
- Saved company thousands of dollars every month by reducing reliance on employment agencies. Brought the majority of formerly outsourced recruiting functions in-house to reduce billable hours from 200+ to less than 15 per month.

#### EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

##### WALNUT TREE UNIVERSITY — Brookville, CA

Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Psychology (with honors), 1997

**Activities:** Worked concurrently during college as a sales rep and team supervisor for ABC Video Store.

##### HR Certifications:

- PHR-CA (Professional in Human Resources with CA state-specific certification), 2004
- PHR (Professional in Human Resources), 2002

#### OF NOTE

##### Professional Development:

- Complete ongoing training in the areas of compensation and benefits, employee and labor relations, leave of absence, workers' compensation and workplace safety/security.

##### Affiliations:

- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- Staffing Management Association (SMA) of Southern CA

If you do use a resume template, you MUST understand the formatting tools used on the resume so you can easily edit it yourself. User beware!

For more sample resume formats, look at the "After" [resume examples on The Essay Expert's website](#). Find one that meets your experience level and the image you want to portray, and feel free to create something similar.



# **SECTION 5**

## **Cover Letter**

### **Tips**

## Tip #35

### Yes, You Need a Cover Letter!

Just about every client I work with lately brings up the rumor they've heard that no one reads cover letters anymore. With the possible exception of highly technological fields and internal promotions, this is ONLY a rumor. If you take action based on it, you may shoot yourself in the foot.

In an article posted on Work Coach Cafe, [“15 Job Search Tips from a Guy Who Just Got a Job,”](#) a successful job seeker named John relates how the CEO of a company personally reached out to him to thank him for sending a cover letter! In fact, John was the ONLY candidate to send a cover letter, most likely because everyone else believed the rumor that cover letters never get read. John made an impression.

This topic is also covered in my article, [Job Search Myth: You Don't Need a Cover Letter](#). The cover letter is your opportunity to showcase strengths that you could not highlight within the confines of your resume.

Write a unique letter to the company about who you are and the difference you would make for that company. Begin building a relationship right from the start. Imagine yourself in a leadership role at this organization and write down what you will bring to the position. Sell yourself.

You do need to know your target audience. You might need to keep your letter very short and to the point, or you might have room to share more about yourself and your accomplishments. If in doubt, keep your cover letter short, sweet and focused.





## Tip #36

### 3 Components of an Effective Cover Letter

Your ability to present yourself in a cover letter is a test of your ability to communicate effectively as a leader. Here are some pointers for presenting a professional image and for conveying a clear statement of the value you would add to an organization.

1. Instead of starting the letter with something about yourself, state what you know about what the company needs. For example:

For a corporation to succeed and expand in Asia, it is essential to have smart decision-making and global supply chain expertise in place. The complex Asian environment requires a person of high integrity to lead business strategy—someone fluent in Mandarin, Cantonese and Chinese culture, with an understanding of Chinese labor laws and business structures. Someone who can be trusted to handle every facet of the supply chain to create value and growth for the company. I offer all the qualities necessary to take on the General Manager position at Company, strategically formulate a vision and business plan, then execute that plan with detail and precision.

Do you have a gap in your resume? Explain it in the cover letter:

It takes a fighter to battle “terminal” cancer and come back to run five Iron Man triathlons. I’ll fight for your company with the same gusto I fought for my life. [from [Donald Burns](#)]

2. After you prove you know what the company needs, state why you are a match. List *briefly* the major reasons you are the right candidate for the job. This task can be done in just a few sentences. Yes, really, it can! For example:

My management style has paid huge dividends in Asia for the manufacturing companies I have served for the past ten years. Through assessing and identifying people’s strengths, I match them to a need in the company and encourage them to take ownership and make a contribution. Value is added. Loyalty is created.

The reader shouldn’t have to wonder whether you’ve got the training and experience for the position. Make it clear right away, and give your audience a reason to read further.

3. Provide bullet points of your top three accomplishments—the ones most relevant to THIS position. List them briefly so the reader can get a snapshot of what you can provide to their organization.

My clients have great success getting interviews, and I know at least part of that success is due to their effective, engaging cover letters.



**SECTION 6**

**Technology**

**& Social**

**Media**

## Tip #40

### Google Results are the New “Resume”

A simple resume just doesn't cut it anymore. You need to build a strong on-line presence so you look good when someone punches your name into the Google search bar.

