

STAND OUT!

The Insider's Guide to the VisualCV



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A VisualCV, filled with well-written content, will help you tell your story, communicate your value, and gain a competitive edge in your job search better than any other resume out there.

– Louise Kursmark,
President, Best Impression Career Services

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STAND OUT!



VisualCV is a revolutionary approach to creating an Internet-based resume, building and managing an online career portfolio, and securely sharing professional qualifications with employers, customers, partners and colleagues.

With VisualCV:

- Stand out professionally
- Accelerate your career advancement
- Be in control

Stand Out in the Crowd: VisualCV offers greater depth, breadth and substance than traditional resumes, allowing you to fully present your skills and capabilities, all in a secure environment. Showcase yourself with accolades, awards, transcripts, work samples, charts, graphs, videos and recommendations (and more) – all embedded within your VisualCV.

VisualCVs Are Not Just for Job Seekers: You can use VisualCV to build and maintain a professional online profile to use in all professional networking situations. Create multiple versions of your VisualCV for multiple audiences.

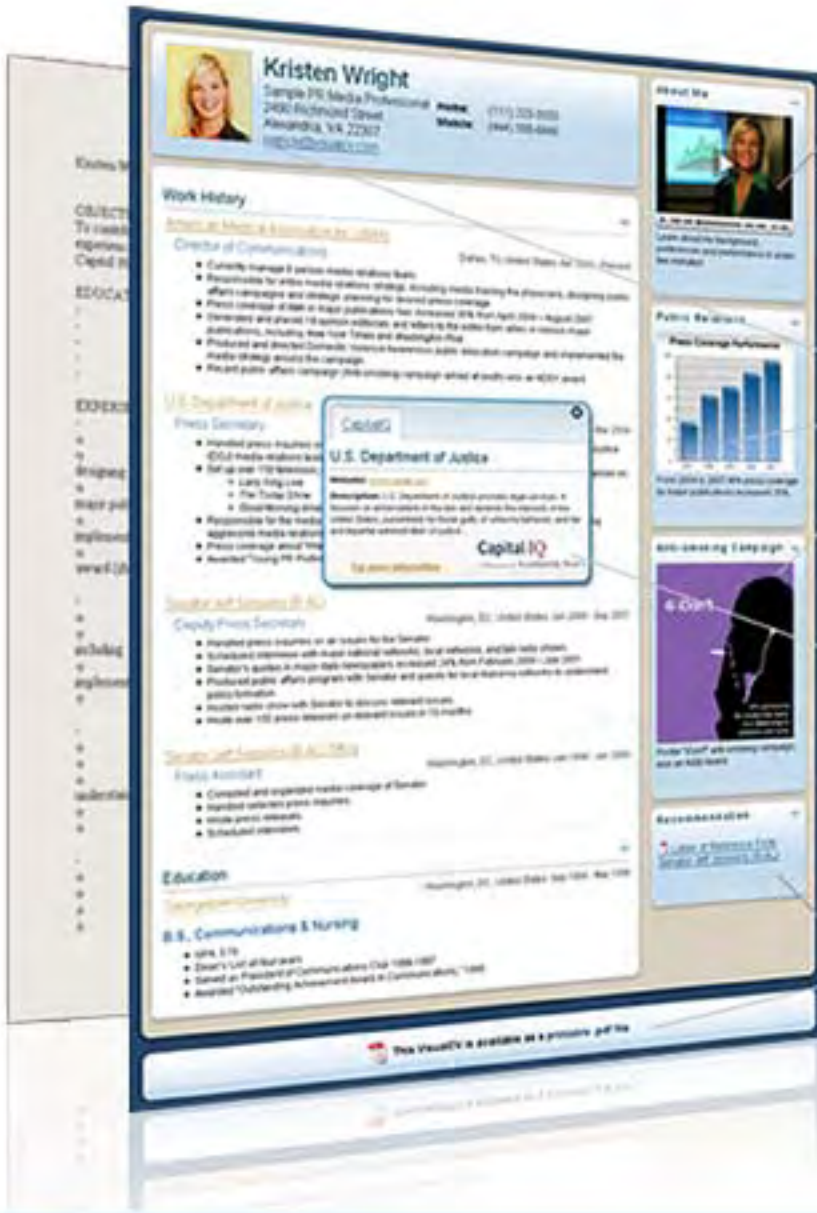
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To Get a Better Job You Need a Better Resume!



Use optional video to highlight your presentation skills.

Include images, charts and audio to showcase your work samples and performance.

Informational pop-ups provide instant data about employers, colleges and universities.

Embed letters of recommendation, diplomas or award certificates. Instantly view and create PDFs.

Welcome to *The Insider's Guide to the VisualCV!*



A VisualCV, filled with well-written content, will help you tell your story, communicate your value, and gain a competitive edge in your job search better than any other resume out there.

- Louise Kursmark, President, Best Impression Career Services

We know that writing a powerful resume, one that represents your many skills and talents, is no easy task. That's why we teamed with author, executive resume writer, career consultant and speaker, [Louise Kursmark](#), to bring you [The Insider's Guide to the VisualCV](#).

Louise has more than 20 years of experience in the career management industry. She is the author of 19 career-related books and has earned multiple industry certifications (including the world's first "Master Resume Writer" credential) and resume-writing awards. Her advice and expertise have been sought by ExecuNet, Netshare, CareerJournal.com, Bluesteps, FENG, BusinessWeek Online, and numerous radio programs.

We asked Louise to write a downloadable eBook for VisualCV members to help them make the most of their VisualCV experience. She agreed and has written a guide with all the strategies and tips you will need to extract the power of the VisualCV for the purpose of career progression, business development, or networking.

Here is a quick overview of the guide. Or, turn the page and start reading!



Want more information on why you need a VisualCV? Head to the [For Your Career page](#) to find out how a VisualCV will help you.

Section 1: Create a High-Impact Resume

Authentic. Relevant. Compelling.

Long gone are the days when recruiters and employers would sit in uninterrupted silence and carefully read multi-page resumes from cover to cover. Nowadays, interruptions and distractions are the norm, and recruiters' time is increasingly crunched. Simply to decide if they want to take the time to read a resume, they need to quickly pull out key facts—do you have the basics of what they're looking for? Then, if they do decide to invest more time in really reading your resume, you'd better not lose their interest. Your resume needs to be sharply focused, compelling, and entirely relevant.

Because the VisualCV is web-based, it's even more essential that the resume component be crisp and clear. Readers/viewers will have multiple opportunities to click away from your information. Sure, they're most likely to click to another element of your VisualCV—perhaps a video, a chart, a presentation, or a reference recommendation. But in the time that they spend looking at your resume, you want them to gain quick impressions and a few hard facts that will reinforce your message of “who you are” and “what you're good at.”

This guide will help you create a resume that communicates your message and establishes your value. It will lead you through decisions about what material to include, how to include it, and how to position it for maximum impact within the VisualCV and in the minds of recruiters and potential employers.

Note to New Grads

Although the overall strategy and advice in this guide do apply to you, you might be challenged by the fact that you have little or no relevant work experience to include on your resume. Don't despair! I've written a separate Section that addresses your unique situation and gives you ideas and examples for spinning your educational, part-time, co-op, extracurricular, and other experiences into gold for your resume. See Section 2.

What is a Resume?

Before we start discussing what your resume should include, let's clear up a few common misconceptions about resumes. In brief, your resume should not be:

- A “career obituary”—a warts-and-all description of everything you've ever done in your work life.
- An apology—for any less-than-successful experiences, gaps, or other anomalies.
- An equally weighted description of all of your career experiences.
- Your life story.

Instead, your resume should be a *capabilities statement* filled with promise and proof. And it should perfectly position you for the job you want.

Here's how to accomplish that.

RESUME STRATEGIES

STRATEGY #1: Clarify Your Objective

Before beginning to write your resume and create your VisualCV, take some time to think about what you want to do next. Defining your current career objective is a critical first step because *how you want to be perceived* is the perspective you must keep in the forefront of your mind as you choose, position, and describe all of the information in your resume.

Remember, you are not writing your “career obituary.” You don't necessarily need to include everything about your past career experiences. You must carefully select the real and relevant facts and experiences that support your current goal. So take some time to reflect on what you love to do, what you do best, the kinds of activities you'd prefer in your next job, and the environment—the job culture, company type, location, and more—that will give you the greatest job satisfaction.

Now, you might or might not wish to include a Career Objective at the top of your resume. In fact, most current-day resumes begin with a Profile, Qualifications Summary, or other introduction rather than an objective statement. But whether you choose to include an objective or not, it's imperative to know what your objective is! Otherwise, you will not be able to conduct a focused and effective job search.

Multiple Objectives

But what if you're considering more than one objective? If your objectives are substantially similar—such as CIO / Information Technology Manager / Director of Network Infrastructure, you will be able to use the same resume for most jobs that you're interested in. But in other cases, one resume won't do the trick—your objectives are dissimilar enough that trying to “cover all the bases” will result in an unfocused and disjointed resume.

Consider these instances when you might need more than one version of your resume:

- When your objectives are similar but not the same—for example, Customer Service Representative or Sales Representative. In the first version, you'll want to emphasize your customer successes and relationship skills, while in the second version your sales numbers will be paramount.
- When you are pursuing jobs that are significantly different—such as a part-time bartender position to help pay the bills while you simultaneously pursue full-time work as a librarian. Clearly, what will make the right impression for one of those objectives will not work well for the other.

- When you are looking at roles at significantly different levels—for example, Business Analyst (individual contributor role) and VP of Strategic Planning (business leadership role). In the first instance, you’ll want to highlight your analytical skills and business projects, while in the second you’ll need to present a bigger-picture focus and demonstrate management skills and experience as well as strategic planning ability.
- When you are making a significant career transition but want to have your “same-old” resume as a safety net. For example, one of my clients, a Vice President of Sales, wanted to move to the nonprofit world and become a Director of Development at a university. We prepared a strong resume that perfectly positioned him for his new role, emphasizing his relationship-building skills, sales successes, and long-time involvement in fundraising for community causes. But he didn’t know if he would be able to make the move in a reasonable timeframe, so he also prepared a resume to simultaneously pursue VP of Sales positions.

With your goals clearly defined, you can create a single or multiple versions of your resume to present just the relevant information to potential employers.

VisualCV Advantage: Multiple Versions



With VisualCV.com, you can build and store multiple versions of your resume, and you can easily keep track of which version you send to which people and which companies. What’s more, you can quickly pull together a new version of your resume for sudden opportunities that don’t quite fit the resumes you have on file.

For those of you who are uncertain of your career objective—you haven’t quite settled on a goal and don’t want to limit yourself to specific job titles—you’ll find that writing a powerful and effective resume is extremely difficult if not impossible. Remember, your resume must present just the right mix of meaningful information relevant to your goal. Without a goal, you don’t know what information to include, what skills or successes to highlight, and what details to omit. You’re forced to include everything—just in case—and the end result is usually a resume that does not capture interest because it’s not focused.

Employers want to know what you want to do; it’s not their job to figure that out. So do take the time to define a goal (or multiple goals) before writing your resume.

Insider's Tip: Know When to Call in a Coach

A professional career coach can help you assess your capabilities, explore options, establish goals, create an action plan, and execute each step of the plan till you reach your goal. A coach is also an “accountability partner,” someone who will hold your feet to the fire and make you do the tough stuff needed to move forward.

Lots of people use coaches on an ongoing basis throughout their career—most intensively during a job search or career crisis, of course, but also for continuous help with direction, development, and effectiveness. On the other hand, many people have very successful careers and multiple high-stakes job changes without ever hiring a coach.

However, if at any time you are truly “stuck”—you’ve tried everything and nothing has worked, you can’t get an interview or find a job, you don’t know where to go next in your career, you’re seriously unhappy in your job but don’t see a way out—this is when a coach can be a lifesaver. Look for a certified coach with significant experience working with people with similar challenges. Interview several “possibles” and get a clear understanding of what’s provided, what you’ll actually receive, and how you’ll work with the coach. Then choose your coach, commit to the process, and do the work necessary to achieve your goal.

