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How To Start A Home-Based Resume Writing Business

By Ann Baehr

Do you find yourself at work daydreaming of running a home-based business, only to become

paralyzed by the fear of start-up costs and how to get started? If you are a good listener who enjoys helping people and have skills in the areas of researching, writing, and formatting documents on the computer, you might want to consider becoming a resume writer. Make no mistake - the industry is huge and competitive, and you will not get rich quickly. You can depend on a steady income if you work hard, but it won't be immediate. The national salary average for a home-based resume writer ranges from \$25,000 to \$100,000 depending on how much marketing you do, how many clients you can manage weekly, how much you charge, and if you are working for yourself, in partnership with someone, or employing subcontractors to write your clients' resumes and cover letters.

GETTING STARTED

If you are currently working and are not in a financial position to take a risk, keep your job and start slowly by working only in the evenings and on weekend. As a home-based entrepreneur, you must feel comfortable bringing clients into your home. If you have small children and your home does not have a separate entrance, make sure someone is able to watch your children to avoid interruption. Make sure your family is supportive and is willing to keep the house clean and quiet when you know you are expecting a client. If you are not comfortable with meeting clients in person, you can decide to work strictly over the Internet. Some resume writes meet at local libraries and coffee shops to conduct their client in-take interviews.

START-UP COSTS

To succeed as a resume writer does require a lot of determination and hard work, but it does not have to cost an unreasonable amount of money to get started. Start up costs will vary depending on your investment. To begin, you will want to purchase an up-to-date computer with high-speed Internet access and a good word processor such as MS Word or WordPerfect. Ideally, you should have a wireless laptop so you can sit somewhere comfortably when you work or for when you want to take your computer on the road for whatever reason. You will also need a laser printer, a desktop or internal fax (such as e-fax.com), and a second telephone line if you live with people who use the phone a lot.

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Supplies include toner and resume paper (

<http://www.southworth.com>

) if you are providing resume

prints to clients (usually local resume services; Internet-based clients are satisfied with the electronic version of their resume). Mailing clients hard prints of their resumes is an added cost to them and you since you must charge tax on a tangible item. Good resume paper averages three to ten cents per sheet and postage costs depend on how many prints you are sending (can be a lot if the resume is two pages).

MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

There are two sure-fire ways to generate new business. If you are looking to start small, local advertising in the Yellow Pages is the best way to get started. At first you can begin with an in-column print ad (simply having a commercial telephone number gives you a free line listing in the Yellow Pages under your business category, but will not generate as much business as an ad would) and eventually graduate to display ads with color or large black print ads. Often, the charge goes directly on

your monthly phone bill.

The other way is to launch a website. Unless you can do your own website, you will need to hire a web designer. Cost range from \$200 and up for a basic website - and will increase significantly depending on what you want done. You will need to tell your web designer what you want the website to say and how you want it to look and work for you. So be sure to do your homework by looking at other websites to get a feel for content and design.

After you have a website developed, potential clients must be able to find you on the Internet. That involves Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques. This is the difference between coming up in Google, Yahoo, and MSN one page 1 or 150. You can do Internet research on SEO strategies and teach yourself the necessary skills (recommended for the small business owner) or you can hire someone to do it for you. SEO costs range, and can be as much as \$3,000 to get started and as much as \$1,000 a month to maintain and increase your page ranking. There is also SEO software on the market that you can purchase to help you manage the process.

DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS

Client relationships and the art of resume writing and cover letter writing are probably the hardest part of all. There are so many occupations out there that you must have a general understanding of most of them to engage in a good conversation with a jobseeker. They must be made to feel confident that you know what you are talking about and will be able to do their resume and cover letter. And, it is important that you know what you are doing in order to develop a good resume. Today's jobseeker is very savvy and is capable of writing a fairly decent resume using a vast array of free information available to them in resume sample books and on the Internet. They hire professional resume writers

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because they need someone to provide consultative advice and to write a resume and cover letter in way that they cannot. You can visit many free Internet sites such as the Occupational Outlook Handbook or rent resume sample books from the library to study various job types, client situations, and wording. The best way to learn is working directly with clients. They will tell you what you need to know simply by answering your questions and telling you what they do, which should include their accomplishments.

