

# The 50+ Résumé: Create a résumé that emphasizes your experience – not your age

By Stephanie Hoover

**You'RE  
HIRED!**

**Résumés are complex characters. The one that lands a college grad his first job won't work for the mother returning to the workforce. And neither of those formats will help the 50-**

• Omit graduation dates for high school and college. These only make it easier for a disinclined employer to make hiring decisions based solely on stereotypes about age.

• Avoid phrases that reinforce the passage of time rather than the accumulation of knowledge. For instance, rather than possessing "30 years of radio broadcasting experience" you have "successfully adapted to a variety of technological advancements including digital recording techniques."

• Like the old cheer, employers like to see proof of A-C-T-I-O-N. Are you comfortable with business travel? Do you stay abreast of industry changes via seminars or Internet research? Are you a volunteer referee for your church basketball team? These things

line that grabs the attention of the reader, making him or her want to read the rest of your story.

Next, communicate work experience. This is the point where you must weigh chronology verses function. If you are seeking a job in the same field, a chronological résumé listing jobs held over the past 10 or 15 years is usually the best choice. On the other hand, if you want to change careers or disguise gaps in employment, the functional résumé is your best bet. This simply means listing your experience by job function (such as marketing, auditing, or fundraising) rather than by job title. The key to either approach, however, is specificity. Include concrete examples of your accomplishments. Here are some examples:

• BORING: helped create a golf

it is considered proper protocol to wait to provide references until a prospective employer requests them. There are a few exceptions to this rule, however.

Is your reference well known? Does he/she hold an important position in your community? Is your reference well respected in the field in which you seek employment? If any of these conditions apply, inclusion of references may add gravitas to your résumé.

Keep in mind that the purpose of a résumé is not to win a job, but rather to win an interview. Make sure your résumé is cleanly formatted, error free, and compelling in content. Prepare a cover letter that clearly addresses the requirements outlined in the help-wanted ad – not by restating what

**plus adult seeking a better opportunity or new career.**

**Boomers offer skills and traits that younger workers lack. But how do you communicate this in a one- or two-page résumé? Simply put, by remembering what to leave out and what to emphasize:**

help demonstrate that you are contemporary and up for a challenge – while once again counteracting those old stereotypes about age.

Once you understand the best approach, it's time to study the anatomy of the 50+ résumé. Somewhere in our file drawers or storage boxes we've all probably got one of those '80s résumés that starts with our "career objective." These are typically vaguely worded statements telling the reader that you're looking for a rewarding job utilizing your strong communications and people skills.

The problem with this blanket objective is that it applies as easily to a receptionist job as it does a bartender job. The career objective is too generic for the adult job seeker who knows exactly what he or she does – or does not – want. Instead, this section should be replaced with a summary of your relevant strengths.

Choose two or three of your best and most marketable skills, either from your career history or your educational credentials. Immediately communicate to the potential employer what you and you alone can offer his business. This summary should be the head-

tournament fund raiser  
• BETTER: solicited \$40,000 in corporate sponsorships for the First Annual Children's Foundation Golf Tournament  
• COY: cut the advertising and marketing budget by \$50,000  
• CONFIDENT: by writing, editing and typesetting the company newsletter rather than outsourcing to an agency, ABC Company realized a savings of more than \$50,000

When describing your experience, concentrate on relevance and avoid the obvious. If you worked as a waitress we all know you served food. But, did you also learn how to deal with difficult people? Reconcile the cash drawer and make the nightly bank deposit? Help write the menu? If so, bring these added skills to the attention of potential employers.

Next, present your education – but only if it is an asset. If your formal education is weaker than your work experience, why draw attention to it? Just remember to omit those graduation dates.

Last is the issue of references. In years past it was not uncommon for résumés to contain a list of three unsolicited references. Today

is in your résumé but by pointing out specifics that could only be of benefit to the position for which you applying.

This cover letter is where you make it known that it's not always about the money. Perhaps you are retired and would like to do something that offers personal satisfaction rather than financial gain.

Say so. If you don't, employers may wrongly assume they can't afford you.

Employers are looking for the highest return on investment.

Being 50-plus means you may have to take a unique approach when expressing your investment value, but it hardly means rewarding work is unavailable. Make sure your résumé offers a dynamic assessment of your skills and experiences.

Communicate these skills honestly, confidently and specifically and your phone may be ringing before you know it.