STRATEGY #2: Organize Your Material

Most resumes follow a fairly typical format:

Introduction—might include some or all of the following:

- Profile
- Summary of Qualifications
- Career Objective
- Core Skills List
- Highlights of Accomplishments

Career History—most often in reverse-chronological order and usually including all of these elements:

- Employer Names and Locations
- Dates of Employment
- Job Titles
- Job Descriptions
- Accomplishments

Education—to include some or all of the following:

- Name of School
- Degree Earned
- Major Course(s) of Study
- Academic Distinctions
- Extracurricular and Leadership Activities
- Training and Certification
- Additional Professional Development

Extras—additional facts and information that don't fit into one of the previous categories but might be important to include, such as:

- Professional Affiliations and Industry Leadership
- Presentations and Publications
- Language Proficiencies
- Technical Competencies
- Community Activities and Leadership Positions
- Personal Interests

As you are gathering the material for your resume, organize it into these rough groups; but keep in mind that you don't have to follow a strict formula! You can create new sections, add in unusual information, or come up with creative ways to present your qualifications. The purpose of the resume is to tell your story and describe your capabilities in the way that is most beneficial to you and meaningful to employers.

VisualCV Advantage: Multimedia



Words on paper or on screen can communicate only so much. With the VisualCV, you have the opportunity to enhance the words in your resume with graphics, photographs, charts and graphs, video and audio clips, and additional paper documents (such as letters of recommendation or examples of your work) that paint a richer and more meaningful picture of who you are and the value you offer. Be sure to take advantage of this capability!

In later sections of this guide you'll find more information about the VisualCV enhancements and how you can incorporate them into your online presentation. For now, let's concentrate on capturing and presenting the right information in each of the different sections of the traditional resume that serves as the foundation for your enhanced VisualCV.

STRATEGY #3: Emphasize Performance and Results

Consider this: For every job you apply for, employers will be reviewing dozens if not hundreds of resumes from people with similar skills and experience. If the job calls for two years of customer service experience, everyone who applies will have two years... or more. If expertise in Great Plains accounting software is called for, all applicants should have it. If Project Management certification is a job requirement, then most if not all applicants will have the PMP designation.

So how do you stand out in a sea of candidates who all have the essential qualifications?

In a nutshell, you can't rely on your "qualifications" to be the distinguishing factor. What will set you apart are your accomplishments—what you have done while earning those qualifications. Your unique experiences and individual successes not only will distinguish you from other candidates, but will give employers the evidence they need to evaluate whether you have what it takes to do the job.

Let's say a company is hiring a Project Manager to jump-start a key project and bring several other initiatives back on track. Not only do they want someone with proven project management skills, they need to know that their new hire can move quickly into action and get things moving when they've stalled. If your resume contains bare-bones information about projects you've managed or participated in, this doesn't tell them what they need to know. Instead, you need to tell the story of how you inherited six failing projects and brought them all in on time and under budget. You need to let them know that you were chosen out of six Project Manager peers to lead a mission-critical new project, and that you launched and completed that project successfully.

In other words, your resume must be all about performance and results, not just experiences and qualifications.

When writing your resume, be sure you include performance information that will give employers an insight into what you have done and how you have done it. Look beyond your job description or assignment and think about what you were asked to do and—specifically—how you did it and how well you did it. Come up with examples that illustrate your capabilities and support your current objectives. Then use these examples in all of the various sections of your resume, as appropriate—the Introduction, Experience, Education, and Extras.

Insider's Tip: Ask Yourself "Why?" "What Happened?" "So What?"

When I am working with individual clients to dig up information for their resume, one technique I use is to keep asking questions at the end of a statement or story. If a client tells me, "I was promoted to Senior Account Manager," I might ask, "Why?" Then I get the story that the previous person in the job had created a rift with the company's #1 client, then quit when the business was about to be lost. "What Happened?" reveals that my client saved the account! And "So What?" lets me know that the business doubled in size while my client was managing it. By continuously asking questions, I've uncovered information that I can use to write a power-packed resume that is filled with specific examples and measurable results.

Consider the difference in impact between these two statements:

- 1) Promoted to Senior Account Manager with full responsibility for the company's #1 client.
- 2) Promoted to Senior Account Manager to "rescue" the company's #1 account, in danger of being lost due to deteriorated relationships. Quickly restored client confidence and built the business from \$3 million to \$6 million in 2 years.

As you can see, details, numbers, and specific examples make an enormous difference.

When you are working on your resume, keep asking yourself questions to get beneath the surface descriptions of your career history and experiences, and use the information you dig up to add power and meaning to your resume.

WRITE YOUR RESUME

Now that we've covered "big picture" strategies, it's time to get down to the nitty-gritty of actually writing your resume. We'll take it step by step, beginning with the Introduction and proceeding through Experience, Education, and Extras.

WRITE YOUR RESUME: INTRODUCTION

Be Clear About Who You Are

In the context of your resume, "who you are" usually refers to a job title. Are you a Software Engineer? Corporate Finance Executive? Customer Service Representative? Be sure to include this critical information right up front, as a headline or in the first sentence of your introduction. Your goal is to immediately communicate to employers the essential information that creates the context for everything else they will read in your resume.

For example, if you define yourself as a “Sales Professional,” employers will be looking for key qualifications such as sales results, communication skills, relationship-building abilities, territory management experience, and so forth. If you define yourself as an “Accountant,” they’ll be looking for something entirely different—accounting and finance experience, knowledge of accounting software, attention to detail, and strong analytical skills. By defining yourself up front, you establish expectations and help readers better appreciate and absorb the information that follows.

Insider’s Tip

Try to use a job title that clearly expresses your functional expertise and level—yet one that leaves open a few possibilities for several different jobs that you could hold.

Let’s say in your last job your title was Supervisor—Direct Mail Marketing. You don’t need to include this specific title at the top of your resume. In fact, if you do you might limit yourself from being considered for other roles that fall within the general realm of marketing—jobs that you might be interested in and are qualified for, with titles such as Marketing Manager, Key Account Manager, Market Research Coordinator, or Call Center Manager.

Instead, consider a more generic title for the top of your resume. Here are a few examples:

Marketing Management Professional

Marketing & Sales Professional

Marketing—Market Research—Direct Mail Management

TEAM & PROJECT LEADER: Marketing / Customer Response / Direct Mail

Paint the Picture of the Ideal Candidate

Having defined “who you are,” consider what information you can place “front and center” on your resume to support your claim. What credentials, qualifications, experiences, knowledge, and accomplishments do you possess that will prove you are, in fact, an effective Marketing Management Professional? Your goal is to create a “snapshot,” a capsule portrait that conveys the most essential information to your readers. In essence, you want to quickly portray that you are an ideal candidate for the types of jobs you are pursuing.

You will need to condense a lot of information into a small space! The following examples are provided to help you see how three different job seekers—Alex, Sylvie, and Frank—handled this challenge. As we move through the resume-writing process, you’ll see the different sections for each of these same job seekers.

EXAMPLES: INTRODUCTION

Here are the Introduction sections. The circled numbers refer to notes below that explain the various elements of each Introduction.

EXAMPLE: Alex Diaz

Software Developer / Technical Project Leader ①

VISION – EXECUTION – LEADERSHIP – RESULTS ②

- ③ Innovative technology leader who can translate ideas to action and results. Effective team participant/leader skilled in communicating technical concepts and gaining support for new ideas. Customer advocate recognized for commitment to usability and ability to develop new capabilities from existing technologies. Quick learner eager for new professional challenges.
- ④ Ardent believer in the power of technology to communicate ideas and advance human endeavors.

Technical Summary ⑤

Programming Languages/Standards

HTML, CSS, JavaScript, XML XHTML, ASP, JSP, JAVA, Perl, C

Operating Systems

UNIX, IRIX, LINUX, WIN 98/NT, DOS, MAC OS

Development Environments and Methodologies

ClearCase, Visual Basic Studio, Extreme Programming, EMACS, VI, UNIX

Databases, CRM Tools, and Protocols

Access, Oracle, ODBC, Vantive, SQL

- ① Who I am.
- ② What I do well.
- ③ Summary of hard and soft skills.
- ④ Branding statement – what makes me unique.
- ⑤ Specific skill sets.

EXAMPLE: Sylvie St. Pierre

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY MANAGER ①

Hotel • Food & Beverage • Entertainment • Tourism ②

③ Advanced rapidly to management role with respected hotel-management company and delivered measurable improvements in multiple areas of performance: revenue, guest satisfaction, service, and safety. Built teams of talented professionals and motivated entire staff to work together to achieve stretch goals. Planned, managed, and executed large, complex functions to maximize revenue while delivering exceptional customer satisfaction. Captured new business, restored corporate client relationships, and delivered creative, high-quality guest experiences.

Expertise ④

- Yield Management
- Quality Improvement
- Service Delivery
- Event Management
- Creative Marketing
- Sales Relationships

① Who I am.

② Industry expertise.

③ Overview of experience, accomplishments, and capabilities.

④ Specific skill sets.

EXAMPLE: Frank Reynolds

Senior Sales & Marketing Executive ①

Leading-Edge Networking, E-Commerce & Internet Technologies ②

- ③ **Performance-driven sales leader with a strong record of results in sales of complex technology solutions and services.** Successful driving rapid revenue growth, penetrating target markets, revitalizing sales performance, and gaining strategic advantage against the competition. Effective building, leading, and motivating strong teams of management and sales performers. Experienced in operations/P&L management with sharp focus on the bottom line.

Career Highlights ④

- In progressive sales leadership roles, contributed to rapid and strategic growth of Crydon/Foxtel, now the world's leading distributor of PC products, network products, and outsourcing services (\$4.5B annual revenue):
 - Built \$400M sales region earning exceptional profitability and customer satisfaction (2003–07).
 - Sales Manager of the Year (2002).
 - Corporate Sales Manager of the Year (1999).
- Landed multiple \$5M–\$15M complex systems/services contracts with Fortune 500 corporations and Federal Government agencies including the largest sale ever closed for Amtech.
- Tripled revenue in 3 years with IBM.

① Who I am.

② Industry expertise / areas of interest.

③ Overview of experience, accomplishments, and capabilities.

④ Specific achievements – evidence of performance.

As you review the examples above, note that these are not generic “capabilities statements”; each is a very specific introduction to one individual job seeker. When writing your Introduction, be sure to include specifics and not simply the general kinds of statements that could be written about any and all candidates.

Be specific, be memorable, and be unique! Remember, your goal is to stand out in a crowd of similarly qualified candidates.

When you have written your Introduction, review it carefully to be sure you have included the right information in such a way that if they read nothing else, readers will come away with a clear picture of who you are and the value you offer.

VisualCV Advantage: Supporting Proof



With the VisualCV's hover-over feature popping up data from such reliable sources as Standard & Poor's CapitalIQ and Princeton Review, the information that you present in your Introduction (and in fact your entire resume) is enhanced and solidified. Readers see that you have a BSBA from James Madison University, then learn that it is the top-rated public university in the Southern U.S. for business studies. They read that you have two years' experience with Ruby on Rails, and the pop-up informs them that this technology is just three years old—so they know you are a pioneer and an expert.

When your resume goes live on VisualCV.com, check out the pop-ups and see what additional information is being made available to viewers. If necessary, edit your resume Introduction to be sure that you are revealing the most beneficial information.

WRITE YOUR RESUME: EXPERIENCE

This section of your resume is generally the lengthiest, the most substantial, and the most time-consuming to prepare. You must provide readers with sufficient evidence of your experiences to make them believe in your capabilities, yet you do not want to weigh down the resume with so much detail that readers lose interest and the most impressive information gets lost. It is quite a balancing act!

Insider's Tip: Use a Chronological Format If At All Possible

You might be considering a “functional” resume, one that allows you to group all of your relevant experience together and “divorce” it from your work experience. This is a favorite technique to disguise employment gaps, level out an up-and-down career, or bring your older experience to a more prominent position. Sounds like a great strategy! The only problem is that recruiters and employers dislike the functional format; the first thing they look for is the employment history and “what you're trying to hide.” Thus, for most people, I recommend the chronological format whenever possible. It's easier for you to organize the material, and it gives readers the information they need.

