



CREATING A RESUME SUMMARY STATEMENT
THAT BRANDS & SELLS

PURPOSE OF A SUMMARY STATEMENT

Creating a strong resume summary statement that brands and sells your strengths, skills and experiences can make the difference between an effective and an ineffective resume. This is the first part of your resume that a potential employer will read, and it will set the context for the rest of your resume. So the goal is to communicate clearly from the start what your expertise is, and why you are qualified.

The summary statement simply pulls the most important, most relevant parts of your overall branding message and brings it into a 4--6 line compilation that clearly communicates your strengths, skills and core competencies. Do not discuss personal details, and do NOT discuss employment gaps here.

WHY NOT AN OBJECTIVE STATEMENT?

Often an "Objective" statement tends to focus more your own interests as the job seeker, while a "Summary" statement communicates what you can bring to the table in the targeted role for the organization. What can you do for them, and what will they get out of hiring you--- that is the question they want answered! Why should they hire you, essentially? This is communicated by highlighting the most relevant strengths, skills & core competencies that are unique to you as a candidate, versus a trait or skill that's an industry or professional standard (i.e. "multi---tasker" or "team---player").

ISN'T IT SIMPLY REPEATING WHAT'S IN MY COVER LETTER?

While a cover letter may go into more personal detail and include more supporting information about the actual job or organization you are applying to, both the cover letter and the resume summary are important branding tools. Keep in mind, that regardless of how well crafted your cover letter is, there is a chance it will not be read in some cases, and if it is, it will be scanned rather than read line---for---line (like your resume). So never assume that a hiring manager will get all the information they need about you from your cover letter alone.

Repeat the strongest selling points in your summary statement, because that may be the first and only introduction they get about you. Make it powerful, and ensure that it effectively and clearly brands you as the right person for the role.

HERE'S A GREAT EXAMPLE...

Creative project manager with 6+ years of experience developing integrated print and digital marketing programs, and event components to increase brand image, expand market share and drive revenue. Offering a unique combination of creativity and analytical skill with the ability to assess both vantage points to create cost---effective solutions for internal and external clients. Proficient in Adobe Creative Suite, MS Project and Salesforce.

Avoid generic skills that anyone can claim; if what you are saying doesn't position you in a unique and relevant manner, replace it with something more powerful.

CREATING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND SUMMARY STATEMENT

Get Clear on What & Whom You are Targeting

In as much detail as you can, answer the following questions to create clarity around the type of role you are primarily targeting, and who your target audience is (the people you want to read your resume and be completely WOW---ed).

- **What type of work are you targeting? Be specific about the role and the company.**
Example: "I'm targeting a mid---level account executive role within a small or mid---sized boutique PR agency in New York City, preferably one that caters to travel and tourism clientele."

- **List the top 6 skills associated with that role that job descriptions are likely to call for.**
These are most likely the keywords that hiring managers will be looking for in your resume.

Examples: "Excellent relationship builder. Ability to write a press release. Comfortable working with high---level clientele. Experience within the hospitality industry. Degree in Public Relations."

- **Who is your target audience (the person whom you want read and be WOW---ed by your resume)?**
Examples: "HR Manager, Creative Director, VP of Marketing, Principle or Director."

Get Clear on Your Personal Brand Value

Now that you know what type of work you are targeting and to whom you are trying to appeal, think about the message you want to be sending about yourself in terms of the skills, experiences and attributes that you can bring to the table for this potential employer.

- **What message do you want your personal brand to communicate about you?**
This isn't the actual summary, but simply the bigger idea that you want someone to get from reading it. Think of how you would describe yourself professionally to a friend.

Example: "I'm an accomplished and award---winning copywriter who has a wide range of experience across multiple media, and a wide range of work within some of the best known consumer brands. I know my stuff, and I would be an asset to any creative team!"

- Looking at the skills associated with your target role, list out the relevant skills that you possess.

- What other transferrable skills do you have that aren't on the list, but which could help you succeed in the role?

