

# Resume and Job Application Tips

At some point most of us participate in the job application process. For many people this is daunting and intimidating. In reality, it doesn't have to be this way if you follow some simple principles and tips.

The starting point for this process is knowing what God created you to do. Some people have no sense of God's purpose for their lives. For others, there may be a sense of God's purpose for their lives, but often there is not much clarity. A very few do have clarity about their divinely ordained life purposes. Whatever the case, you need clarity. If you don't have clarity, you need to press into the process of discovering what God created you to do. Clarity about your life purpose is essential in recognizing the right job for you. Clarity is also a predicate for you to prepare, apply, and interview well for your right job. If you need help gaining that clarity, consider attending the next Strategic Life Alignment Seminar<sup>1</sup>—a venue that will give you tools to help you discover your life purpose.

After you have clarity about your life purpose, you will be ready to pursue finding the job that will enable you to fulfill your destiny. You will be ready to engage in the job application process because you have a level of understanding concerning your divinely ordained life purpose. Only by fulfilling your life purpose will you find peace, joy, and contentment in life.

To engage in the job application process, you need a résumé. A résumé is a summary of your background that communicates your clarity of and preparation to fulfill your life calling. It is a tool to gain the opportunity to interview for a job opening. When applying for a job, one of the first requests that an employer makes of an applicant is for a copy of the applicant's résumé. Though requesting a résumé is very predictable, rarely have I seen someone receive a job offer based solely on his or her résumé. Hence a résumé is a necessary but not sufficient document to help you achieve your goal of finding the right job.

Given the role that a résumé plays in the job application process, it is incumbent on you to prepare a résumé that will be efficacious toward your goal. To this end you need to understand how managers read and use résumés. Many managers, if not most, do not read résumés; they scan them—not with machines, but with their eyes. Hence, make the résumé easy to scan with the eye by keeping it uncluttered, clear, and concise.

Typically, employers are looking for someone who is focused. Most job applicants tend to be too broad in how they present themselves. This is usually because of the fear of missing an opportunity. A better approach is to seek clarity about what God created you to do and reflect that clarity and focus in your résumé. Employers will notice the focus and be drawn to you, if you focus fits their need. This is a win-win both for you, the applicant, and the employer.

The following is a suggested résumé outline to help you organize the content:

- Contact information
- Career objective
- Work history
- Education and training history

- Awards, professional recognition, licenses, certifications, and publications
- Personal information
- References (on request)

Here are some key tips to consider in preparing your résumé:

- Limit it to one page with plenty of white space. Use a medium-size font.
- Include a focused statement of your career objective at the top.
- As much as possible, tie everything in the résumé to your career objective.
- Emphasize the key elements that support the career objective.
- Don't leave gaps in your career history.
- Don't try to include everything that you have ever done.
- Use bullets to summarize key thoughts and focus on short meaningful phrases.
- Be honest (don't embellish)—no one can be all things for all people.
- Include key words that are descriptive of you (make it easy to quickly review).
- Keep your personal information short but meaningful.

Remember that a résumé will probably not land you a job. But a well-written résumé will many times get you an interview. A poorly written résumé will probably be an impediment to the process.

Include a cover letter with each résumé that you submit. The cover letter allows you to articulate why you believe that you are qualified for the specific position. This assumes that you have done your homework on the employer and can visualize how you could be an asset to the company. Your cover letter should articulate clearly, cogently, and convincingly why you are a good candidate for the job.

Remember, the key to finding a job that will bring you satisfaction and contentment is knowing who you are and what God created you to do. The job application process is a vehicle to help you find the place God has ordained for you to be in order to fulfill your life purpose. This makes a job search a top priority for everyone. Do it well and you will bless your employer and yourself.

Gerald R. Chester, Ph.D.  
 President  
 Strategies@Work, LLC  
 April 2007  
 Gerald@StrategiesWork.com  
<http://www.StrategiesWork.com>

---

1. For information on the Strategic Life Alignment Seminar, please see the Web site <http://www.strategieswork.com/events/sla.html>