To keep the Experience section to a reasonable length while highlighting the most meaningful information, follow this formula for presenting each of your positions:

- Company name, city and state, and total tenure at company (year–year)
- Job title and specific dates in that job (if different from total tenure listed above)
- Brief description of job scope (usually in paragraph format)
- Specific accomplishments (usually in bullet format)

VisualCV Advantage: Company Information



When readers view your VisualCV, simply by hovering over the company names they will gain some valuable information about your past employers. Because of this unique feature, you don't have to include a lot of details about the company in the text of your resume.

Plus, the unbiased third-party reporting lets readers know key facts that can help them evaluate the importance of your experience. Let's say you're a customer service manager with a stellar record of customer retention. When the pop-up reveals multiple acquisitions and integrations during the time you were in that role, readers appreciate your accomplishment even more because they understand the challenges inherent in that environment

The area where most resumes bog down is in the job description. Keep in mind, you don't have to tell your readers all of the details of your job; they are really interested in what you actually did, not what you were "responsible for." When writing the description, provide just enough information so they understand the scope of your activities and extent of your authority.

Also consider abbreviating or eliminating some of your job information. You want the focus to stay on your relevant experiences and activities. For most people, the most recent positions are the most relevant and should consume the most space on the resume. Early career experiences can be briefly described or simply presented without elaboration (as you'll see in the examples below). But perhaps you're making a career shift back to something you did years ago. In that case, you'd want to emphasize that earlier experience and just briefly mention the more recent roles to avoid a gap.

If in doubt, go back to your career objective and evaluate whether the information is relevant to that goal. If it is not, downplay it on your resume so that readers don't lose sight of who you are—how you want to be perceived at this point in your career.

Insider's Tip: Downplay Gaps and Job-Hopping

Lots of people have gaps in their employment history for one reason or another. Others have held several short-term jobs in a row and will probably be labeled “job hoppers” by recruiters. Obviously, you need to tell the truth on your resume, but you don't need to highlight information that is potentially damaging. These tips will help you draw attention from these potential problem areas.

- Use years only instead of months and years. This will help to hide a few short gaps.
- If your short-term jobs have been as a contractor, a consultant, or otherwise intended to be short-term, group them under one listing and show the total time. For example:
CONTRACT PROGRAMMER, Independent and Agency Assignments, 2004–2007
Primary assignments included:
3M Corporation, January 2007–July 2007 (completed 9-month project in 7 months)
United Healthcare, May 2006–December 2006
Target Corp., July 2005–May 2006
XYZ Corp., May 2004–July 2005 (contract twice extended due to exceptional performance)
Then continue with the description of your activities and your accomplishments.
- If you have gaps that can't be easily disguised, consider including a brief explanation to cover the time period. For example, “2002–2004: Educational sabbatical” or “2000–2005: Voluntarily left the workforce to care for aging parents.” You're not required to provide this information, and I don't suggest that you give a lengthy explanation or try to inflate the experience. But sometimes a brief explanation can help remove a red flag.

Focus on Your Accomplishments

The most significant information on your resume is your accomplishment statements. Here is where you communicate how you contributed to the success of your company, your projects, and your team. It is a prime opportunity to demonstrate your capabilities with actual examples and results.

To create the most powerful and meaningful resume, be specific about the results you attained. Include hard numbers, percentages, comparisons, and other precise results. Let readers know—exactly—what you achieved and the impact you had on your organization.

Consider the difference in impact between these two statements:

- 1) Completed all projects on time and under budget.
- 2) Averaged 7% under budget while completing 100% of projects on schedule, 65% ahead of schedule.

The first sentence is vague, while the second uses hard numbers to make the accomplishment more concrete, more impressive, and more believable.

You will have to “dig deep” to uncover the numbers and results you’ll need for your resume. Be sure to look beyond your own job and department to see how what you did affected the large organization. Use the following questions to stimulate your memory and look at your career from the standpoint of specific outcomes.

If the answer to any of the following questions is “yes,” ask yourself “how and how much?” and keep digging till you get to the bottom—the actual, hard results that you can showcase on your resume.

Questions to Quantify Your Performance

- Did you make money for the company?
- Did you increase market share?
- Did you improve your ranking in comparison to other departments, branches, or competitors?
- Did you suggest any ways to cut costs in your team, department, unit, branch, or company?
- Did you regularly meet all your deadlines?
- Did you improve the efficiency of your job, team, or department?
- How did your performance compare to prior years?
- How did you rank against the competition?
- How did you rank against industry averages? Company averages? Peers? Your predecessor in the position?
- What were your performance goals? Did you meet them? Exceed them?
- Did you handle an increased workload?
- How did you contribute to the bottom line?

Questions to Reveal Your Greatest “Success Factors”

- What are you most proud of?
- What did supervisors compliment you for?
- What do your performance evaluations say?
- What are you known for?
- What do you do that others can't or don't do?
- What would “fall apart” or “slide downhill” if you weren't at your job for a week?
- What do you have “bragging rights” about?
- Where you the first, best or most effective in any particular function or organization?

Insider's Tip: Lead Off with a “Wow” Statement

When launching into your job description, see if you can come up with a strong introductory sentence that highlights your most impressive achievement on the job. This technique will elevate your job description to a must-read accomplishment overview. To uncover this statement, ask yourself:

- What is the most important thing I accomplished in that job?
- What was I initially hired to do? Did I do it?
- What major challenge was I presented with? Or what major challenge did my company or industry face, and how did I surmount that challenge?
- What happened to my company or department as a result of my effort in that job?

Try it—you'll see how a “wow” introduction livens up your position descriptions.

EXAMPLES: EXPERIENCE

Here are the experience sections from the resumes of our three job seekers. Again, the circled numbers are referenced below each resume to explain different components of each section.

EXAMPLE: Alex Diaz

KKY TECHNOLOGIES, Chicago, IL, 2004–Present ①

Technical Leader/Developer, 2005–Present ②

③ Promoted to multifaceted technical/leadership role, collaborating with other members of the Customer Services team in a fast-paced, creative environment to envision, develop, enhance, and implement online services for the company's customer base—technical staff at large organizations such as AT&T, Nextel, Boeing, IBM, and the U.S. military.

- ④ • Doubled speed of product turnaround to customers while reducing engineering time.
- Led a cross-functional international team in developing the Internal Update Center (IUC), a service that gives access to all KKY products through a web interface to synchronized FTP collections distributed in 3 countries. Completed project on schedule and 5% under budget.
- Created automated processes that slashed development time for product updates by 65%.
- Designed new “best practice” testing methodologies that were adopted as the new global standard for online applications.

Helpdesk Engineer, 2004–2005 ②

③ Brought on board to strengthen base of technical skills for the company's front-line customer contacts.

- ④ • Developed new training protocol that cut new-hire onboarding time from 3 weeks to 3 days.

EDU-LINKS, INC., Chicago, IL, 2002–2004 ①

Technology Manager ②

③ Elevated technology capabilities of fast-growing online educational company. Managed network design, telecommunications, and helpdesk service.

- ④ • Drove website redesign from vision through project leadership, creating an attractive, informative, and easily navigable site. Completed on budget in 3 months (vs. 6 projected).
- Reduced telecom costs 15% by establishing uniform nationwide standards and negotiating new contract at highly competitive rates.

GRAPHIC ADVANTAGE, Evansville, IL, 2001–2002 ①

Webmaster ②

③ Handled all technical and organizational aspects of the company's online presence. Also served as LAN administrator and technical support staff.

- ① Company, location, and total tenure.
- ② Job title and specific dates in the position.
- ③ Concise description of job scope and challenges.
- ④ Specific achievements and measurable results.

EXAMPLE: Sylvie St. Pierre

MACOMBER & REYNOLDS, 2001–2006 ①

② **General Manager: Riverpark Luxor**, Queens, NY, 2005–2007

156 guest rooms, full-service restaurant, meeting space

⑤ **Reversed negative profit performance and stemmed decline of aging hotel in a competitive business/tourism market.** Managed P&L and annual business plan to achieve performance objectives. Led a team of 9 operational supervisors and 3 sales managers. Quickly filled open managerial positions, replaced underperformers, and built a strong team. ③

- Delivered 11% RevPar increase in one year. ④
- Focused on quality improvement as a key driver of customer satisfaction. Took Safety score from “unacceptable” to “excellent” and brought METS evaluations up to date.
- Tightly controlled costs by adjusting staff and adapting duties to seasonal fluctuations. Cut overall operating expense by 7%.
- Emphasized F&B to drive guest satisfaction and raised scores from mid 70s to consistent 95+.

② **Assistant General Manager: Lake Michigan Luxor**, Chicago, OH, 2004–2005

247 guest rooms, full-service restaurant, convention space

⑤ **Helped achieve record high performance in quality, service, and satisfaction to propel property from #93 to #22 among more than 400 Luxor hotels nationwide.** Ignited team and led aggressive improvement initiatives to meet stretch goals—set every benchmark above 90 and created incentive programs for exceeding goals. ③

- Raised scores across the board, from 80s to 90+ in all areas (overall satisfaction at 95+).
- Achieved 16% RevPar increase year-over-year with no new demand. ④
- Recaptured a \$200K account that had spread its business among 3 competitors. Differentiated our property and delivered service/value that returned 100% of the business to our hotel.
- Earned Luxor *Quality Excellence Award*, 2002 and 2003.

MARRIOTT CORPORATION, 1998–2004 ⑥

② **Manager: Tip-of-the-Top Restaurant, Marriott Hotel**, Iowa City, IA, 2002–2004

② **Assistant F&B Manager: Marriott Westwinds**, Tampa, FL, 2000–2002

② **Management Trainee**, Marriott HQ and multiple hotel locations nationwide, 1998–2000

- ① Company, location, and total tenure.
- ② Job title and specific dates in the position.
- ③ Concise description of job scope and challenges.
- ④ Specific achievements and measurable results.
- ⑤ “Wow” introduction.
- ⑥ Abbreviated presentation of early, less relevant career information.

EXAMPLE: Frank Reynolds

CRYDON SYSTEMS (formerly Foxtel Information Systems), New York, NY ① 1998–Present

—**AREA VICE PRESIDENT** (2003–Present) ②

- ⑤ **Rapidly grew revenues (+45M in 1 year) and built the #1 business-sales region in the country.** Selected to lead expanded sales/service organization formed through Foxtel/Crydon merger, with direct accountability for P&L, sales, and market development in Northeast. Manage \$400M annual budget and 75 sales and technical support staff. ③
- ④
- Restrategized, realigned, and refocused sales force on top 10 customers to drive profitable growth.
 - In a stagnant market, grew revenues 13% (\$355M to \$400M) in one year.
 - Ranked in top 5 of 17 regions nationwide, #1 in business sales; consistently exceeded quotas.
 - Expanded sales to existing accounts (MetLife, Bear Stearns) and developed new, multimillion dollar business with key target accounts (Gardner Group, Morgan Stanley).
 - Earned notable accolades from high-profile strategic customers:
 - Top Regional Distributor—IBM (2003).
 - Top Regional Distributor—Compaq (2002).
 - Delivered integrated solutions and outsourcing services that improved customer profitability and performance—e.g., sold and executed outsourcing contract that saved \$5M+ annually for MetLife.
 - Built a strong management team and created a culture of performance and results.

—**AREA SALES DIRECTOR** (1999–2003) ②

- ⑤ **Led sales region to consistent top performance.** Directed a 60-person sales force, organized into 5 teams and achieving over \$150M annual sales. Participated on strategic company initiatives including product/service reorganization, quality programs, and acquisition due diligence that led to Crydon merger in 2003. ③
- ④
- Reached aggressive sales and profit goals every year, earning regional and national recognition:
 - Sales Manager of the Year, 2002.
 - Top Sales Manager, East Region: 2001, 2002, 2003.
 - President’s Club member, 5 consecutive years.
 - Grew customer base 30% in strategically targeted financial and banking sectors.
 - Led team selected by American Express, Inc., as Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award winner in 2002 and 2003. Award-winning achievement encompassed consulting with customer to reduce procurement/install process and outsource related functions, cutting process time by 75% and saving \$1M+ annually.