Ways to do this:

- 1) Have a 100% LinkedIn profile that is professional and full of keywords. Learn more about [How to Write a KILLER LinkedIn® Profile](#).
- 2) Clean up your Facebook page. That means no pictures of you within 100 yards of a beer! (Did you know that studies show people are judged as less intelligent when holding an alcoholic beverage?!)
- 3) Establish a Twitter account and tweet useful information about your field of work.
- 4) Create a website for yourself! Post your on-line resume there and stock it with keywords.
- 5) Create a PowerPoint-based resume and upload it to SlideShare. See Dreamcss's [30 Best Visual PowerPoint Résumés for Your Inspiration](#) for examples.
- 6) Start a blog and write something at least once/week. People with blogs are seen as leaders and doers. The topic is up to you as long as it's professionally appropriate.
- 7) Post a professional video on YouTube. YouTube has high search rankings and will have your video show up in Google searches.
- 8) Search for yourself on Google and see what happens. Is there anything there that looks less than pristine? If so, clean it up. It WILL keep you from getting hired.

Yes you still need a resume. Just about every hiring entity will ask for one in some form or another. But build your Google brand too.

Check out [The Essay Expert's Google results](#). The results change every day!



## Tip #41

### PowerPoint and Video Resumes

Calling all armchair graphic designers and creative people of all sorts!!! I've got great news for you: You can create a PowerPoint or video resume in addition to your standard “vanilla” resume!

How cool is that?



If you read the previous tip, you know that Google results are the new resume. How can you get your resume to show up on Google results? That's where PowerPoint, SlideShare and YouTube come in.

### **PowerPoint**

For more samples of PowerPoint resumes, read [4 Steps to Creating a Visual Resume That Stands Out](#). These folks have used uniquely creative methods to market themselves by means of their resume. Through a combination of language and graphics, they have set themselves apart from the competition: they have shown they are willing to go the extra mile to get noticed and produce outstanding results.

Don't you want to be one of them? If so, don't wait another second. Open up PowerPoint on your computer and get to work!

### **Need help publishing your PPT presentation to SlideShare?**

Read LinkedIn Help Center's [SlideShare - Frequently Asked Questions](#).

### **Video Resumes**

Video resumes are becoming more and more viable as a way to present yourself to potential employers. Many hiring managers would rather watch a 3-minute video than read through yet another resume. However, according to a [September 2015 article by Recruiter.com](#), a standalone video resume will not get you hired on its own. It's important to present a consistently branded multimedia package to succeed in leveraging the power of video and other technology in your job search.

Branding expert Alex Kecskes states in his article [Video Resumes: Should You Use Them? Do They Work?](#) that "once the CD disk, thumb drive or other media is viewed, your personality, poise, speaking skills and overall demeanor are evident immediately." This can be both good and bad. Mistakes can be edited out, but if you're not comfortable in front of a camera, awkward body language could cost you an interview, and although illegal, potential discrimination based on appearance or dialect may also occur.

If you do choose to create a video component to your job search profile, make sure to keep it clear and short (ideally, about 2 minutes) and point to that video clearly from your resume and LinkedIn profile. Use consistent imaging and branding: Say or show something that differentiates you. “Multimedia resumes work best when they are part of a broader campaign,” according to the Boston Globe, paraphrasing John Wilpers, founder and chief executive of Degrees2Dreams. This campaign “should include a blog about a niche in your professional field, personal marketing through social media, and a series of informational interviews.”

So be careful if you jump on the multimedia bandwagon. It’s not for everyone, it takes a lot of work, and it must be done well to pack a punch. Also keep in mind that many large companies won't accept video resumes, preferring to utilize resume scanning technology to pre-filter the best candidates.

For more help on deciding whether to use a video resume, see Robert Half's article, [Is a Video Resume Right for You?](#)



# **SECTION 7**

**The #1 Most**

**Important**

**Tip Set!**

## Tip #47

### How to Avoid Embarrassing Editing Marks on Your Documents

#### MS Word's Track Changes Program

Have you ever gotten a document back from an editor with tons of red or blue lines (maybe even some green ones), and have no idea how to get rid of them all, or view the document the way it's supposed to look? This tip is for you!

