



3 Quick Fixes For A Lackluster Executive Resume

October 28, 2013 by Laura Smith-Proulx

Does it seem like an uphill battle to convey your leadership value during your job search?

You might be a superstar at work, but if recruiters don't see that message emanating from your resume, you'll be edged out by the competition.

Unfortunately, many executive resumes fail to answer employers' fundamental questions:

- Why hire you?
- What's special about your career trajectory or background?
- What do you deliver that others can't?

If your executive resume isn't clearly hitting on these key points within the first 10 to 30 seconds, you'll need to take another look at why it's missing the mark. Here are three quick fixes for a lackluster executive resume:

1. Use Powerful Descriptions

To make an impression, your resume must lay claim to your achievements with powerful, specific descriptions of your impact on the business.

If you use language copied from other resumes or LinkedIn Profiles (or even worse, your job description!), you're missing out on the opportunity to show how your work affects the company.

As an example, consider the difference between these two statements of scope on a sales executive resume (both describing the same job):

Statement A: "Managed national accounts, customer relationships, and sales teams in 4 states."

Statement B: “Built the top 3 customer accounts producing 74% of all 2010-2013 revenue, while developing 6 President’s Club sales performers in 4 states.”

Employers are eager to identify leaders who can articulate the reasons they add value – expecting that these employees will continue to differentiate the business. Metrics-driven, power-packed language makes it easy for them to see why hiring you will pay dividends.

2. Impress Them With Context

Since recruiters and employers don’t have time to connect the dots, your executive resume must do it for them.

The secret to truly impressing them? Context.

For example, any IT Director can point out new, cutting-edge technologies used in delivering services to users. However, a business- centric technology leader can point out ways he or she has cut costs at the same time.

By the same token, an effective COO must be able to show success in dealing with pushback on critical operations changes (rather than just listing the initiatives delivered to date).

To dig deep into the achievements needed to wow employers, answer the following when writing about your executive career:

- What would have happened if I weren’t here?
- How did my work affect the bottom line – or the performance of my division, team, etc.?
- What are the reasons others believe in me?
- How has my approach transformed the culture at work?

3. Focus On Single Accomplishments

If your resume strings together seemingly disparate lists of bullet-point statements, you’ll run the risk of turning off employers who can’t see a pattern. (“Death by bullets” is a common refrain in the professional resume writing industry, and for good reason.)

You may need to employ a graphic or chart to show your contributions over time.

This strategy helps demonstrate consistent, career-defining leadership in your background, and shows why you’ll continue to generate the results employers need.

In summary, take another pass at injecting powerful information into your executive resume, especially if you’re getting the brush-off from employers.

Even if you’re not adept at writing about yourself, these simple steps can pump up your content –and create better results in your search.