—**CORPORATE SALES MANAGER** (1998–1999) ②

- ⑤ **Rejuvenated an underperforming corporate sales organization, doubling gross sales in 1 year and laying foundation for 600% revenue growth within 3 years.** Assumed leadership for 10-member team selling and servicing POS terminals for a large installed base of major retailer accounts. ③
- ④
- Professionalized the sales team. Replaced underperformers (50% in first year alone) and focused sales efforts on high-value accounts, high-volume sales, and high-profit service contracts.
 - Revenues jumped from \$12M to \$24M in first year and to \$80M in 3 years.
 - Service sales grew by 50% in first year.
 - Captured significant new business, including a \$50M contract with MetLife and the company’s first contract with American Express. Closed a \$6M project installing POS terminals in 100+ customer locations and saving customer \$6M through project management and process improvements.
 - Corporate Sales Manager of the Year, 1999.

AMTECH CORPORATION, New York, NY ①

1994–1998

—**GLOBAL SALES REPRESENTATIVE** ②

⑤ **Landed the company’s biggest single contract (\$20MM) and was consistently successful in sales of complex computer systems and services to Fortune 500 firms and their worldwide subsidiaries.** Developed compelling value propositions and delivered winning sales proposals to C-level executives at client companies. ③

- ④ • Exceeded sales targets every year.
- Closed sales from \$5M–\$15M with AlliedSignal, Dun & Bradstreet, and the U.S. Postal Service.
- Gradually replaced IBM (former vendor of choice) at a key account, within 3 years earning 100% of business valued at nearly \$50M.

IBM CORPORATION, New York, NY ①

1989–1993

—**MARKETING REPRESENTATIVE** (1991–1993) / **SYSTEMS ENGINEER** (1989–1991) ②

⑤ **Developed new business** for IBM midsize and mainframe computer, storage, and software and communication products; managed 5 national accounts. Installed computer systems in customer locations in 40 cities across U.S. ③

- ④ • Increased yearly sales from \$1.1M to \$3.1 million in 2 years.
- Achieved over 125% of quota each year.
- Named to 5 consecutive President’s Clubs.

EARLY CAREER ⑥

—**ACCOUNT MARKETING REPRESENTATIVE, XEROX** (1987–1989); **XYZ, INC.** (1986–1987)

- ① Company, location, and total tenure.
- ② Job title and specific dates in the position.
- ③ Concise description of job scope and challenges.
- ④ Specific achievements and measurable results.
- ⑤ “Wow” introduction.
- ⑥ Abbreviated presentation of early, less relevant career information.

In writing the Experience section of your resume, remember to stay relevant; be as concise as possible; and emphasize performance and results rather than job responsibilities. This is the most important section of your resume and will probably take you the longest to write! But when you start interviewing, you’ll be glad you took the time to dig deep into the activities and accomplishments of your career. Your past performance will convince employers of your future performance.

WRITE YOUR RESUME: EDUCATION

Typically the shortest and easiest section of the resume to write, the Education section simply documents the educational credentials that are a fundamental qualification for many jobs.

The more senior your level, the fewer details you should include in the Education section—often just the degree, the school, and possibly the year of graduation will suffice.

For younger professionals, it is more appropriate to add in some distinguishing information, perhaps illustrating academic achievement or campus leadership. This can help reinforce the image you are trying to portray in the rest of the resume.

But regardless of your age, take care not to include so many details about your educational experiences that this section overshadows your professional experience. You don't want to look like you peaked during your college years and it's been all downhill since! Keep this section brief and to the point.

However, do include continuing education and professional certification, especially if it's recent and related to your goals. For the most part, it's wise to avoid a long "laundry list" of training courses. You can keep track of this detailed information in a separate document and include just the highlights in the Education section of your resume.

Insider's Tip: Don't Inflate Your Education!

You've heard the stories of top people who've lied on their resumes and got caught—the coach at Notre Dame and the admissions counselor at MIT, to name just two high-profile examples. Nowhere is lying more common than in the Education section. Don't make the mistake of listing a degree you don't have or a school you didn't attend. It is extremely easy to verify such information, and your misstatement or half-truth will harm you—whether immediately (you don't get the job) or years later (you get fired or you quit in a hailstorm of bad publicity).

If you don't have a degree or other important credential, it's true you might not be considered for some jobs. But with a strong, accomplishment-filled resume, you should be able to communicate your value and earn interviews. Be clear and confident about what you do have rather than worrying (or lying) about what you don't have.

EXAMPLES: EDUCATION

The three Education sections below show varied levels of detail, as appropriate for each individual.

EXAMPLE: Alex Diaz

Education

Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
BS in Computer Science, 2005

Recent Training:

- Website Usability for Programmers (University of Chicago)
- Leading Technical Teams (Chicago Chamber of Commerce Business Forum)
- ASP.NET AJAX, Ruby on Rails, XHTML, Web 2.0 (National Association of Technology Professionals)

EXAMPLE: Sylvie St. Pierre

EDUCATION

BA, Liberal Arts – University of Iowa, Ames, IA

EXAMPLE: Frank Reynolds

EDUCATION

MBA, 1991 (Major: Finance/Marketing)—NEW YORK UNIVERSITY / Stern School of Business, New York, NY

BA, 1983 (Major: Economics)—RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, New Brunswick, NJ

Professional Development: Xerox and IBM Sales Training; Target Account Selling; Merrill Lynch MBA Training

THE EXTRAS

Although you've included most of your critical information in the first three sections, there are often additional facts and experiences that support your presentation as a qualified professional in your field. You might group all of these "extras" into one section, or have individual sections for several different areas, such as:

- Professional Affiliations and Industry Leadership
- Presentations and Publications
- Language Proficiencies
- Technical Competencies
- Community Activities and Leadership Positions
- Personal Interests

Before adding "extras," be sure they are truly valuable. You don't want to clutter up your resume with irrelevant information.

Also, beware of sharing personal information on the Internet. Although your VisualCV is not searchable or available without your permission, it is wise to protect sensitive personal data at all times. Your social security number and date of birth should *never* appear on documents or sites that are freely shared with others. Personal and family information should be shared with discretion.

VisualCV Advantage: Different Levels of Privacy and Protection



Because your VisualCV is such a dynamic way to communicate about your career and yourself, you will find countless opportunities to share the VisualCV with different audiences. With some contacts, you'll feel quite comfortable sharing personal, financial, and family information; with others, you'll want to strictly limit the details they receive.

You can easily control and keep track of who has access to different versions of your VisualCV. And you are the one who chooses which information to share with which audience.

EXAMPLES: THE EXTRAS

You can see that our three job-seekers have diverse “extras” sections, each reflecting the appropriate additional information they’ve chosen to round out the presentation of their career experiences and qualifications.

EXAMPLE: Alex Diaz

Value-Added Capabilities

- **Language Skills:** Bilingual English-Spanish; proficient in French; conversational Japanese.
- **Industry Leadership:** Elected president of Chicagoland Technical Society, 2006–2008; initiated new programs that boosted membership 20%.
- **Personal:** Competitive triathlete. Volunteer on local school technology committees. Teen mentor.

EXAMPLE: Sylvie St. Pierre

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Volunteer, United Way	2003, 2005, 2007
Member, Queens Rotary Club	2006, 2007
Coordinator, Heart Association “Taste of Iowa”	2004

EXAMPLE: Frank Reynolds

BOARD AND INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

Board of Directors, National Association of Technology Marketers
Board of Advisors, System XTRa, Inc. (high-tech start-up); Clemson Group (VC firm)
Keynote Presenter, National Marketing Association Annual Meeting, 2006
Author, *Global Technology Marketing in a New Millennium*, Smith-Perkins Publishers, 2000

Summing It Up

Step by step, section-by-section, you’ve built your resume. Congratulations! Now it’s time to publish your efforts—on paper, via email, and most importantly on your VisualCV. With this essential foundation in place, you can now begin to expand, enrich, and enlighten your resume using the many capabilities of the VisualCV. The next sections of this Guide will give you some ideas and insights for doing just that.

Section 2: Special Information for New Grads



No Experience? No Problem.

As a new graduate, you have strong educational qualifications but probably feel you don't have much to offer in terms of "real-world" business experience. As a result, you might be wondering what to communicate in your resume and in interviews—what can you say and what should you share to pique the interest of potential employers?

In this Section, I'll share advice, ideas, and examples specific to your situation. Let's start with some positives:

- Employers understand that you don't have much (if any) hands-on experience in the business world.
- Year after year, employers are eager to hire new graduates because you bring fresh thinking and moldable skills to their businesses. They are happy to teach you what you need to know to be successful within their organization.
- Quite likely you have more to offer than you think! There is much "gold" that can be mined from your college career, part-time work experiences, co-op or internship jobs, volunteer and extracurricular activities.

Begin with the End in Mind

Before writing your resume you must understand what you're trying to achieve—the general types of positions you're interested in and the skills and competencies you must have to attain the position and succeed once hired.

If you're not clear on your goals, you'll need to do some prep work before preparing your resume. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Talk to your college or university Career Center. Make an appointment to meet with an advisor and ask about their services and suggestions for defining your career target. Your Career Center might offer resources like these:
 - Personality and career assessments—instruments that can generate valuable data and insights to help you make good career decisions.
 - One-on-one counseling.
 - Group coaching sessions.
 - Referrals to alumni in positions you're considering.
 - Books, articles, and online resources about career options and job descriptions.
- Talk to your parents, other relatives, friends' parents, parents' friends—in general, anyone who has a job can give you information about their career, career path, and career recommendations. I think you'll find that most people are eager to help you. Ask them:

- What their job is like—what they do day to day, what they love and don't love about their jobs, the skills they use and the skills they wish they had.
 - What their career path was like—how they got where they are today.
 - Roadblocks to career advancement and how they got around them (if they did).
 - Other jobs that are like theirs.
 - Whether their current career is close to what they imagined when they were your age.
 - What they'd do differently if they could.
 - Jobs they can think of that match your skills and interests.
 - Good companies to work for (and why).
 - Best piece of career advice they can give you.
- Work with a private career coach or counselor. Although this requires a financial investment, you'll get undivided individual attention and specific expertise that can help you reach a decision and create an action plan much more quickly than you would alone.

Whatever steps you take, your goal is to emerge with a clear picture about what you want to do and the types of jobs for which you're well suited. Then, and only then, can you write a resume that positions you for those jobs.

More Alike Than Different

Any job seeker, regardless of your level of experience, has the same fundamental resume-writing challenge: to demonstrate that you have the skills and competencies needed to do a particular job. As a new grad, however, you cannot cite accomplishments, experiences, success stories, and examples from your professional career as “evidence” of your capabilities. As noted, that's okay; employers don't expect it. What they *do* expect, though, is that you'll have a general understanding of the kinds of skills you'll need to use on the job and that you possess *some* relevant examples and accomplishments to share.

Section 1 of this guide walks you through the process of creating a compelling resume. That entire in-depth discussion will *not* be repeated in this Section, so be sure to read Section 1, become familiar with the strategies, and use as many as possible given your circumstances. I think you'll find much of the information is suitable to you, even though you're a new grad.

But because you don't have the professional experience that is the primary component of most resumes, you'll need to do a few things differently, and this section will show and tell you how.

Focus on Core Competencies

Start by identifying the fundamental skills that you'll need for your target positions. A good source for gathering this information is online ads. You'll quickly be able to identify skills, terms, and qualifications that recur in many of the positions you're looking at. Make a list of these core competencies.

For example, if you're looking for a job as a Mechanical Engineer your list might look like this:

- BS in Mechanical Engineering
- Computer skills: CAD software and business applications (MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Analytical and problem-solving skills
- Ability to work in a cross-functional team environment
- Project management
- Initiative and self-starting skills
- Creativity
- Ability to use technical data to sell your ideas
- Communication skills

For a position as a Human Resources Generalist, this list might be more appropriate:

- Bachelor's degree in HR or a related field (Business, Communications, Industrial Relations)
- Ability to handle confidential material
- Computer proficiency
- Attention to detail and accuracy
- Business writing skills
- Ability to work with diverse personalities
- General office/administrative capabilities
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Planning, organization, and time management

With your list in hand, you now know what you need to convey on your resume to convince employers you can do the job.

