

# (4 Ways) Take Your Resume From Good to GREAT

June 28, 2009 by [sparktalk](http://sparktalk.com) (www.careerealism.com)

By Teena Rose

**What really makes a great resume for today's job market?** The use of a branding statement, a tagline or two, relevant keywords/key phrases, and a situation/action/results writing style can actually increase the return of your resume. Let's review why each are increasingly important for job seekers competing in today's highly competitive job market.

## 1. Branding Statement

Personal branding is hot - *very hot!* Once paralleled with top business professionals such as Bill Gates, Donald Trump, and let's not forget Oprah, personal branding strategies are now applied to jobseekers. Branding is not made up of one thing, but of many. According to Wikipedia.org, personal branding *"is not limited to the body, clothing, appearance and knowledge contained within, leading to an indelible impression that is uniquely distinguishable."*

Think about Lance Armstrong, for example. When you hear his name, what are the first things that come to mind? Tour De France winner? Cancer survivor? Cheryl Crow's boyfriend? What we think about when hearing Lance's name are the very components that help make up his brand.

Can branding techniques be used for job-search purposes? Absolutely. Start by using a branding statement within your resume. Typically a one or two-liner, a branding statement could be an umbrella statement relative to the broadness and depth of you. To develop a branding statement, take your 15-second elevator pitch and rework it to include key points relevant to talent recruiters. For those who don't have an elevator pitch, write a short paragraph (4-5 sentences) about your professional career and value. Then, boil the paragraph down to a couple of sentences. Lastly, fine-tune the statement until it contains the exact wording that helps sell you to the hiring community.

## 2. Using Taglines

If a branding statement was a book title, a tagline would be the subtitle.

Taglines are terrific, enabling those who review your resume to immediately see your value ... all from a mere skim. Oh sure, resume management systems are certainly ruling the roost when it comes to resumes these days, but real people are actually out there

reviewing soft and hard copy resumes, so definitely write your resume for those pesky RMS systems, and don't forget about the human beings too.

Taking a variety of forms, taglines can be a group of keywords or a sentence fragment. The first example tagline below (Award-Winning Designs - Community Project Lead - Travel Internationally) was perfect for this client. She was targeting a high-end, executive role for a major community development company with project interests on a national and international level. Certainly we could have included this information within the intro statement, or elsewhere, but a more strategic placement adds visual interest and introduces a bit more white space to attract readers' eyes.

*...management. Slip comfortably between planning and design, spec writing and construction administration.*

**C**onsult on large-scale design/planning, sustainable, and green building design projects, participating in economic, market feasibility and density studies, as needed, as well as grading and drainage studies and solutions. Apply 21 years of construction experience, working with contract teams in tandem with third-party inspection, engineering, and building code compliance from city/state or government agencies. Direct designs associated with subdivisions, commercial/mixed-use, residential, retail, office, park and recreation, and municipal facilities. Handle complete projects, from client's specs relative to design/layout and progressing through each facet of the project. **Licensed in Louisiana and Mississippi. CLARB certificate #13xx. LEED accreditation expected Fall of 2009.**

*Award-Winning Designs — Community Project Lead — Travel Internationally*

#### Relevant Skills

- Project Management (concept/fruition)
- Land-Use. Site Planning & Density Studies
- Client Relations & Management
- Construction Administration

My favorite use of taglines is to include a quick “content snapshot” where you would otherwise see blank space. For example, readers would learn this individual is a turnaround expert by simply reading the resume; but honestly, who reads an entire resume these days?

#### Professional Career

*Turnaround Expert; Brought Operation to #1 in Market Share*

**Operations Manager/COO/CFO** • Confidential, City, State • 2004 – present

*(Direct and coach 4 operations managers while overseeing extensive financial tasks during the first 3 years, including balance sheets, cash flow, and operational statements, applying GAAP principles. Focused energies on completion of*

Taglines are another way for readers to quickly learn more about you and what you have to offer, putting you one step closer to being called for an interview.

### 3. Keywords & Key Phrases

Want to know an insider's secret to identifying ideal keywords and key phrases for your resume? Print those ideal job ads and get out a highlighter. Highlight job tasks, concentrating on nouns/actions. Then, cross-reference the highlighted keywords against your resume. Is there an important keyword (skill) missing from the resume? Does the resume need a bit more tweaking to accommodate more relevant keywords and key phrases? Sometimes a job description is filled with poppy-cosh, and by focusing primarily on those specific skills (keywords), you're somewhat getting rid of the “content fat,” enabling you to see what's ultimately important to the hiring company.

#### **4. Situation/Action/Results (SAR) Writing Style**

A SAR writing style introduces achievements into a resume, adding numbers and percentages to add visual breaks in text for readers' eyes ... it's that simple. Hiring managers and recruiters love achievements within a resume because each represents an action and result on the part of the candidate.

Introduce more achievements into your resume by focusing on your specific job area, department, or the company as a whole. Think about situations you faced during your tenure, how you responded, and the results from each action. Did you increase sales? Save the company money? Cut dependency on a specific resource? If you weren't in a lead/management role, possibly you assisted a team with achieving a sales goal or securing that million-dollar client.

Some actions seem small, but in the end, may have resulted in a big impact. For example: "Provided extensive team support during the development and integration of a new incentive program offered to the SE sales team; program added \$3.2 million in new sales and was later introduced to other US-based territories."