#### Don't Submit a Document that Looks Like This!

The screenshot shows a document titled "EDUCATION" with the following content:

- MCGILL UNIVERSITY, Montreal, QC** (2008 - 2012)
  - Bachelor of Science obtained in June, 2012
  - Member, Golden Key McGill Chapter as a result of academic achievements 2008-2009
  - Top 15% of the 2012 McGill Graduating Class during Freshman year
- NORTH TORONTO COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE, Toronto, ON** (2004 - 2008)
  - Graduated with Honours
- MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA BILINGUAL SCHOOL, Bucharest, Romania** (1996 - 2003)
- ROUGE VALLEY PS, TORONTO, ON** (2002 - 2004)
- NORTH TORONTO COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE, Toronto, ON** (2004 - 2008)
- McGill University, Montreal, QC** (2008 - 2012)
  - Bachelor of Science obtained in June, 2012

The right side of the image shows a list of formatting and comment changes:

- Formatted: Font: 14 pt, No underline, All caps
- Formatted: Font: 11 pt, Bold, All caps
- Formatted: Normal, No bullets or numbering
- Formatted: Font: 11 pt, Bold
- Formatted: Font: 11 pt
- Formatted: Font: 11 pt
- Formatted: Space After: 0 pt
- Formatted: Normal, No bullets or numbering
- Formatted: Indent: Left: 0.25"
- Comment [B1]: don't understand - how can you be top 15% of graduating class when you are a freshman? please clarify?
- Formatted: Font: 11 pt, Bold
- Formatted: Normal, No bullets or numbering
- Formatted: Font: Bold
- Comment [B2]: did you get a degree here?
- Formatted: Space After: 0 pt
- Formatted: Font: 11 pt, Bold, All caps
- Formatted: Font: 11 pt

#### Why I Love Track Changes

Microsoft Word has a very useful feature called "Track Changes" that keeps track of changes that an editor makes to a document, and allows subsequent readers to see what changes were made. When the "Track Changes" feature is turned on, anyone who opens the document can see every change made to the original document, whether to fonts, page formats, margins, and text.

Track Changes also has a "Comments" feature that allows explanations and suggestions to be entered in the margins of your document.

The value of Track Changes to me as an editor is that my clients can see what I've changed, and I can see the changes they make. I do not then have to go through their resume word by word to see what alterations have occurred. Accepting or rejecting changes is easy and does not require changing individual fonts or colors. Gone are the days of manually inserting a strikethrough to indicate a deletion!

If you are working with someone on your resume, and they send you a set of edits, I recommend accepting them and then tracking the changes you make. This system makes it easy for both parties to keep track of what's being changed, and avoids the necessity of reading the entire resume to find any changes.

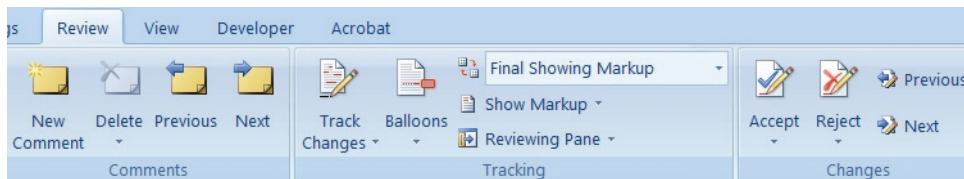


## The Dangers of Track Changes

Track Changes can be troublesome too. You don't want to send a document with lots of red lines and bubbles all over it to an employer or a school (many people have embarrassing stories of doing this)! The recipient then sees all the suggestions, changes, and possibly the original language and mistakes that needed changing.

As part of proofreading and preparing the final draft of a resume, cover letter, or essay, take the following steps to ensure that you do not inadvertently send a marked up copy to an employer:

### Directions for MS Word 2007/2010



### Review Tab

- 1) Check to see if there are any comments or tracked changes in the document:
  - Go to the “Review” tab and click on the window that says “Final Showing Markup.” Go to the “Show Markup” menu and make sure there are check marks in all the boxes (otherwise you might not see the comments or formatting changes when you look at “Final Showing Markup”).
  - NOTE: If the window says “Final” and you do not see any red lines, this does not mean they are gone! Make sure you are viewing the markups before determining that your document is clean.
- 2) If you do not see any changes or comments and you do not make any other changes to the document, you're good to go.
- 3) However, if you do see comments and tracked changes, you can do one of two things:
  - a. Change “Final: Show Markup” to “Final” and save the final document as a PDF. This solution works if the place you're submitting your resume accepts .pdf files.
  - b. Accept all the tracked changes and delete all edits and comments (unless you only want to accept some of them, in which case see step 4). NOTE: You need to delete edits SEPARATELY from comments!
    - Under the “Review” tab, go to “Accept” icon and accept all changes.
    - Under the “Review” tab, go to the icon that says “Delete” (next to the “New Comment” icon, and click “Delete All Comments in Document.”

