

The Advantages of A Functional Resume

Plus how to find a job after your spouse is transferred

BY TAUNEE BESSON

Editor's Note: This month columnist Taunee Besson answers questions about common job hunting and career problems. If you have a question about your job search or career, send it to our monthly advice column, National Business Employment Weekly, Box 300, Princeton, N.J. 08543-0300. All names are kept confidential.

Q: I've decided to change jobs after eight years with the same company. While there, I've held three different positions. The first two were enjoyable; the third one is not. Because the company had some major layoffs, I had to move laterally to another department where neither the work nor my co-workers are a good fit. Sitting here, trying to write my resume, I realize that by following the typical format of putting my last job first, I'll be emphasizing skills and experience I prefer not to use. I would rather not mention my current position, but don't know how to avoid it. Are there other ways to put together a resume aside from chronologically?

A: Yes, there is more than one way to write a good resume. In fact, people who only use the chronological format are limiting themselves to a structure that may not meet their needs. This traditional format, which lists last job first and accounts for every year since graduation, shows only "perfect" careers in their best light. The chronological resume can be downright detrimental for those who:

- Have moved around a good deal;
- Are changing careers;
- Have gaps in their employment history;
- Haven't achieved regularly increasing responsibility over time.

In your case, an alternative approach makes sense. Here are two suggestions for de-emphasizing your current job:

1. Use the chronological format, but instead of listing your positions by date, change the order and substitute the number of years worked. Example:

TRADITIONAL

1979 to present	XYZ Corp., Dallas, Texas
1986 to present	Job C
1983-86	Job B
1979-83	Job A
1974-1979	MNO Company, Chicago, Illinois

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ALTERNATE

1979 to present	XYZ Corp., Dallas, Texas
Job B—3 years	
Job A—4 years	
Job C—2 years	
1974-1979	MNO Company, Chicago, Illinois

This technique allows you to conform to the typical structure, keep the dates straight and put the positions you prefer at the top where they'll get the most attention.

2. Try a more functional approach: emphasize the activities of your target job instead of describing previous positions. Example:

OBJECTIVE Sales management position where my background in training and

Try to put your most impressive accomplishments on the top two-thirds of the first page

mentoring sales people, building new markets and servicing large accounts will be prerequisites.

APPLICABLE EXPERIENCE

Training and Mentoring Sales People

- Recruited and supervised more than 20 new and seasoned sales people for XYZ Corp.
- Developed a sales training program that was adopted company-wide and led to a 36% growth in sales in 12 months.
- (Add a couple of others.)

Building New Markets

- Introduced the QPR widget to engineers throughout the Northeast. Achieved 42% market penetration in its first two years of production.
- (List several other accomplishments that show you can perform this function.)

Servicing Key Clients

- (Discuss a few specific instances where your customer service has kept and built business with ongoing large accounts.)

After the experience section, you can list companies, job titles and dates under the title **EMPLOY-**

MENT HISTORY, or you may choose to eliminate them altogether.

There is no one sure-fire way to format all resumes. However, here are some guidelines:

1. Be sure to tailor your resume to the needs of your audience. While some interviewers may prefer a functional format, others may not trust it. Learn as much as you can about your resume's audience before you choose its structure and content.

2. Use a format that feels right to you. A resume is a reflection of you on paper. If the functional format seems too avant garde for your conservative personality, don't use it.

3. Try to put your most impressive accomplishments on the top two-thirds of the first page. If your most responsible and enjoyable job ended several years ago, the chronological resume will bury it beneath the more recent, less interesting positions.

4. Recognize that you may have to write more than one resume. The interpretation of your skills and experience that's perfect for one audience may be of little interest to another.

Q: Yesterday, my husband came home with the news that he had been offered a promotion and a transfer out of the state. While I'm pleased for him, I'm concerned about the effect a move will have on my career. I enjoy my job and have made steady progress with my company. If we relocate, I'll have to resign and start over in a city where I have no reputation or contacts.