Transferrable skills may not be directly related to the role, but may be broader skill sets that can be applied in a new job or environment, something unique or extra you bring to the table, in addition to the required skills of the role.

Examples: "Published journalist. Certified Project Manager. Bookkeeping. Creating in---depth project plans. Training staff."

- What differentiates you from others in your field who might have similar training or skill sets?

Example: "Experience working in cross---cultural environments and international organizations."

- List adjectives or phrases that describe these attributes.

Think about your work ethic, past accomplishments, additional training, related interests or interactions with past colleagues, clients & supervisors.

Examples: "Consistently promoted. Employee of the month. Three---Time ADDY Award Recipient. Recognized as a top media blogger by the New York Times."

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER INTO A SUMMARY STATEMENT

Your summary statement is all about highlighting your skills, strengths, experiences & core competencies that will best position you as a qualified candidate for the role, based upon what you know to be the requirements and needs of the position. You outlined all of those things in the questions above, and now it's time to patch them together to create a cohesive summary statement that clearly communicates your personal brand and what you can bring to the table for a potential employer.

I encourage you to play around and come up with a version that is accurate and uniquely descriptive of you. But you can use the following formula to get started and create a basic statement that you can tailor and modify. As a best practice, it's always a good idea to tailor your summary statement as well as your resume to each position and company you apply to, as each will have its own unique requirements for hiring.

STEP 1: Remember Your Original Intended Message

Refer back to the informal message you created when asked, "What do you want your brand to communicate about you? We're going to essentially build upon and rework this.

Example: "I'm an accomplished and award-winning copywriter who has a wide range of experience across multiple media, and a wide range of work within some of the best known consumer brands. I know my stuff, and I would be an asset to any creative team!"

STEP 2: Create a strong opening line. (1-2 lines)

The idea here is to be direct with 1) who you are, 2) what you do, and 3) what your level of expertise is. I often begin the sentence with 1 or 2 powerful and supporting adjectives that uniquely describe the person, and that add some oomph.

Example: "Award-winning multi-lingual copywriter with 10+ years of experience in digital and traditional advertising agencies and design shops."

STEP 3: Talk about your strengths and core competencies. (1-2 lines)

Now that they know what you do and your level of expertise, talk about the specific functions within your role that are 1) most relevant to the job your applying to, and 2) that you consider your strongest attributes.

Example: "Strengths focus around cross-cultural brand promotion for direct mail and print campaigns, and understanding how ads will resonate within international markets."

STEP 4: Talk about additional experience or transferrable skills. (1-2 lines)

Now that you've clarified what you are qualified to do, and really where you excel in relation to the experiences and skills the job requires, discuss what other attributes you bring to the table that might set you apart from someone else with a similar background.

Examples: "Additional experience working with consumer and retail brands including Target, Home Depot and Macy's, with exposure to project planning, budgetary oversight, and contract management."

STEP 5: Put it all together!

Piece together each of the above components, and make sure the constructed message echoes what you said in Step 1. Be sure that the message doesn't just look or sound good on paper, but that it's an accurate and unique representation of you as a qualified professional in your field, and clearly communicates the type of role you're targeting and appeals to your target audience through use of appropriate language and keywords. **This is your personal brand.**

"Award---winding multi---lingual copywriter with 10+ years of experience in digital and traditional advertising agencies and design shops. Strengths focus around cross---cultural brand promotion for direct mail and print campaigns, and understanding how ads will resonate within international markets. Additional experience working with consumer brands including Target, Home Depot and Macy's, with exposure to project planning, budgetary oversight, and contract management."

STEP 6: Modify as needed.

Tailor this for reach resume you send out so that you are appealing directly to the exact role and company to which you are applying. You can also use this for your LinkedIn profile or other social media profiles.

Your branding summary statement is a marketing tool, and when used effectively it should communicate your brand in a way that screams, *"Hire me! I'm qualified and full of potential that your company needs!"*