4) If you want to accept some changes and delete others, you can accept or reject changes and comments one at a time by right clicking on them individually. You will get a drop-down menu with choices of what to do.

5) Repeat Step 1.

### **Directions for MS Word 2003**

1) Check to see if there are any comments or tracked changes in the document.

- Go to the “View” menu and click on the “Markup” option. This feature can be switched on or off. On the Reviewing toolbar, click Show, and then make sure that a check mark appears next to each of the following items. If a check mark does not appear next to an item, click the item to select it.
  1. Comments
  2. Ink Annotations (Word 2003 only)
  3. Insertions and Deletions
  4. Formatting
  5. Reviewers (Point to Reviewers and make sure that All Reviewers is selected.)
- When on, you will see all the comments and changes. When off, you will see the document in its final form. **Note: the default setting may be set to “off.” Therefore, never assume your final Word document does not contain any hidden comments or changes!!!**

2) Get rid of all the redlines and comments (you must delete edits and comments separately). Do this in one of two ways:

- a. Turn off the View Markup option and convert the final form of the document into a PDF. You can use a program such as [Primo PDF](#).
- b. In the View menu, point to Toolbars, and then click Reviewing.
  - On the Reviewing toolbar, click Next to advance from one revision or comment to the next. Click Accept Change or Reject Change/Delete Comment for each revision or comment. Repeat until all the revisions in the document have been accepted or rejected and all the comments have been deleted.

OR

- To accept all the changes, click the arrow next to Accept Change, and then click Accept All Changes in Document. If you know that you want to reject all the changes, click the arrow next to Reject Change/Delete Comment, and then click Reject All Changes in Document.
- THEN, to remove ALL comments, click the arrow next to Reject Change/Delete Comment, and then click Delete All Comments in Document.

- If you want to accept SOME changes and delete others, you can accept or reject changes and comments one at a time by right clicking on them individually. You will get a drop-down menu with choices of what to do.

3) Repeat Step 1.

### **Important notes for both MS versions of Word:**

1. If you accept all changes before reviewing the document and there is a comment in the middle of your document like “(dates?)” then that change will be accepted and become a part of your document! Make sure you respond to all questions and make any revisions needed inside your document before accepting all changes.
2. \*ALWAYS\* proofread your final document at least 3 times! As much as The Essay Expert and other editors attempt to ensure that your documents are perfect, final approval is ultimately your responsibility.
3. If you don’t want all your future edits to show up as marked on your document, turn Track Changes off by clicking on it. It’s a toggled function. Click it on, click it off.
4. Finally, when you receive an edited document, whenever possible accept or reject the changes before making your own edits! This practice will make it much easier to look at the NEW edits you have made to the document.



### **Tip #48**

#### **Proofread, and Proofread Again!**

Yes, this is the grand finale! You would be amazed how many grammatical and typographical errors show up in “finished” resumes. I reread every resume I write multiple times, and have my client and another resume writer look over the document as well. There is a LOT of information in a resume, and just as many opportunities to get something wrong.

Here are ten essential spots to examine carefully before submitting your resume to an employer:

1. **Address, phone and email.** Although it’s unlikely you have misspellings in any of these key areas, it can happen, so check them carefully! Perhaps you changed a phone number or email address and forgot to change it on your resume? Make sure your address, phone and email are both correct and up-to-date! If you are in a technology field, use a Gmail address or paid account and stay away from Hotmail and Yahoo.