Mine Your Experiences

Now it's time to dig up evidence to include on your resume. In the same way that experienced professionals look back at their careers to find "proof" of their capabilities, you will look at *your* experiences—the only difference is that many of yours will not have occurred in the world of work. But that doesn't mean they are any less valuable or any less indicative of what you can do on the job.

When reviewing your background, consider these areas where you might have demonstrated the hard and soft skills you've included on your list of core competencies.

- Class projects—individual or team. *Ask yourself:*
 - What was challenging about that project? How did I overcome the obstacles?
 - Did I serve as team leader—either formally or informally?
 - What did I do to ensure the project was finished on time and meeting all requirements?
 - What areas of knowledge did that project assess?
 - What did I learn?
 - What grade did I get?

- What did my professor say about the project, the team, or the total experience?
- What did my teammates say?
- What did my classmates say?
- Was the project reviewed by anyone outside the university (e.g., community business leaders)? If so, what did they say about it?
- If I were to have a project like this on the job, what would I do differently? What would I do the same?
- Did this project have any long-term impact?
- Co-op jobs or internships. *Ask yourself:*
 - How did I get this job?
 - Why were they interested in me?
 - Was there a particular project or problem I was hired to handle? What did I do about it, and what was the result?
 - What aspects of this job did I most enjoy?
 - What did I learn?
 - What skills did I use most?
 - Did I have the chance to work on team projects? If so, what was my role? What was the outcome of the project?
 - What was my greatest success on the job?
 - Was I invited to return to the company?
 - What did my supervisor say about me?
- Part-time jobs during college or high school. *Ask yourself:*
 - How did I get this job?
 - What tasks did I most enjoy?
 - How did I help the organization I worked for?
 - What problems did I solve?
 - What did my supervisor say about me?
 - Did I overcome any unusual obstacles to hold down this job?
 - What did I learn?
 - How did I manage my time and all of my other responsibilities while working?
 - Was I invited to return?
- Extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, volunteer). *Ask yourself:*
 - Why did I participate?
 - What did I learn?
 - How did I help other people and the organization?
 - What problems did I solve?
 - What did I improve?
 - Did I demonstrate leadership?
 - Did I start any new programs or projects? What were the results?
 - What was most enjoyable about this activity?

- Additional areas and activities. *Ask yourself:*
 - What else did I do? Why did I do it? What was the result?
 - Did I earn any formal recognition for my efforts (academic honors and awards, volunteer awards, leadership recognition, etc.)?
 - Is there anything unusual in my background that helped shape the person I am today or provided a distinctive skill or experience (e.g., living in different countries, speaking multiple languages, working full-time while in college, overcoming a significant obstacle, managing around a disability, unusual depth in a particular area)?

Now, compare your notes to the requirements of the position, and write brief “success stories” that demonstrate how you used and strengthened these core capabilities. These success stories will be useful to you throughout your job search—you can include them in your resume, in abbreviated form, as bullet-point accomplishment statements, and share them during your interviews. You should have multiple stories to support your greatest competencies; and it’s perfectly okay to use the same story (slightly shifted for appropriate emphasis) to illustrate more than one core competency.

Insider’s Tip: Include Yourself In

One of the easiest ways to strike the right chord with potential employers is to use the language of business in your resume. Consider how much more inclusive you can be by converting common terminology from school to business—as appropriate, of course, and such that you retain the meaning of what you’re trying to communicate:

<i>School Language</i>	<i>Business Language</i>
Class	Group or Team
Class Project	Project or Marketing Project, Engineering Project, Customer Project
Classmates	Teammates
School	Organization
Students	Peers or Teammates
Grades	Results or Outcome

Here’s a case study that will help you get started in writing your own stories and creating your resume.

Meredith’s Story

About to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania with a dual-major degree in Biology and Judaic Studies, Meredith was unsure what she wanted to do with her career. She had a lot of very diverse interests and had pursued several of them with success—but nothing stood out as her ideal job.

Meredith did some soul-searching, talked with her advisor and her professors, interviewed several friends of her parents, and briefly worked with a career consultant. As a result of all of this effort, she concluded that she would like a job that involved writing and editing, and she wanted to be in the business world, not the science lab.

She reviewed a number of job postings online and came up with the following list of core competencies for jobs titled Writer, Editor, Communications Assistant, Project Assistant, and Program Coordinator:

- Strong research, writing, and editing skills
- Experience with diverse publications and writing styles
- Ability to work in a cross-functional team environment
- Project management skills
- Attention to detail
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Computer skills

Next, Meredith wrote “success stories” that illustrated each of these core competencies. Here is an example of a story that speaks to her abilities in multiple areas—writing and editing, working with diverse writing styles and people, attention to detail, and communication skills.

In my senior year, I was invited to become a peer writing tutor. This was quite an honor at Penn because the invitation had to come from a team of faculty members. I had to take a special course in editing academic papers, and then I worked two or three times a week in the university’s language lab, reviewing the papers of both undergraduate and grad students and helping them improve their content, language, style, clarity, and overall presentation. It was challenging because I had to review papers in everything from accounting to zoology! And I couldn’t just rewrite it myself, I had to coach and guide the students to improve their work. That forced me to become better at communicating my ideas in a clear and respectful manner. The benefits of this experience were many: I helped students be better writers (and get better grades); I honed my editing skills; I strengthened my communication skills; and I got paid for my work!

You can imagine that potential employers would be quite interested in this story. It is a microcosm of the work Meredith wants to do in the “real world” as an editor, writer, and member of the communications team.

On the next page you will see Meredith’s resume and how she incorporated this story—just briefly—into the “Experience” section.

Note these additional points as you review Meredith’s resume:

- Her experience section is titled just that—“Experience.” Some of this experience was unpaid, some was part-time or summer work, and some was on campus. It is all relevant experience and thus can be included in this section.
- Because she hasn’t firmly settled on a job target, Meredith’s Summary is rather vague—but it does include the bulk of the Core Competencies she has identified.

- As with most new graduates, Meredith positions her Education section above her experience. She highlights this section with appropriate academic honors and awards that will distinguish her from less-accomplished new grads.
- Her resume is a concise one page.

Meredith's search was successful! She landed a program coordinator job that called for her to use all of her writing, editing, project management, and communication skills. It gave her opportunities to demonstrate leadership and initiative. And her major in Judaic Studies was a definite plus!

Two years later, Meredith was ready to look for a new challenge, and you will see her revised resume on the following pages. Note that her professional experience has moved up in length, depth, and importance, while education takes a less-prominent position. Also notice how she proves her capabilities by highlighting the specific accomplishments—not just the activities—of her first job post-college.

VisualCV Advantage: Continuous Updates/Career Management



It's highly unlikely that your *next* job will be your *last* job. In fact, as you graduate from college you can expect to hold 10, 15, or more jobs over the course of your work life. Currently, the median employer tenure for 25- to 34-year-olds is just 2.9 years. Thus, it makes sense to keep your resume updated at all times and be ready to respond when the right opportunity presents itself.

With the VisualCV, it's easy for you to add your accomplishments as they occur, so you don't forget about them or face a major rewrite in a rush situation. Plus, you can target your ideal employers, build a relationship, and keep them continuously updated as your career accelerates and your accomplishments accumulate.

In effect, if you practice *lifelong career management*, you won't have to repeatedly *look for a job*. And isn't that a comforting thought?

(NEW GRAD RESUME)

Meredith Jones

meredith@gmail.com • 555-555-5555

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Dual degrees in two challenging majors—consistent record of academic excellence.
- Strong and diverse research, writing, and editing skills, demonstrated in roles as creative writer, writing tutor, historical researcher, and biology researcher.
- Repeated selection for special roles and assignments on the basis of academic performance, language abilities, and communication skills.

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia, PA
Honors College—Double Major, Biology and Judaic Studies
B.S. and B.A. 2005; GPA 3.75/4.0

Academic Honors

- Quaker State Scholar—2 or more consecutive terms of straight A's
- University Honors—minimum of 3.5 GPA
- William Penn Freshman Prize—top 5% of class

EXPERIENCE

Jewish History Research

Research Assistant, Graduate Library, University of Pennsylvania (Sept. 2001–June 2005)

- Cataloged and identified new Hebrew and Yiddish materials received at the library.
- Performed extensive database searches to identify rare Hebrew and Yiddish books.

Research Aide to Professor Alex Feldman, University of Pennsylvania (Sept. 2002–June 2005)

- Hand-picked from 30+ peers to assist Professor with PhD thesis.
- Researched and tracked Jewish-to-Christian conversion rates in Hungary and Romania as a response to persecution or poverty.

Medical/Science Research

Research Assistant, Biology Department, University of Pennsylvania (Sept. 2002–May 2003)

- Chosen from a field of 75 candidates (Biology majors).
- Contributed to research involving senescence of mutant strains of Arabidopsis.

Writing / Editing / Tutoring

Writing Tutor, University Writing Lab, University of Pennsylvania (Sept. 2004–May 2005)

- Selected for by-invitation tutoring opportunity; required completion of special course.
- Worked directly with undergraduate and graduate students to improve quality of written materials. Proofread, edited, checked strength of theses, and tutored students to improve writing skills.

Additional Employment

Receptionist, Dewey & Howe, Harrisburg, PA (Summer 2003)

Counselor, Wilderness Camp, Latrobe, PA (Summers 1999–2002)

ADDITIONAL

- Published creative writing (short stories and poems) in campus and community publications.
- Proficient in MS Word and Internet applications; familiar with PowerPoint and Excel.
- Fluent in Hebrew.

PROGRAM COORDINATOR / PROJECT MANAGER / ADMINISTRATOR / WRITER / EDITOR

Creative, results-focused professional, extremely effective in fast-paced roles managing multiple programs and projects. Track record of initiative and leadership in improving operations, increasing efficiency, cutting costs, and streamlining processes. Strong writing, editing, communication, and teamwork skills.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

SENIOR PROGRAM COORDINATOR (2006–Present) • PROGRAM COORDINATOR (2005–2006)
Education in Action Foundation, Philadelphia, PA

Member of evaluation and program team that investigates, awards, and manages grants supporting creative programming in Jewish education and cultural awareness. Participate in the Foundation's strategic planning process and manage a wide array of projects and operational functions.

—**PROGRAM COORDINATION:** Annually, manage a portfolio of grant semifinalists, serving as primary point of contact and advising on program development. Conduct site visits and prepare recommendations for Board review.

- Conceived idea for 2 innovative "seed grant" programs to support mini-initiatives that fall below general grant guidelines. Worked with executive director to refine the concept and prepare Board presentation; pilot programs planned for 2008.
- Created and implemented office-wide a new process to ensure the accuracy and consistency of information given to all potential applicants.

—**ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT:** Ensure smooth running of office and continuously seek opportunities to improve operational efficiency and consistency.

- Investigated and initiated new purchasing program that cut office-supply expenses as much as 50%.
- Monitored usage of printed materials and adjusted print orders to eliminate waste and cut cost 7.5%.
- Created centralized records system that, for the first time, provides immediate and easily accessible information about grants at every stage from application through award and reporting.

—**WRITING AND PUBLICATION:** Write, edit, and publish printed materials including award books and bios, grant and award guidelines, newsletter, and ongoing correspondence with applicants and recipients.

- Revitalized the Foundation's newsletter, increasing frequency of publication and expanding distribution from a handful to more than 300 people. Serve as chief writer and editor.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT, University of Pennsylvania (2001–2005)

Selected for 3 diverse research positions; held concurrently while completing dual degrees in 4 years.

- Researched and cataloged Hebrew and Yiddish materials for the graduate library.
- Assisted professor with PhD research, tracking Jewish conversion rates in Eastern Europe.
- Contributed to biology laboratory research involving senescence of mutant plant strains.

WRITING TUTOR, University Writing Lab, University of Pennsylvania (2004–2005)

Worked directly with undergraduate and graduate students to improve quality of written materials. Proofread, edited, and tutored students to improve their writing skills.

