



THE WILKINS GROUP

Tool Kit

Providing Tools for
Productive Workplaces

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*"It is one
thing to see
your road,
another to
travel it."*

— Anonymous —

Career planning 101



How can leaders and managers encourage and support their staffs in being productive and innovative during these anxious and tense months?

Many organizations do their yearly planning and budgeting in the 4th quarter of the year. Would a crystal ball help predict the future? With so much uncertainty and difficult economic times, it's almost impossible to forecast the right things to work on.

On an individual basis, we can take responsibility for our careers by creating a specific strategy with Plan A and Plan B. Developing plans and following them give us some modicum of control over our future.

One of the basic steps in career planning is to create a knock-'em-dead résumé. How can we revise our résumés highlighting the significant contributions we've made to our organizations?

Carol Haig of Carol Haig & Associates will show us how. This issue features a "how to" article on updating our résumés. Carol gives us concrete and timely tips on how to give our résumés a new look focusing on outcomes we've realized and the results we've achieved in our careers. Go for it!

Angst-free résumé tune-up

By Carol Haig, CPT

When did you last update your résumé? Been awhile, has it? Feel squirmy just thinking about it? You are not alone. Most of us find updating our résumé a miserable chore. And, most experts tell us we should do it every six months. Groan...

EASY UPDATE

While I cannot make your résumé update itself, I can suggest the next best thing: a painless process that will enable easy



CAROL HAIG

tune-ups in the future accompanied by that wonderfully satisfied feeling of a job well done.

Let's assume that you have a serviceable, error-free résumé that helped you land your last job and that you have significant achievements to showcase for your next career move, whenever that may be.

RÉSUMÉ BONES

Good "bones" underlie the longevity of gorgeous models, handsome build-ings, and effective résumés.

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Angst-free résumé tune-up

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Which of these does yours have?

- Current contact information, including email.
- A succinct skill summary of no more than three or four sentences.
- Chronological work history including: employers, locations, job titles, dates, brief statements of job responsibilities, examples of accomplishments.
- Education and Training, including: degrees earned, schools and locations (with dates, unless you are over 40), relevant in-service training and advanced coursework.
- Professional affiliations, including associations, offices held, and dates.
- Publications.

Is your résumé two pages or less in length? Be sure to keep it that way as you tune it up.

Whether your résumé is chronological or functional (this is a separate discussion) start by updating the mechanical items from the list above, such as your skill summary, new jobs or employers, training, professional activities, and publications.

With that out of the way, you've already completed much of your tune-up, and you are ready to confront the challenging part of this task: your accomplishments.

Let's assume you have some sprinkled through your old résumé. You will probably need to streamline and re-focus those and then add more recent examples.

Making the time and effort to thoroughly document the results you have achieved in your work will, I promise you, significantly set you apart from your fellow professionals and enable you to clearly

express in writing and in interviews how your expertise adds value.

On a separate pad of paper, and starting with your current position, list all the accomplishments you can recall. Do this for your entire work history, position by position. It will be worth it. Aim for two to four solid examples for each job.

PARs*, for **P**roblem, **A**ction, **R**esult, they help you capture clear statements of the problem or opportunity you resolved, the actions you took, and the measurable (usually in money earned or saved, or time decreased) results you achieved.

Let's try one. **Problem:** the sales people in your company were not meeting

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PARs

But how? I hear you moan. Drake Beam Morin, the respected outplacement experts, teaches clients an effective process for pulling accomplishments from their memory bank in a succinct and compelling way that is perfect for résumés. Called

their cross-selling goals. **Action:** you created an automated tool to prompt them with cross-sell possibilities and trained them to use it. **Result:** the cross-sell ratio for the trained group increased, raising revenues 25% in the first six months post-training.

Your streamlined accomplishment statement might read: Raised revenues 25% in six months (**R**) by creating an automated cross-sell prompt (**A**) that enabled sales people to exceed their production goals (**P**). If you have figures for the production increase, so much the better.

Placing the result first captures the prospective employer's interest and enables her to quickly learn what you can do.

FUTURE TUNE-UPS

Accomplishments become easier to describe as you work with the PARs formula.

One of the best things you can do for your professional self is to keep a log in an accessible place on your computer.

When you finish a project, get in the habit of assessing your accomplishments and adding them to your PARs list. In six months, you'll be ready for your next résumé tune-up. It will take you no time at all, and you will be the envy of all the kids on your block.

— Carol Haig, Certified Performance Technologist, leads Carol Haig & Associates, a consulting firm that helps organizations improve employee performance to meet business goals.

In addition to her corporate engagements, Carol assists individuals with their résumés, brochures, and related marketing collateral.

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