

# NewsRelease

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[seamus.kelleher@mrinetwork.com](mailto:seamus.kelleher@mrinetwork.com)**ARE RESUMES A HINDRANCE IN TODAY'S JOB SEARCH?*****The old model won't make you stand out in the crowd, says MRINetwork®***

**(Philadelphia)** -- March 31<sup>st</sup> 2009 – If you are in a job search right now, or are about to start one, you don't need anyone to tell you that jobs are tough to come by. More people are competing for fewer jobs, making it much more challenging to get noticed. Creating an effective personal "brand" is critical to making sure that you stand out from the crowd in the ways that employers are looking for today, says **MRINetwork®**, one of the world's largest search and recruitment organizations.

"It's a big mistake to rely on your traditional resume as your primary marketing tool," says Tony McKinnon, president of **MRINetwork**. "Most people drag out some version of their resume that they've been using for years, update it with their current information, and get a very discouraging ROI for their efforts."

McKinnon says to stand out you have to create alignment between the specific needs of the employer and the value that you bring to the market, and find new ways to communicate that value. His advice on how to do that means doing some hard work before that resume leaves your hands:

**Dive in deep** by learning as much as you can about the needs of the companies you want to work for.

Understand:

- Their culture.
- Their strengths and weaknesses, including skills and competencies they may be lacking.
- Challenges that are holding them back from achieving their sales goals.
- Initiatives they may have tabled for the present, but will come back to when conditions improve.
- Future initiatives – and the talents they will need to achieve them.

"In today's socially networked world, it's easier than ever to find people to give you this vital information," says McKinnon. "If you are not already doing it, make active use of online tools like Facebook, LinkedIn and Plaxo. Even if you are not in a job search, don't wait until you are to get started." He advises that you approach contacts by explaining that you are doing preliminary research, not calling them to ask about a job, and that you'd like their help – are they open to spending a few minutes with you to share their industry insight?

**Analyze your skills** with a thorough review of your work history and begin to catalogue your skills and the value they have created in your past positions.

"We encourage candidates to make this a systematic, formal process," says McKinnon, "down to having them create three equal columns on a sheet of paper or their computer screen."

- Label the first column "skills." Review the work you've done over the last three-to-five years and list all of the skills you can think of in that column.
- Label the next column "accomplishments." List as many specific, measurable accomplishments that resulted from using each skill. "Why measurable? Because anytime you can quantify the impact you've made," says McKinnon, "you are providing evidence of your skills that is much more credible. Since the majority of job seekers don't bother to do this rigorously, you will stand out if you do. You may need to do some research here, but it's worth investing the time. Make sure you liberally sprinkle these accomplishments throughout your resume—they are much more compelling than any other general narrative you can provide about your skills."
- Label the next column "benefits." For each one of those accomplishments, specify the value that each success created for your employer, constituents, or other stakeholders. "In today's world," McKinnon emphasizes, "employers are looking for people who make money or save money."

**Connect the dots** by identifying the employers you want to contact. “Using the information you collected during your analysis of the market,” says McKinnon, “figure out which of your skills are best aligned with the needs of the employers you want to pursue, then develop a plan for how you will make an impact.”

**Communicate directly** by using the information you gathered during your market analysis to determine the situations where you can make the greatest impact. Identify the employers that have those needs and start setting up appointments. Introduce yourself with a concise statement of who you are, briefly share some of the insight you have acquired about their organization, and inspire them with your ideas. Suggest that there might be value in setting up a time to talk about what you can do to enhance their effectiveness.

“Instead of presenting a general resume that may or may not be on target,” says McKinnon, “you’ll be offering specific ideas and solutions that are aligned to real business needs and address the major concerns of most employers today -- enhancing the bottom line.”

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