2. **Section headings.** Have you checked the spelling of the word Achievements (I have seen senior executives' resumes where the heading is spelled Acheivements)? How about Experience and Activities? Are there any extra letters floating around? Did you correctly spell Extracurricular (I have seen Extracaricular). Not only could errors like these turn off a hiring manager who notices them, but they could prevent an ATS system from recognizing an entire section of your resume.
3. **Job titles.** One of the most commonly misspelled words on resumes is "Manager" (often spelled "Manger"). Check your job titles to make sure they are spelled correctly! Also, in all your correspondence, make sure to refer to the exact job title listed in the job announcement. Do not abbreviate! Why take chances?
4. **Verbs.** "Led" is the past tense of "Lead" (many people mistakenly write "Lead"). Make sure you've spelled it correctly. If you are repeating your verbs over and over in your bullets, see what you can do to vary your verbs. Your resume will truly start to shine. Finally, make sure your past jobs use past tense verbs. Often when someone converts a present job to a past job, some of those verbs remain in the present tense. This applies to ALL verbs in the section, not just the ones that start each bullet. For more tips on varying your verbs, view my webinar, [Top 10 Ways to Make Resume Writing FUN!](#)
5. **Format.** Do all your bullets and dates line up with each other? Do you use the same font and font size throughout your resume (unless you have an artistic, consistent reason for using two different fonts)? Is your spacing even? Are your headers all formatted the same way? If not, you have some cleaning up to do!
6. **Dates.** Line up all your dates format-wise and use consistent formatting (don't write 1/06 to 2/05 in one spot and 3/2008-4/2011 in another; don't write December 2004 in one spot and Dec. 2006 in another). Check that all dates are accurate, with proper months and years, listed in reverse chronological order.
7. **Document Properties and Tracked Changes.** If someone else assisted you with your resume, there might be tracked changes and document properties still lurking. To clean up tracked changes, accept all changes and delete all comments. Want more detailed instructions? Check out [Tip #49](#), or my article, [How to Avoid Embarrassing Editing Marks on Your Documents!](#) To delete document properties such as Author, go to the File tab, click on Check for Issues and then Inspect document. Follow the prompts and your document will be cleaned of whatever information you choose.
8. **Consistency between cover letter and resume.** Match your cover letter format, including header and font, to your resume format. Consistency matters to recruiters and hiring managers!

9. **Additional instructions.** Did you supply all the information and documentation requested by the employer in the job description, in exactly the way it was requested? Following instruction is one of the most important parts to a successful job application!
  
10. **How does it look in PRINT?** Yes, I suggest PRINTING out your resume and reading it on paper. You might be surprised what you find!

Once you are absolutely sure there are no errors in your resume, go through the checklist in [Appendix D](#) one item at a time. Then run it by at least three trusted friends and colleagues to see if they find anything you missed! Once they've approved of the resume, start applying to your dream jobs!



# Thank you!

We hope you've enjoyed this preview of *How to Write a STELLER Executive Resume*. There are **36 more tips, as well as additional resources**, in the complete book! You can get the full version for your Kindle [directly from Amazon](#) (note: the graphics are much sharper on the Kindle version).

## Here's what you'll get with the full version:

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About the Author

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#### Check Out Our Services

If you think you might benefit from The Essay Expert's [resume writing](#) or [LinkedIn](#) services, please contact [TEESupport@TheEssayExpert.com](mailto:TEESupport@TheEssayExpert.com) or through our [web form](#), or call us at 608-467-0067. We look forward to working with you!



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*Here's what people are saying about The Essay Expert's Resume Services:*



"I worked with The Essay Expert on condensing 4 pages and 24 years of professional experience down to a succinct 2 page Executive Resume. Brenda was instrumental in helping me land my new CEO position. I highly recommend her services to any professional seeking a job change."

- R.K., President / CEO, Code Violation Services, Inc., Denver, CO"

"This was by far the most professional C.V. rewrite on which I have ever engaged a hired team. I saw an immediate and dramatic improvement in the quantity and the quality of inquiries and invitations to interview, and I accepted an offer as VP of Global Marketing after just 2 months. Worth every dime."

- S.I., Chief Marketing Officer, Chicago, IL

"The feedback from recruiters and hiring managers on my new resume has been quite amazing. It's hard to believe, but the traction I have received since publishing the new version two weeks ago has put me in the running for 5 positions. It might have been timing, but I think it's the new resume."

- S.B., Global Sourcing Executive, Los Angeles, CA

"It more than paid off to have an executive resume that was professionally done. I was offered and accepted a full-time Director of Development position with a prominent non-profit organization in New York City. This position has increased my salary by \$50,000 and I am seen as an expert in the field. I attribute much of this to our work together."

- F.B., Non-Profit Executive, New York, NY

I was offered an Executive Director position at A Safe Place and I accepted it! I am excited for this new beginning in my life, and I want to thank you for helping me make this a reality. Your excellent writing skills created a phenomenal resume that got me noticed. I never had to look for a job using a resume before, and I was lucky to have you in my corner helping me with my job search. THANK YOU!!!!

- P.D., Non-Profit Executive Director, Zion, IL



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[Brenda Bernstein on LinkedIn](#)

***Thank you! Here's to your success as you craft a STELLAR  
Executive Resume!***