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia, PA

Honors College—Double Major, Biology and Judaic Studies

B.S. and B.A., 2005; GPA 3.75/4.0

- Quaker State Scholar; University Honors; William Penn Freshman Prize—top 5% of class.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Proficient in MS Office, Photoshop, HTML, and Internet applications. Published writer. Fluent in Hebrew.

Section 3: Build Your Portfolio

Graphics. Video. Audio. Virtual Excitement!

Thus far, you've learned strategies and guidelines to create killer content for your resume. And certainly this is a critical skill that you'll put to use throughout your career. But isn't it just a little... last century? Isn't there a lot more you can do, given Web capabilities, to liven up your resume?

Indeed there is, and that's what this Section is about.

We'll discuss how to create a virtual portfolio, with supporting evidence of your capabilities, using the VisualCV tools and features. You'll learn what to add and why, how to add it, and how to create a smooth flow of information from the home page of your VisualCV.

Combined, all of these elements will create a powerful portfolio that not just tells, but shows what you have done and what you can do.

Enhancement, Not Replacement

Despite the power punch of video, graphics, audio files, and other add-ons, don't make the mistake of thinking these can take the place of a well-written resume. The traditional resume, while it continues to evolve, is far from dead and is an essential element in your job search and career management.

Take the time to create a strong resume, as described in sections 1 and 2, before adding the jazzier digital components. You'll need the written document for a traditional job search, when you share your Word document, text file, or actual printed page with a network contact, recruiter, or hiring manager. Then, when your contacts access your VisualCV online, they'll find even more to look at, listen to, and read about to reinforce the image you've already created via your traditional resume and your personal presence.

Navigating the VisualCV

The VisualCV is designed for quick and easy creation of your online portfolio. When you first log in, you'll create an account and then be guided through the process of putting your resume content online. You can either type in each section or simply cut-and-paste from your existing resume.

First the resume wizard will automatically convert your account information to the name and contact blocks of your resume. Of course, you can edit any of this if you like—for example, maybe you'd like to use a different email address on your resume so you can easily track your job search activity. After reviewing the contact section, go on to build your resume. Simply select the appropriate heading—or

create your own—and transfer the various sections of your resume from your Word file to your VisualCV.

As with all Word-to-text conversions, there might be a few formatting glitches that you'll need to adjust.

As you create your VisualCV, you'll note that you are not constrained to a cookie-cutter approach but can organize and present your information in the way that is most beneficial to you.

Insider's Tip: Create an On-Target Skills List

When recruiters and employers are filling a position, they start by matching resumes to job keywords. Why not make it easy for them? Use the Skills category of your VisualCV to present your core capabilities, knowledge, and experience that match the keywords for the jobs you're most interested in. You can find these keywords by perusing job postings and noting the terms that appear repeatedly.

Your resume should include these terms, assuming they reflect your actual experience, but when they are highlighted in the Skills section recruiters can quickly determine that you have the essentials they're seeking. With the bases covered, they'll go on to review the rest of your VisualCV to learn more about you—your capabilities and your accomplishments.

When the resume portion of your VisualCV is complete, you can move on to the other elements that will make your online presentation dashing and distinctive.

Building Your Portfolio

Below the Resume Sections you'll see an area called "Portfolio Items." Here is where you will store tangible evidence of your capabilities and accomplishments. Broken down into five areas—**Documents, Images, Video, Audio,** and **Charts**—your portfolio gives your viewers visible and audible proof of the material in your resume.

The first step in building your portfolio is simply uploading the various portfolio items—discussed in more detail below. Then just insert the appropriate items into each version of your VisualCV.

Let's explore what additional material you might include and why and how to include it.

DOCUMENTS

There is an endless array of documents that can enhance the value of your VisualCV. Consider these ideas:

Documentation

- University diplomas and training certificates
- Licenses and other credentials
- Performance awards and recognition—such as a President’s Club letter or award certificate
- W2 forms for the last 5 years as proof of your earnings history
- Patent awards and other intellectual property descriptions

Work Product

- Your master’s thesis or senior project
- A white paper or article you’ve written that showcases your professional expertise
- A business report, strategic plan, marketing plan, or other document you created on the job
- A speech or presentation that you gave
- Blueprints, diagrams, graphic designs, screen shots, or other visual display of work you’ve done

Third-Party Endorsements

- Letters of reference (See later section for a detailed discussion of references.)
- Letter of appreciation from a customer or colleague
- News clippings—articles in which you’ve been profiled or quoted, that discuss a product or technology that you created, or that support a business decision you made

Resume Enhancements and Personality Profile Information

- A resume addendum describing several of your career “success stories” in depth
- A personal brand statement—a description of what makes you unique, how you approach problems, and what you’re known for, expanding on any brand tagline you might have included in your resume
- Your Myers-Briggs report or other assessment findings
- A summary of a book or book chapter you’ve written, or a review of career-relevant books you’ve read
- A question-and-answer format in which you discuss an area of expertise or respond to typical interview questions
- A statement of your work philosophy and description of what makes a great opportunity for you

VisualCV Advantages: Privacy Protection and Permanence



Because you can easily create multiple versions of your VisualCV, you choose precisely which information you will share with each audience. For example, you will want to keep your W2 forms private until you are in deep discussions with a recruiter or employer who asks for them. Then you can share that version of your VisualCV only with those specific people.

Plus, once you upload any document, it remains stored in a central, easily accessed location for your use now and throughout your career.

To add documents to your VisualCV, save each file as a PDF or Word (.doc) file and simply upload. VisualCV also supports PowerPoint (PPT) files for portfolio items such as presentations.

When deciding what to include, choose items that enhance your credibility and clearly demonstrate your expertise. Be sure the documents are professional in look and language.

IMAGES

Photos add human interest to your VisualCV. We recommend that you include at least two photos of yourself:

- A formal business head shot
- A business casual photo

In addition, consider these photos if applicable to your circumstances:

- Photo of yourself winning an award or being recognized for a contribution to your business or community
- Photo of yourself giving a presentation or appearing on an industry panel
- Photo of yourself with “celebrities”—no, not the Hollywood B-list, but people who are recognized as leaders in your field

Photos are also the perfect format for sharing examples of your work product. For example:

- A screen shot of a web page you designed
- A photograph of a trade show exhibit that you created

The VisualCV accepts most photo file formats, including JPG and .gif. Simply upload each file to your portfolio.

Insider's Tip: Don't Worry About Bias

Virtually all career experts and HR professionals recommend against including your photo on a resume. That's because employers do not want to have information that could be a potential source of bias. Photos can reveal information related to EEOC "protected categories" such as age, race, gender, religion, or disability. So why are we recommending photos and video on your VisualCV?

The VisualCV does not replace the traditional resume and application process. It is designed to allow you to build and maintain relationships with recruiters, employers, and professional contacts throughout the course of your career. As such, it's perfectly natural that these contacts will know what you look like, and therefore the issue of bias does not arise.

Remember, you still have your traditional resume (without photo) that you can send to employers and recruiters as part of the standard job application process. In fact, you'll often be required to complete a company's online application even if your candidacy is already in the works or if you have a longstanding relationship with the recruiter or hiring manager. So you'll be able to meet the company's requirements and still allow your visually rich VisualCV to present a comprehensive picture of who you are, what you're good at, and your professional value.

Now, let's move on to the next category for your portfolio—video.

VIDEO

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a video must be worth a million! While it's not feasible to present your entire CV in video format (and nobody wants to watch you read your resume aloud), you can enhance the written word by using your voice, face, gestures, and unique personal style to communicate who you are and what sets you apart from others.

VisualCV Advantage: Multiple Videos



With the VisualCV, you're not confined to a single "video resume." You can create multiple short films that will showcase different aspects of yourself and your professional capabilities. We recommend that you consider making three videos to answer these three questions:

- What makes me a great professional (your professional capabilities, strengths, and successes)
- What makes a great opportunity for me (what you're looking for—the job and environment)
- What makes me a great person (personal information that adds interest and conveys value)

Insider's Tip: Make a Great Video!

We've prepared a complete guide to creating a great video; it appears at the end of this Section. We recommend that you review it carefully to ensure that your videos are a positive addition to your VisualCV.

A video resume is not the only video you can add to your VisualCV. Consider these additional ideas for video presentations that will help paint the picture of who you are and what you have to offer.

Professional Presentation

If you are in a profession that requires you to give presentations as a key element of your job, what better way to prove your skills than to show a video of yourself in action? Here are just a few possibilities:

- Sales presentation
- Product demonstration
- Public speaking event
- Press conference
- Trade show interaction
- Technical explanation
- Training session
- Seminar delivery
- Board presentation
- Emcee role (for a business event)

While these sessions aren't scripted and presented in the same way as your video resume, similar strategies will ensure the best presentation:

- **Keep it short**—you don't have to present an entire speech or session, simply a 2- to 3-minute clip that showcases your talents.
- **Stay focused**—select the segment that best illustrates the skill you want to demonstrate, whether that be persuasiveness, grace under pressure, ability to convey complex information simply and clearly, ability to connect with your audience, or some other aspect of your professional skill set.
- **Tune in to your audience**—if your audience is pictured or heard in the video, be sure their demeanor is engaged and their questions or comments on point.
- **Create killer content**—the material you're presenting should further support the professional image you are trying to convey. For example, if you're a B2B sales professional, show yourself in a business setting, not the video of you emceeding your child's eighth-grade graduation.

- **Present with power**—if you don't have a stellar example of your presentation skills, it's best to skip this addition to your portfolio. Remember, you are trying to reinforce your professional image, not damage it.
- **Be yourself**—Your enthusiasm and genuineness should shine through on your video.

References

Rather than relying on recruiters, employers, and possible business partners to track down your references, why not include their endorsements as part of your VisualCV?

Ask your top references to prepare a short (2- to 3-minute) video in which they discuss your strengths and give some specific examples of those strengths in action. You might provide some guidelines by having them address these questions:

- How do you know this individual?
- What impresses you most about him?
- Describe a significant challenge that he took on. What did he do, and what was the outcome?
- What do you think are this person's greatest development needs? What should he learn or how should he grow to continue to advance his career?
- How does he handle adversity? Give me an example.
- If you were to hire this individual, what role would you consider ideal? Be specific.
- Please comment on this person's ethics and integrity. Provide an example.

After creating your video, upload the file to your portfolio. Refer to the online help section if you need additional guidance.

AUDIO

The human voice adds many dimensions to the written word. With the ease of recording, storing, and uploading audio files, you can enhance your VisualCV.

Consider these ideas for audible additions to your portfolio:

- A podcast of your appearance on a radio program
- A mock "interview"—a Q&A session in which a colleague asks relevant questions about your professional experience and you provide stellar answers
- An audio recording of your presentation at a conference or meeting
- Your responses to the three topics we discussed in the Video section, namely: *What makes me a great professional; What makes a great opportunity for me; What makes me a great person.* If for some reason you can't or don't wish to create a video of these topics, consider an audio-only file.

If you are creating audio from scratch, be sure to review the guide to creating a great video that appears at the end of the Section. Only the visual portions won't apply—the advice regarding what to say and how to say it will be right on point.

As with video, simply create your audio files and upload them to your portfolio.

The next section of your portfolio is labeled “Charts.” Let's examine the possibilities.

CHARTS

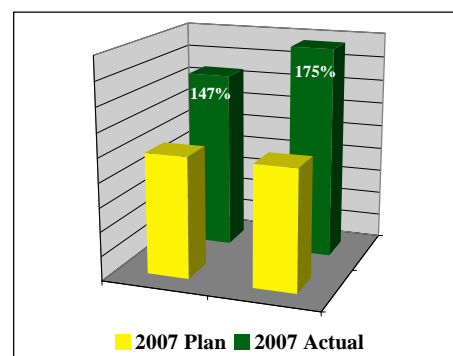
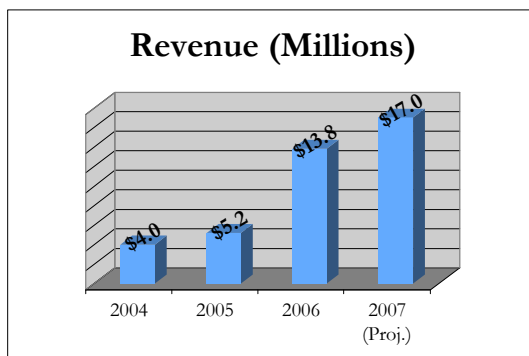
A chart is a high-impact visual reinforcement of key information in your resume. By presenting data in multiple forms, you can capture attention, impress your viewers, and drive home your key points. I suggest that you take advantage of this opportunity!