Jim and I knew that his career advancement would necessitate leaving the city. We've discussed it in the past and decided that when the time came, we'd make the move. Now I must admit I'm not very excited about the challenge of finding work, friends and support services in a new location. I'm also concerned about our child's adjustment. He's enrolled in a wonderful day care center that will be hard to replace.

There's little doubt that we will pursue the promotion and relocation. Consequently, I need your suggestions for accomplishing the following:

- Making a successful job change that will provide a stimulating position and pay what I'm worth.
- Developing a new network of friends and leisure activities.
- Finding day care where my son will be comfortable and happy.

A: It's certainly understandable that you have mixed feelings about moving. While it's exciting to see your husband's career forging ahead, relocating

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Your turn to ask

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will require you to find a new job and develop the support systems needed to provide growth for you and comfort for your family. Often, promoted spouses have a ready-made transition while their mates take the major responsibility for re-establishing themselves in the new community.

With approximately 60% of all families having dual careers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are a lot of couples faced with your dilemma. The Conference Board, a New York-based research firm, reports that executive transfer refusals are at an all-time high of 24% because of dual career conflicts and family resistance. Pat Greenwald, associate publisher of Professional Publishing Associates, a firm specializing in relocation publications, says the "trailing spouse" is the biggest relocation issue of the decade.

As you have chosen to tackle the challenge of a successful move, here are some suggestions that should help your transition:

- Check to see if Jim's company can help. Some corporations have spouse relocation services that provide job search counseling, resume preparation, job leads shared with other firms and/or information on how to plug into the new community.

There's also the possibility that Jim's new office may need someone with your expertise. Sit down with his company's personnel director before the move to explore this option.

- Begin networking before you leave familiar territory. Often friends, business acquaintances, churches, professional, fraternal and civic organizations and even hobby groups can give you names of people to start your research in the new city. By gathering contacts from familiar sources,

you can move with some confidence that there will be people waiting to help you in the new city. Call or write the city's Chamber of Commerce and community relations departments to request information on job opportunities. They probably will send you lists of major employers, overall industry trends and percentages, etc., that will begin to acquaint you with the job market there.

- Order the local Sunday newspaper for the help-wanted section and to get a feel for major city issues, cost of living and real estate trends, places to shop and the local lifestyle.
- Check with Catalyst (212-777-8900), a non-profit organization in New York that specializes in

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helping working women and their families. They may have a network affiliate in the new city. Get a copy of the local yellow pages and look for Women's Centers, university career centers or career counselors who may have job search counseling and support groups for unemployed professionals. Call and ask for some literature. Also check the Calendar of Career Events in this week's NBEW.

- When your move is complete, begin using the information you've collected. Contact the names your resources have given you. Ask if you can get together to discuss what's happening in your field and the best approach to finding a new position.
- Make an effort to meet your neighbors. Attend

professional group and volunteer meetings to expand your network.

- Join a job search club or support group if you can find one.
- Check local want ads and register with a couple of employment agencies, but concentrate your efforts on meeting and building rapport with people whose companies can hire you.
- Do temporary work if money is critical. Temporary jobs give you immediate income and acquaint you with the local business community while you are searching for something permanent.
- For more information about support services, talk to your realtor. He or she probably lives in the neighborhood and will have excellent recommendations on shopping, doctors, hairdressers, etc.
- Ask your local contacts where their children attend day care, the name of their pediatrician, etc. Then visit, observe and get acquainted with the centers that sound most appropriate for your child.
- An added benefit of networking is that friendships naturally evolve from it. As you look for your job and support services you'll likely meet several people you'll want to know better.
- In the midst of your research and activity, take time to enjoy and reward yourself. Checking out the local art museum, taking your children to the zoo or going to lunch with a new friend can restore your perspective when your move seems overwhelming.
- Be sure to share your experiences with Jim and ask him to keep you informed on what's happening in his job. Moving strains relationships unless both partners make a conscious effort to work through it together. As best friends you and he must be committed to support and nurturing each other and turning this transition into a positive experience for both of you.