

Thinking about Hiring a Professional Resume Writer? Ask These 7 Questions First!

So, you're ready to take the next step in your career but your resume is lackluster. You don't want to end up at the bottom of the pile, so you start exploring the possibility of hiring a professional resume writer. Good for you! But there's a problem: How do you separate a good one from a scammer? (Sadly, there are a LOT of unqualified folks out there selling resume services who have no experience and no business doing so!)

Before you hand over *any* of your hard-earned cash, do some serious investigation. Below, I've provided 5 questions you should ask before making any decisions regarding hiring a resume writer, along with explanations of why this information is important. And, because I'm a resume writer and I would love your business, I've also included my answers. I hope you'll add my name to the list of potential choices! Please don't hesitate to call or email me so we can discuss my services and your needs in greater detail.

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Visit: www.EatYourCareer.com/resumes

1. Do you have any samples?

Nothing will be a more powerful indication of whether or not this person has the goods than actually *seeing* the work he or she has produced in the past. Most experienced resume writers will have a variety of samples to look at, from people at all levels and with all kinds of backgrounds. Looking at a few different samples will give you a nice, well-rounded view of the overall quality of their work.

If you'd like to see samples of my resume work, please visit this page:

<http://www.eatyourcareer.com/services/resumes-cover-letters/samples/>

2. What do you think are the most critical elements of an attention-grabbing resume?

This is, by far, the most important question. You want to listen closely to make sure the writer really KNOWS what gets attention in today's marketplace. There are always new "tricks" floating around, but a strong resume writer will know which strategies actually work and which ones are just hype. They'll give you specific techniques, not general statements like, "Well, it really has to pack a punch and make you stand out." Yeah, that's a given...but how??

For me, I have a few guiding principles. An attention-grabbing resume is, among other things:

- **USUALLY chronological format:** Don't trust a resume writer who wants to write a 100% skills-based (or functional) resume. Recruiters, hiring managers and anyone else making hiring decisions won't want to see something so out of the ordinary. 90% of resumes are in chronological format. The other 10% are a hybrid—a mix of chronological and functional. When a fully skills-based resume comes across the desk of a hiring manager or recruiter, it sends up a big red flag and goes directly to the bottom of the pile. This kind of resume is only used when people are trying to hide something. If you have an odd situation to address, it can be done in the cover letter and in a traditional chronological or hybrid resume. But your resume writer has to be very skilled at handling these kinds of things (see question 6).
- **ALWAYS focused on achievements:** Any resume writer who includes basic tasks or duties on a resume isn't worth your money. A resume is fundamentally different from a job description. Every sentence should point to your accomplishments.
- **Keyword focused:** A strong resume writer will understand applicant tracking systems as well as keywords (how they work and how to determine the right ones to use). Make sure they talk about this in-depth without prodding from you.
- **Nicely formatted:** A strong resume writer is, first and foremost, a writer, not a designer. However, the format is an essential part of the overall look and feel of the document. Most resume writers have a few formats that they know work really well. They will know which one is best for your situation.

3. What is your process?

How a resume writer works with you can vary. I know many don't do anything except look at your existing resume and make improvements from there. However, that defeats the purpose of hiring a professional. If that's all they're doing, it's not worth it. Some writers will send you a questionnaire to complete and send back to them. That's fine, but in my opinion, it's still not enough.

Personally, I do a full 90-minute one-on-one phone consultation where I interview you extensively on your background, pulling out all of the relevant information I know I'll need. I record this conversation to ensure accuracy as I'm putting together the resume, so you can "brain dump" on me as much as you'd like! Prior to that call, I ask for your existing documents and provide a list of questions I'd like you to review and consider to ensure you're arriving with all of the necessary information at your fingertips. My job in that call is to grill you...so prepare for a lot of talking! But when it's done, I'll have so much great information to work from; it's totally worth it.

4. Do you have any testimonials or references?

The proof is in the pudding as they say! The best people to “sell” a writer’s services are the people who have actually experienced them. Ask to see testimonials or get the name and contact information for someone who can vouch for the work. Always look for results: Did the person receive more interview requests with the new resume? If not, the service wasn’t a success. If so, it worked! This is the one and only important factor.

Here’s a testimonial from one of my previous resume clients:

“Chrissy, you are SOOO good. This is beyond awesome! I sent my new resumes and have gotten 2 responses in the last 24 hours.”

–Lori B., Greenwood, MO

5. What is your education in the field?

Sadly, many—MANY—self-proclaimed resume writers have little to no experience writing professionally and no education in the field. Anyone with a laptop can set up shop and call himself a writer. Some large “resume factories” employ people outside of North America, many of whom are not native English speakers, and pay them pennies for the work.

Personally, I’ve been writing professionally for over 10 years. As a former managing editor for an online publication and a contributing writer for some of the world’s most renowned publications (including Forbes.com and U.S. News & World Report), I know my skills are far beyond the average resume writer. I also have certification in copyediting, which means my work is 100% error-free, guaranteed. Finally, I’m a certified Professional Career Manager (PCM). Obtaining this credential required completing several levels of resume and cover letter instruction—far beyond other certification programs.

6. How will you handle this odd situation in my work history?

Almost everyone has something in his or her work history that isn’t “perfect”. If you’re worried about trying to downplay a gap in employment or a non-traditional career path, you’re wise to work with an experienced resume writer. The writer is there to think about the situation differently and identify the best strategy. It’s doesn’t require lying or creating some kind of unique, tricky format to hide it. A great resume writer has seen a whole slew of weird situations...yours won’t be anything new!

Personally, I believe these situations are totally manageable...and in some cases, we can even make them work FOR you. It’s all about choosing your wording carefully and finding your unique angle. No trickery necessary.

7. What are your fees?

Remember: You get what you pay for. If you want to pay peanuts, don't expect a big return on your investment. However, you don't have to fork over thousands to get a high-quality document. Consider what it's worth to you: A great resume could potentially land you a key interview. What does that mean financially? If you're not willing to pay more than \$100 for that, you aren't placing an appropriate value on yourself.

My resume and cover letter package is a flat \$600 (executives and entrepreneurs have a \$200 add-on fee due to the time investment involved on my end). There are no hidden fees. This includes everything: The phone consultation and one round of revisions. My typical turn time is 5 to 7 business days.

I would love to work with you to create a fabulous, attention-grabbing resume that reflects your unique personal brand. Please visit my website or contact me directly to get started.

Chrissy Scivicque is an award-winning writer and certified career coach. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing from Sonoma State University and Certification in Copy Editing from UC San Diego. Chrissy is also a Certified Professional Career Manager (PCM) and has completed 120+ hours of CTI core curriculum for life coaches. Her writing on career-related topics is regularly featured on dozens of websites including Forbes, U.S. News & World Report, Monster, CareerBuilder, CBS News (formerly BNET), and Careerealism among others. Visit www.EatYourCareer.com for more information or call (303) 872-3731.