Depending on your profession, your chart can show vastly different things. Use these ideas as a jumping-off point for developing the right chart for your unique circumstances.

- Revenue growth
- Profit growth
- Stock performance
- Sales performance
- Quality improvement / defect reduction
- Performance to a goal (any specific, measurable objective)
- A positive trend in any area of measurement
- Your personal income growth
- Length of time you've practiced specific skills

The VisualCV offers a charts widget where you can enter raw data and create your unique charts. Alternatively, you can design your own charts in Excel and save the finished charts in a graphic file format (such as JPG or .gif) and upload them to your portfolio.

Here are a couple examples of charts that showcase strong performance:



HYPERLINKS

In certain instances you'll want to provide your viewers with another source of information, beyond what's available in your VisualCV. In these instances, create a hyperlink in the text of your resume to allow viewers to immediately access the featured site. Items you might want to link to include blogs, news stories, and multimedia sites. For example:

- A blog can provide solid reinforcement of your expertise and position you as a thought leader and forward thinker. Be sure your blog is professional, not personal.
- News media can be a valuable third-party endorsement. Do include a link to the appropriate online source if you can't include the actual article as part of your portfolio.
- Videos, podcasts, and other Web-based multimedia may be appropriate to include if they are relevant to your career and consistent with your professional image.

SUMMING IT UP

"The more the merrier" is a good approach to use in creating your portfolio. Once it's online, all your material is there permanently, and you won't find yourself scrambling to find it years down the road or when a sudden opportunity arises. And remember, you can create multiple versions of your VisualCV and share your information selectively.

Now, as promised, let's go into much more detail about creating videos that will enhance your professional image.

Video Resume Tips

We suggest creating three "video resumes" addressing the following questions:

- What makes me a great professional (your professional capabilities, strengths, and successes)
- What makes a great opportunity for me (what you're looking for—the job and environment)
- What makes me a great person (personal information that adds interest and conveys value)

The following guidelines will help you make the most of your video opportunity.

Keep it Short

Remember, your video is designed to enhance your resume—not replace it. Two minutes or less is the recommended length. You'll find that's plenty of time to get across your key points.

Stay Focused

Before recording, plan your message, define your key points, and practice your delivery. Don't try to say too much; you'll make a better impression, and be more memorable, if you have one well-defined message that you communicate clearly.

Tune In to Your Listeners

You may be talking about yourself, but it's imperative that you make your message all about them—your listeners/viewers. Remember, you are marketing yourself. Rather than simply reciting your knowledge and experience, you should convey how that knowledge and experience can make a company more successful. In the language of advertising, make sure your listeners understand your *benefits*, not just your *features*.

Create Killer Content

Using our recommended themes, you can present three distinct facets of yourself:

- *What makes me a great professional*
- *What makes a great opportunity for me*
- *What makes me a great person*

Within these themes (described in more detail below), you can share your unique talents and your most significant successes. Make your video memorable and effective by following these content guidelines:

- *Use the big and save the little*. In your two minutes, you won't have time to share a lot of details. Instead, use summary statements and strong language to communicate overall achievements, big themes, and other high-impact information. Save the details for a later meeting.
- *Be relevant*. Keep in mind what your listeners care about most, and select those experiences, credentials, and successes that cater to their interests. Recruiters and employers typically want to know the scope of your experience, the industries you've worked in, your job titles and career progression, and how you've made a difference.
- *Be specific*. Whether you're using a story-telling format or simply relating your key successes, avoid language that is vague, general, and non-specific. You'll come off sounding like every other candidate. Include numbers, percentages, dollars, and other specific results.
- *Dig deep*. Your goal is to be memorable, so think about providing a "deep slice" of experience rather than a broad surface view. The microcosmic view you present will illuminate the entire macro picture of who you are.
- *Be interesting*. Intrigue your audience and they'll delve more deeply into your written materials to see if you have the specifics they're looking for. Bore them and they won't make the effort.

Present with Power

Once you've perfected the content, it's time to work on your delivery.

- Speak directly to the camera and make “eye contact” with the electronic lens. Your viewers will feel you're speaking directly to them.
- Smile! You want to appear as if you're enjoying yourself. Don't fix a rigid grin on your face and keep it there, but begin with a smile and keep a pleasant facial expression throughout your presentation.
- Relax. Easier said than done, but before you go on camera take a deep breath and mentally slow down your breathing, heart rate, and reaction times. You want to come across as calm and focused, not anxious, jittery, or wired up.
- Start with a bang. Your opening sentence should incite immediate interest, and it should be prepared and practiced so that you can start your video on a confident note.
- Glance down at your notes. You don't have to memorize your presentation, although you should practice beforehand. Jot down a few pertinent keywords that will remind you of your major points, and keep the card where you can see it just by glancing down. This action will appear natural and normal and will quickly give you your next cue. Then, look up at the camera again, smile, and start your next point.
- Gesture naturally. Avoid nervous, repeated gestures; avoid large hand and arm movements; be sure your movements aren't constant. But within these sensible guidelines, feel free to gesture as you normally would when speaking. You'll appear natural and poised.
- If you make a mistake, go with the flow. You're probably not a professional presenter... and this is not a major network production. Try not to get flustered if you make a mistake. Simply correct yourself with a minimum of fuss and move on.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Some people speak faster when they're nervous... and presentations make many people nervous. Others have a naturally quick speaking style. Be conscious of how quickly you're speaking and slow down a bit if need be. Regardless of how fast you speak, take extra care to enunciate each word to make it easy on your listeners.
- Silence is golden. Don't be uncomfortable with occasional silence, and be sure you pause between sentences and as you transition from one topic to another. Your pauses give listeners time to absorb your information.
- Avoid unnecessary sounds and movements. Rustling papers, tapping your fingers, rocking in your chair, or shuffling your feet are distractions that will catch the eyes and ears of your audience. Allow them to concentrate on your message, not the extraneous sounds and movements.

- *Don't dribble to a stop.* Your presentation should have a clear ending point, so your audience knows you're done. Plan this closing statement in advance and finish with confidence!

Prepare Your Message

As noted, we recommend three distinct topics for your video presentation. You can choose to create one, two, or three videos; we suggest that you seriously consider all three to paint the most insightful picture of who you are. Following are some prompts and sample scripts to help you create your message for each of these three topic areas.

- *What makes me a great professional*

What are the most significant achievements of your career?

Explain any tenures less than one year for a full-time position.

What sets you apart from others?

What are your areas of expertise?

What has been your greatest learning experience?

Example Script

I'm a high-energy sales and business development executive with 15 years' experience in technology products and services. The kind of challenge that excites me most is going into new markets, specifically in Asia, and revving up the revenue. In the past three years I've built the Asian IT services division for Zytec from zero to \$60 million. Before that, during a 12-year career with Intelligent Solutions, I led new sales initiatives in 6 distinct Asian markets, and in every case we exceeded our first-year objectives.

One of my greatest strengths as a sales leader is being able to quickly and accurately assess the market opportunity. This helps us make the right initiatives at the right time in the most promising markets, so that we quickly gain traction and ramp up revenues. For example, with Zytec, I developed the strategy and timeline for new market launches, based on market analysis and extensive knowledge of the business climate and culture in China, Japan, South Korea, and Malaysia.

They say that sales is all about relationships, and nowhere is that more true than in Asia. Because I've lived in six Asian countries and devoted myself to learning as much as I could about the local culture, I understand the nuances in building and nurturing business relationships in each distinct country and market. What that means is that the business I develop is highly sustainable, built on the foundation of a strong business relationship. At Intelligent Solutions, our Asian business had the best 3-year retention rate in the company.

What I'm most proud of during my career is that I have repeatedly developed superb sales teams. I get a lot of satisfaction from mentoring my people and making sure they are adequately trained and have what they need to be successful.

As you may know, Zytec was recently acquired by Labtech, and they have decided to close all of their Asian offices and manage those customers from the US. They've offered me an excellent position if I wish to stay on, but I prefer to remain in Asia at this point. The opportunities there are so tremendous, I'm looking forward to having another great run for a company that shares my view! I'm looking forward to exploring how my experience can be of value to you.

- What makes a great opportunity for me

What is the ideal company culture (example: small, large, public, private)?

What is your desired work environment (example: from home, HQ near execs, regional office)?

What types of challenges do you most enjoy (example: creating something, fixing something, executing on a plan or strategy)?

What is your desired compensation?

What is the next step in your career (where/how can you add value)?

Example Script

Working 12-hour days for a solid year isn't necessarily something I want to do again, but the culture at May-Tech was so exciting it was impossible not to pour everything I had into my work there. I am passionate about ideas that change the world, or at least make people's lives a little bit better, and I want to work at a company where everyone shares the vision and works hard to achieve it. Although I've been successful at both large and small companies, I prefer working within a smaller project team where I have the chance to step outside my designated area of expertise; I don't enjoy a rigid hierarchical structure and like to pitch in wherever I'm needed.

My greatest skill is envisioning "what might be" within the realm of available technology; I understand what's mainstream, what's cutting edge, and what is yet to be perfected, with the result that the vast majority of products I've contributed to have been easy to manufacture and quick to bring to market. I do have strong technology skills and can contribute to the detail work as needed, but I prefer to be in a strategy or leadership role where I am driving the development and not just executing it.

My ideal role would be as a Product Development Manager for a company with a strong technology component. I can lead product teams from concept through design, testing, and product launch, and I am particularly good at motivating my team through sticky challenges, whether technical, financial, business, or interpersonal.

I have been earning in the low six figures and would anticipate competitive pay based on the value I offer. I enjoy the dynamic environment of a start-up or early-stage company provided there is sufficient upside potential; or I'd be happy in a division of a larger corporation, perhaps a skunk works or other new product initiative where I can play a lead role in developing new products that are not only visionary but practical. I am not too concerned

about job titles and don't envision a specific role for myself in the future; I can add value in a variety of roles and I am most concerned with the challenge, the opportunity, and the team rather than career advancement or job title. I'm looking to join a great company that will benefit from my passion as well as my skills.

- *What makes me a great person*

Talk about your current situation in life.

What are the most significant achievements in your life?

What are you most proud of in life?

What are your interest/hobbies?

What has been your greatest learning experience?

Example Script

When I was 8 years old, I ran away from home to join the circus. I know that's a cliché, but I really did. I had seen the Big Apple Circus that day and was so enthralled with the magical atmosphere, I knew I had to be part of it. I didn't get very far that day, but I see that as the first example in my life of dreaming big dreams and going after them with passion.

You might think there's a big difference between being a circus performer and being a sales rep, but you'd be surprised how many parallels there are! In my job I need to capture the attention of my audience, mesmerize them with my vision of what the product or service can do for them, and delight them with the entire experience of buying from me. So my early tendencies are certainly playing out in my professional life.

In my personal life, I have followed this theme of "dreaming big" as well. I was the first person in my family to go to college, and then I helped three of my siblings get their degrees as well. I moved from rural Maine to the real Big Apple, New York City, because I saw it as a metaphor for very big dreams and big accomplishments. When it came time to choose a career, I first hitched my star to the world of entertainment and rose through the ranks at MTV from intern to producer before I realized I wanted to be part of something more substantial. I realized I could use my marketing skills and entertainment expertise to make something as unsexy as financial services an exciting buying experience! I helped my clients understand how their purchases helped them and helped their families and would enable their big dreams to carry on in the future. I'm really proud of helping people gain some security so they can live better lives now and make a better future for their children.

I don't have children myself, but I get a lot of satisfaction from helping disadvantaged children live happier and more successful lives. I've been an active volunteer with Big Brothers and Sisters for more than a decade; currently I'm on the board, and I'm spearheading an alliance with Habitat for Humanity so the boys and girls and their Big Brothers and Sisters can play an active role in building homes—whether for themselves or for others in their community.

