

Are Headhunters calling you...or ignoring you?

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**Are Headhunters calling you...or ignoring you?**

**By Deborah Walker**

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In my former life as a recruiter (also affectionately referred to as "headhunter") I received hundreds of resumes a week from all parts of the country. The statement that a person's resume gets a 15 second read is not far from the truth. In fact, 15 seconds is a generous assumption. In reality, a resume must capture the recruiter's attention in the first five seconds to avoid the round file. Candidates can greatly improve their chance of catching the recruiter's attention by following three simple rules: use the correct format, include plenty of quantifiable accomplishments and sprinkle liberally with appropriate keywords.

The first rule, use of correct format, is crucial. There is one, and only one, proper resume format for recruiters—chronological. Recruiters' do not have time or patience to figure out the complexities of a functional resume. To recruiters, time is money. A second danger of using a functional resume is that recruiters automatically assume the candidate is attempting to hide something. This is a universal assumption. No job seeker on earth is able to hide unpleasant facts within a functional resume. Recruiters are trained from the start to pick up on any possible "red flags" that identify the job seeker as an undesirable candidate.

The second rule, use of quantifiable accomplishments, is essential in helping the recruiter see you as money in his pocket. Remember this point—you will only capture a headhunter's attention when he sees you in terms of commission potential. Since recruiters earn their fee by providing better candidates than their competition, your resume should shout "ACCOMPLISHMENTS." Quantifiable accomplishments are most convincing when connected to bottom-line results: revenue earned, money saved, market share increased, costs cut or time saved. This type of information gives the recruiter selling points to market you to their clients and put you in front of employers quicker.

The third rule, liberal use of keywords, is important not only in the short term, but also leads to future opportunity. At any given time a recruiter may have 10 to 100 specific positions to fill. Recruiters categorize their positions by qualifications identified by keywords. When reading resumes the recruiter scans for those keywords. The recruiter may be so tuned into finding specific words that he is oblivious to anything else in the resume except keywords.

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The best way to make sure your resume is filled with keywords is to scour job postings of target positions and identify keywords of qualifications. Find the most commonly used keywords in 12 or more target postings and use those words as the language of your resume. For future use, recruiters save resumes in candidate-tracking databases to sort later by keywords. If your resume does not have the correct keywords, it may never be seen by human eyes. Correct choice of words means that your resume will get recruiter attention every time he queries by keywords contained in your resume.

Once your resume is showcased in the proper format, packed with quantifiable accomplishments and strong keywords, be sure to follow proper etiquette in contacting recruiters and headhunters. The most effective initial contact is through email. Recruiters spend 80% of their time proactively calling prospective candidates and employers. They do not appreciate spending phone time with unsolicited

callers. Once a recruiter has your resume he will call you if he is interested in you. It does no good to call him up asking if they he has received your resume. You risk ticking him off permanently.

When emailing your resume to recruiters it's best to send it as both a Word attachment as well as in ASCII (plain text) format in the body of the email. This allows the recruiter to access your information in the quickest manner in order to contact you sooner.

Recruiters and headhunters can be a tremendous resource to your job search efforts. They are privy to a great number of opportunities in the hidden job market. They are experts at presenting candidates' best selling points. They also act as go-between for candidate and employer, allowing the candidate to learn important employer feedback. Designing your resume with recruiters in mind is an important first step toward building relationships with influential recruiters who have the power to introduce you to your next boss.

Deborah Walker, CCMC provides Career Coaching and Resume Writing to executives nationwide. Accelerate your job search! visit her website at [AlphaAdvantage.com](http://AlphaAdvantage.com) or email at [sucess@AlphaAdvantage.com](mailto:sucess@AlphaAdvantage.com)

### **Let the Pros Handle It**

**By Myrtis Smith**

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When it comes to looking for a job, most people take the Lone Ranger approach. They rely on themselves to figure out what they want to do, write their resume, prepare for interviews, and create a job search strategy. And while in the Information Age, it is possible to do all these things on your own; the real question is "is it smart?"

There are many career specialists available to assist you

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with the various aspect of the job–hunting process. Below, we highlight career coaches, resume writers, and headhunters.

### Career Coach

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What do they do? A career coach can be your partner in the job search process. They can help you decide what it is you want to do, work with you to create an action plan, and assist you with practice interviews. Career Coaches are great accountability partners if you are struggling to set and maintain goals. In addition, a career coach can stay with you find a job to create a plan for success in your new role.

Should you hire one? If you're asking yourself "What's next in my career?" and you don't have an answer, a career coach may be a good resource for you. If you are able to create an action plan but have trouble following through, a career coach can create accountability and examine potential reasons why you aren't achieving your goals.

What to look for? There are lots of people calling themselves coaches. When looking for a coach, find someone associated with a professional organization or training institute for coaching (Coach U is one of the more popular ones). Also, only work with a coach who will give you at least 1 complimentary session; this will give you an opportunity to see if your personalities "click."

### Professional Resume Writer

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What do they do? A professional resume writer will take information you provide about yourself and your previous work experience to create a top–notch resume. They have excellent writing skills and are familiar with what key words recruiters look for when reviewing a resume.

Should you hire one? Simply put, if you're sending out a large number of resumes but not getting any interviews it is time to hire a professional resume writer.

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What to look for? Find someone who will spend time interviewing you and helping you decide what to include on your resume. If they simply ask you to fill out a form without a live conversation, find someone else. Also ask about fees up front and be sure you understand what is included.

### Headhunter

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What do they do? Headhunters (sometimes called Recruiters) match employment opportunities to available candidates. Headhunters generally have a good knowledge of the companies they represent and can pre-screen potential candidates, saving both the employer and the job hunter time.

Should you hire one? Using a headhunter is a good idea if you have a very specific skill set that companies may not advertise. Headhunters are also very useful if you are conducting a passive job search and just want to stay aware of openings in your field.

What to look for? The key thing to remember about headhunters is they work for the person who pays them (sounds obvious doesn't it?). If a headhunter is being paid by the hiring company (and they often are) keep that in mind as you listen to their advice. If you are paying a headhunter, know what you're paying for. Do they charge a flat fee or a percentage of your first year's salary? If you find a job without their help, do you still have to pay the fee?

Myrtis Smith is the founder of Premeditated Life. At Premeditated Life we have one focus – Your Career. As a career coach I offer a variety of services designed to improve your professional skills, support you in your career goals and transitions, and empower your job search. For a FREE Career

Assessment contact us at [coaching@premeditatedlife.com](mailto:coaching@premeditatedlife.com)

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