

## How to Write a Resume

(Part 15 in an ongoing "How to" series. See Part One: "How to Get Out of Bed")

By Anthony Sacramone

You've been putting in 70-hour weeks, no comp time, no bonuses, no pay raises--and you're canned for your efforts. You're middle-aged, underskilled, and suddenly thrust into the technologically convoluted world of dying dot.coms. Or you've just stepped out of your cap and gown and are about to be thrust into the real world. (No, not that obnoxious show on MTV, but that thing that spits in your face upon waking in the morning.) Or you're this close to jabbing a pencil into the neck of the idiot in the cubicle next to you who hums "Lady Marmalade" all day as you try to copyedit another issue of *Necrosis Magazine*. You need another job, but you don't know where to start.

Start with your resume. I will teach you how to master the art of creative exaggeration and romantic hyperbole. Soon you will have an eight-by-ten thing of beauty, a three-dimensional whole greater than its parts. Even your parts. A carefully crafted resume is the key that will unlock untold possibilities [*continue self-affirmation blather here*].

**NAME.** This is crucial. Screw this up and you may as well join the Peace Corps and be done with it. If your name is foreign sounding or hard to pronounce, simplify it. See how easily Moishe Levine becomes Martin Lear; Ugo DeStefanelli become Hugh Stevens; and Piu Lee becomes Dame Judith Anderson.

**ADDRESS.** Not necessarily your address but somewhere you can retrieve your mail with a minimum of police involvement. The more fashionable the zip code, the more impressive to a prospective employer. But avoid such obvious landmarks as the Port Authority or Bonwit Teller.

**OBJECTIVE.** Here you must walk a fine line between exalted expectations and false modesty. Objectives such as "to rule the known universe" or "to be humbled by my betters" are extremes best avoided. Anyone whose honest objective is "international brotherhood" should be beaten with a stick. Try this: "To cease living off the productivity of others."

**EDUCATION.** There are only a handful of colleges that mean anything: the Ivy League, Stanford, M.I.T. A degree from Alfred University will get you a job directing K-Mart shoppers to the ring-binder aisle during "Back to School" week. If your associate's degree is stamped "Leo Gorcey Community College," just write "self-educated" and cite Lincoln. Better yet, mention the "war" and how it interfered with your plans for law school.

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & AWARDS.** Include scholarships, internships, and fellowships. Be circumspect about citing fraternities (especially if initiation deaths were reported in local papers). Leave out all political activity, especially if you picketed somebody or threw a rock. That's all Microsoft needs, a long-haired troublemaker.

## How to Write a Resume (this is page 2, which is to say, it is no longer page 1)

**WORK EXPERIENCE.** You were never unemployed, got it? From the time you could lawfully enter the workplace, you have held a responsible tax-paying place in the world. If there is an unseemly gap in your employment record, make a note that your government service was of a clandestine nature. If you're currently employed and are looking for a new job, explain that you're leaving your current company because everyone died there. It's always your intention to work at one place forever and ever.

**AFFILIATIONS.** Let me put it this way, you were never a member of any organization whose name begins *Worker's*, *People's*, or *White Man's*. You have a library card.

**HOBBIES.** Emphasize things scientific, computerized, and gadgety. In your spare time, you jam Chinese radar, create artificial life, and do robotics. You know, stuff like that. And no occult nonsense. You have no psychic friends, you don't talk to the dead, and the only past life you ever had was when you lived with your parents.

**LAST BOOK READ.** Most people don't include this on a resume, but it proves you give attention to detail. It also proves you can read. Again, avoid extremes! Find some happy medium between *Harriet's Night of Bondage* and *Luther's Bondage of the Will*. Try something historical, maybe on the Civil War. You don't have to read the stupid thing, just remember the dates and which side wore blue.

**PERSONAL REFERENCES.** Include last names. No one will be impressed by "Vinny" or the woman you talk to on the phone when you want another premium cable channel.

**HEALTH.** The only thing that kept you from the Summer Olympics was the sudden death of your sponsor.

With your resume completed, a strong cover letter is next on the agenda. The blueprint for constructing that mendacious gem will be laid out next time. Until then, remember: It's not a lie if you believe it.