My greatest learning experience also came about through the Big Brothers and Big Sisters. When I was paired with my first Little Brother, I was full of enthusiasm and big ideas. I wanted to help him rise above his circumstances and make something of himself. I would preach to him about what I had done and how I had succeeded. After a few months I realized I hadn't made a real connection with him. It took me some deep soul searching and some input from a trusted friend, but I realized I had been doing too much talking and not enough listening. So I put a muzzle on it! I encouraged him to talk. I learned what his life was really like. And I found he had dreams of his own. From then on I kept the focus on him rather than myself. The lesson for me was to listen and tune in to other people so that their dreams can come true—not my dreams for them. Fortunately I realized it in time to salvage my relationship with my Little Brother! He recently graduated from college and he's a Big Brother himself—and boy, does that feel great, knowing I influenced his life in that direction.

You might be wondering how all of this relates to my professional life. In fact, it was a profound transformation in how I conduct myself with other people. It used to be all about me—now it's all about them. The incredible thing, though, is that not only is it more satisfying for them, it makes me more successful at my job. I'm grateful I learned this lesson early in life—and I'll never forget it.

Be Yourself

Let your personality, your successes, your talents, and your interests shine through in your video, and you'll create an indelible impression with recruiters, employers, and network contacts. After all, you're unique—as is each company and each opportunity. The goal in successfully managing your career is finding the fit that's right for you at a specific stage of your professional development.

Section 4: Steer Your Career

It's not just a job... it's your life.

With a well-written resume, a stunning VisualCV, and the networking and sharing capabilities of VisualCV.com, you have in one easy-to-use tool just what you need to rev up a job search, manage your contacts, stay in touch with people of influence, and guide your career where you want it to go... not where the latest layoff, downsizing, or boom-and-bust cycle takes you.

This Section discusses smart strategies for managing your career. I encourage you to think beyond landing your next position (as important as that is) and adopt the practices that will keep you on the radar screen for ongoing opportunities—not just jobs, but possibly speaking gigs, consulting assignments, special projects, board positions, publishing opportunities, media inquiries, and maybe even the opportunity to get in the ground floor of the next breakthrough technology!

It's All About Branding and Visibility

It's impossible to predict when or how opportunities will come your way, but one thing I can guarantee: If people don't know about you or remember you, they won't pass along to you their hot tips or bright ideas.

Thus, to be “top of mind” with your target audiences, you must be *visible*—they need to see you or hear from you from time to time. And you must exude an authentic, credible *personal brand* that distinguishes you from others and attracts the right kinds of opportunities.

The secret to effective lifelong career management is to structure and follow a process of regularly communicating with people of influence, sharing information about yourself in an appropriate way, and consistently expressing what it is that makes you different and special.

Fortunately, VisualCV.com is here! It's designed to give you the ultimate control over your messages and methods of communication while making it easy for you to stay in touch with people who can help you throughout your career (and, of course, whom you can help as well). Whether you're in a job search or you simply want to build and maintain professional relationships, VisualCV.com provides the technology and the tools.

The strategies that are presented on the following pages are as ancient as the first human-to-human communication and as new as today's Web technologies. What the Web does is make it easier to stay in touch, make it possible to connect with more people (and the right people) around the globe, and speed up the connections and the interactions. What it *doesn't* do is replace people with technology. In fact, VisualCV.com was born from the frustration that both job seekers and recruiters experience in the typical resume “blasting” and mass-job-posting scenario.

As you begin to learn, use, and benefit from VisualCV.com, this Section of the Insider's Guide can help by providing a big-picture approach and a few specific recommendations. However, VisualCV.com will evolve over time, and the best place to learn about what's new and how it works is to log in to the site, explore what's new, and access the Learning Center for detailed information and support.

FOUR FUNDAMENTALS

Grasp the following four strategies and you'll be a master at both the online and offline communications that will benefit you the most—both immediately and in the long term—as you steer through the intricate waters of career management.

Strategy #1: Cultivate your network.

A powerful professional network is the key to career opportunities and advancement—in every field, at every level. Your network is your source for inside information and influential referrals. Your network extends your visibility to additional contacts. Your network thinks of you when relevant opportunities arise. Building and maintaining your network will deliver exceptional ROI throughout your career.

Insider's Tip: There's No "U" in "Network"

The fastest way to lose the support of your network is to make it all about you. Appropriate networking demands an equal exchange... sometimes you give, sometimes you get, and the give-and-take results in real relationships.

Always look for opportunities to share valuable information, ideas, suggestions, leads, and referrals with your network. When you hear of an opportunity, pass it along to a colleague. When an interesting article comes your way, share it with others. When someone in your network reaches out to you, go out of your way to be helpful. Never lose sight of the importance of a two-way exchange.

To cultivate your network, you might combine periodic mass communications to everyone on your contacts list with more frequent individual messages. You can come up with countless valid reasons for connecting with people. Here are just a few ideas:

- Share good news about a promotion, new job, or key accomplishment
- Share good news about your company
- Ask for assistance for a friend or colleague
- Publicize a new resource that you've found helpful
- Let your contacts know about upcoming events such as a speaker, book tour, or business launch
- Ask for ideas, leads, or referrals for your job search
- Ask for advice about your career or a professional issue
- Circulate an updated resume/VisualCV
- Introduce a new contact to others in your network

Because real networking involves a personal connection, be wary about sending too many “mass” emails. Instead, use VisualCV.com to manage your groups and track your communications, but invest the time and effort in personal rather than group messages most of the time.

Strategy #2: Add to your network.

Maybe you have 17,000 MySpace “friends” or 1,700 LinkedIn connections. There’s a big difference between people who know you and those who exist in an electronic network. Of course, you want to grow your circle of connections. But rather than simply notching another contact on your network belt, seek to add people with whom you can make a real connection. These might be people you’ve already met (in person, by phone, or via email) or people you’d like to get to know, including any or all of the following:

- Someone you met and spoke with at a business meeting or professional conference
- A reporter, columnist, or blogger who writes about your field
- Thought leaders in your areas of expertise
- Fellow members of a professional association
- Someone you were referred to by a person in your network
- A community leader
- An entrepreneur with an intriguing idea
- Recruiters for your industry or profession
- Senior executives at companies you’re interested in
- Human resource professionals
- Venture capitalists
- An author whose work you admire

The best way to add individuals to your network is one by one. If it’s someone you’ve met, reach out by phone or email to make a personal connection. Then, with permission, you can gather their contact details to add to your database.

If it’s someone you don’t know, use your existing network—ask who knows the individual you’re trying to connect with, and ask for a referral. The “Six Degrees of Separation” law has been proven over and over. (In fact, some evidence suggests that most people are just *three* contacts away from anyone in the world!) In all likelihood, you’ll be referred to someone who knows someone who knows your target, and voilà! With the right introduction and the right approach, you’ve just added an influential person to your circle of friends.

VisualCV.com Advantage: Network Management



With VisualCV.com, you can add people to your network, group them according to affinities, and keep track of your communiqués. When you’re trying to establish a new connection with someone, it’s easy to quickly scan your existing contacts to see who might be able to offer a lead.

Strategy #3: Network purposefully and stay on message.

What's the purpose of all this networking? Remember what I said earlier about give-and-take. By establishing an ongoing relationship, staying in regular contact, and sharing more than asking, your network is primed to help you when you do have a need or a request.

Still, every one of your communications with your network should be done with a purpose: to express your brand, strengthen your visibility, establish yourself as a trusted resource, and position yourself as a consummate professional.

VisualCV.com Advantage: Permission Marketing



People in your VisualCV.com network are happy to hear from you! With VisualCV.com, you establish a circle of trusted contacts. Your contacts expect to hear from you and want to stay abreast with what's going on in your career and your life. Your "marketing" communications should be designed to maintain that warm relationship.

There are countless advantages to staying "on message" and on target with your circle of contacts. While you certainly don't want to be rigid or calculating in your interactions, always be aware of the power of the network. The right approach and message will work miracles! An inappropriate, off-target, or out-of-the-blue message will leave your contacts scratching their heads and wondering what's up with you.

For example, think how you'd feel if a professional contact—someone you respect for her knowledge in your field—starts sending you political rants regarding her support for candidates and causes that don't match your views. All of a sudden you're thinking about this person not as "highly respected professional" but as "political nut." Even though politics have nothing to do with her professional life, her messages can't help but color your view of her.

So be judicious about what you share and with whom you share it. It's perfectly all right to let your personality come through! But strive to keep some separation between your personal and professional lives, and remember that it's hard to shake a negative impression or off-kilter experience.

In addition to steering clear of sensitive topics such as politics and religion, use common sense and good judgment:

- Don't badmouth former (or current) employers or co-workers. This never does you any good and can do a great deal of harm—you never know where their network of connections will intersect with yours.

- Get to the point—respect your contacts’ time. Of course, it’s perfectly all right to exchange pleasantries, but don’t ramble on and on before coming to the heart of your message.
- Be crystal clear about what you’re asking your contacts for. If you want them to do something for you, spell it out. If you just want advice or ideas, say so—and give them enough information to get them thinking in the right direction.
- Use proper grammar and correct spelling. It’s fine to use a casual tone and appropriate slang—you want to sound like yourself. But don’t let people think you don’t know how to write, spell, or speak.
- Know when it’s time to pick up the phone and have a direct conversation rather than rely on email. In fact, make phone calls a key part of your networking strategy.

Strategy #4: Keep your VisualCV up to date.

One of the nicest and easiest ways to touch base with people is to let them know you’ve updated your VisualCV. With a quick message that links them to your unique URL, your contacts will be in touch with latest, greatest, most impressive feats of your career. They’ll see, all over again, who you are and what you’re all about.

VisualCV Advantage: Efficiency



Remember, you can create multiple versions of your resume for different audiences. Yet all of the portfolio pieces—the video, audio, charts, graphs, documents, and so forth that enhance your VisualCV—remain located in one central spot. Create it, upload it, and it’s instantly available to insert into *one* or *all* of your VisualCV versions.

As an added bonus, by keeping your VisualCV up to date you are always prepared for opportunities that come along.

Bonus Strategies for Job Seekers

When you’re actively looking for a job, you’ll want to step up your networking and other efforts. Now it’s not enough just to keep in touch; now you need your network to come through for you.

VisualCV.com lets you manage and maintain relationships with people of influence—recruiters, hiring managers at your target companies, and other business and professional contacts. If recruiters and HR people have said they’re interested in you, by all means send them regular updates to keep your name fresh in their minds. You’re in a much better position than typical job seekers who have to build these connections from scratch!

In addition to the recruiters and potential employers in your contact network, you'll want to get your other friends and colleagues thinking about you and helping you identify opportunities. The following strategies will help you get the most from these interactions:

- Don't make the mistake of assuming a recruiter will find a job for you or is working for you. Neither is the case. Recruiters are paid by the hiring company and therefore, naturally, that's where their loyalty lies. They can't become invested in any one candidate but rather must identify a slate of *several* great candidates for each position. You can be one of those candidates, and you can gain a great deal of valuable information and assistance from the recruiter. But be aware of the realities of recruiter relationships.
- When connecting with people at your target companies, let them know precisely why you want to work at *their* company. A generic approach won't get them excited about you; they want to know what you find appealing about their company and why you think you're a great fit. Do some homework before you reach out.
- Be patient and be persistent. Even when there is an open position that's a perfect fit, the hiring process is seldom as direct and never as speedy as job seekers would like. Keep in touch, always in a positive and professional manner, until and unless you are told the position has been filled. (Even then, keep in touch... you never know where a connection might lead.)
- Be generous. Share resources and information with everyone in your network, even if you can't see any benefit to yourself. You might be amazed at what comes of it... and, regardless, you'll feel great.

Beyond the Job Search

The real benefits of VisualCV.com come before and after you're looking for a job. In fact, used properly, VisualCV.com can help ensure that you never actually have to look for a job! Instead, opportunities come to you. You remain visible to people who are touch points for many different parts of the business world, and their knowledge and connections become your knowledge and connections through the power of networking and referrals.

So, stay tuned and stay connected as VisualCV.com takes off. You'll gain advantages today and find even more benefits tomorrow and into the future.