A slow, but effective and affordable way to get started is to volunteer your free resume writing services. Who wouldn't take advantage of that, considering today's professional resume writer charges anywhere from \$89 for a very basic resume to \$1,500 for a comprehensive executive resume. You can advertise your free services at your local community college, library, and homeless shelter, as well as help friends, family, and neighbors. Don't expect to generate new business this way. It could happen, but it is not likely.

Once you have gained a working knowledge of various occupational areas and have mastered the art of interviewing clients, you will need to have very good word processing and document formatting skills so you can create an attractive resume. You will also need to have a knowledge of the resume writing process so you can strategically lay the resume out on paper in the proper manner. For example, you should know that the Education section for a new college graduate is the first section before work experience unless their work experience is extensive. In short, you need to know what will sell your client (jobseeker) to a hiring company. This is why the resume is called a marketing tool.

When you are done creating the resume, the client will let you know if they are happy with the results and will work with you on revisions. When it is finalized, it is recommended to only send an email

version of the resume to clients because they need to learn how to modify their resumes if they want to ensure a successful job search campaign (this is something you must teach them). This is the more affordable and efficient solution for both you and your clients because the hard prints quickly become obsolete. You should never send a cover letter in hardcopy because the cover letter must be personally addressed to the hiring manager/company. This should only be provided in electronic form i.e. email or disk/CD. Another very important form of the resume the client will need is a plain text version (ASCII). You will need to learn how to convert and format the resume to plain text so the client can upload their resume to major job boards such as monster.com, hotjobs.com, and careerbuilder.com.

DEFINING YOUR BUSINESS

A resume writer falls into two categories - a resume generalist or niche market. A resume generalist writes for all occupational disciplines and a niche market resume writer specializes in one occupation such as teachers, or a career level such college students. If you decide to target a niche market, you will be expected to have an expertise in this area. So be sure to master everything you need to know in that occupational area. You might not get as much business as a generalist would in the beginning, but as the years progress you will grow your niche business if you work hard and smart.

ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY

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Job seekers need to know they can trust you before paying you. One way is to establish yourself with resume writing organizations. They include the National Resume Writers' Association (nrwaweb.com), the Professional Association of Resume Writers (parw.com), Career Masters Institute (cminstitute.com), and the Professional Resume Writers and Research Association (prwra.com). Annual memberships range from \$150 to \$175. You will have the opportunity to network with other resume writers on an e-list, have access to monthly newsletters, attend annual conventions (conventions are a few hundred dollars to attend), and get certified by taking (tough) certifying tests to get certified as a professional resume writer. Each organization has their own guidelines. Modest test taking fees average a couple of hundred dollars and the average first-time pass rate is 50% with the opportunity to re-test without having to pay additional fees. After that, the wait time is generally six months or a year to test again for a fee.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Check with your local Chamber of Commerce and accountant to set up your business structure, business registration, and taxes.

Ann Baehr is a CPRW and President of Best Resumes of New York. Notable credentials include her former role as Second Vice President of NRWA and contribution to 25+ resume and cover letter sample books. To learn more visit

<http://www.e-bestresumes.com>

Resume Writing and Preparation is Free Online

By Donna Monday

Creating a strong resume is a very important part of applying for a job, either online or off line. There are many resume writing services that will help you build an impressive resume for job interviews.

You can also learn how to write a resume for free by surfing the Internet for resume writing help. Many sites will show you tips and advice on choosing a resume style that works best for you.

You can also find samples of resumes, resume templates, resume software, and examples of resume cover sheets or letters.

Whether you're looking to create a business resume, marketing resume, military resume, electronic resume, accounting resume, nursing resume, acting resume, sales resume, teacher resume, executive resume, student resume or a customer service resume, you can find great advice online with a little research.

When preparing your resume, keep in mind that employers use resumes for several purposes:

Screen Applicants - Most employers will only look at a resume for about 30 seconds to determine

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whether or not an applicant is a good fit for their organization.

Develop Interview Questions - Statements on your resume can be used to formulate questions they may ask during an interview.

Communication Skills - Employers want to see how well you express yourself.

Qualifications - Employers will reference your resume when making hiring decisions based on how closely your qualifications match their needs.

Writing a resume isn't easy, but by studying various tips and advice, you can learn to create a type of resume that will get you one step closer to your ultimate goal of finding a great job.

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Donna Monday writes employment related articles for

<http://www.get-a-job-interview-quick-tips.com>

Resume Writing and Preparation is Free Online
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