



SPOTLIGHT

*The Premier Professional Association
for Résumé Writers & Career Coaches
Since 1990!*

In This Issue

Columns

What's New From HQ.....	P. 2
New CPRWs.....	P. 2
New CEIPs.....	P. 3
New CPCCs.....	P. 3
PARW/CC Board.....	P. 3

Feature Articles

<i>Preparing Your Clients to Answer the Question the Interviewer Should Have Asked.....</i>	<i>P. 4</i>
<i>by Don Orlando</i>	
<i>Disappointment</i>	<i>P. 6</i>
<i>by Jay Block</i>	
<i>Coaching Through Tough Client Scenarios.....</i>	<i>P. 9</i>
<i>by Diane Hudson (Burns)</i>	
<i>Entrepreneurship: 10 Best Practices for a Successful Business.....</i>	<i>P. 12</i>
<i>by Debra Porter</i>	
<i>Résumé Magic.....</i>	<i>P. 17</i>
<i>by Anne Follis</i>	
<i>The India Story.....</i>	<i>P. 20</i>
<i>by Uma Money</i>	

**March
2014**

Résumé Writing Business - The India Story

*By Uma Money CPRW
Career Catalyst - Bangalore, Karnataka, India
Email: Umabmoney@gmail.com*

Hi – I am Uma Money from India and in the Résumé Writing business for the past 17 years. I am the pioneer for India and when I started, Résumé Writing was in a very nascent stage. In 1997 after quitting a full time corporate HR career with multinational companies, I learned the ropes as a green thumb using my clients as guinea pigs (on a lighter note). I was actually using Jay Block and Richard H Beatty’s samples (with due respects to Jay and Richard) as reference points, then designing résumés customized to the Indian context - reflecting experience and career options for every client. I will come back later about what I mean by this India customization!



Uma is seated at right

Background

As an HR professional with the corporate world, I used to be involved with Recruitment and Selection. As I reviewed badly written résumés and realized the implications, I perceived the need for this service. Possessing the talent of ‘bringing out the best’ in people made me choose ‘Résumé Writing’ as my long-term interest.

Business Promotion

Clients who sought my services initially were mostly ex-colleagues, friends and relatives. That was the story in 1997 and I had no clue whether this business would click! Very luckily one of my clients from a leading newspaper with readership circulation at a national level was excited to catch my storyline for pioneering a novel business concept. In 1998 my first article was published and there was no respite from phone calls! Enquiries poured in and I fully realized the business potential for India. That was 17 years ago and the business just continues to grow!

Methodology

From the beginning I believed in a one-on-one discussion to understand the clients’ heart! I still continue with this model and am one of the first Résumé Writers in India pursuing this approach. Several career web portals inspired by my business followed suit using the volume model; turning around large numbers in a limited time frame without meeting the client face-to-face.

CPRW Certification

After nearly eight years of doing business with sheer hands-on experience interacting with diverse professionals across the industry, I felt a strong need to understand the finer nuances and take my business and business understanding to the next level. It was at this time that I began looking at professional organizations from the US.

PARW/CC came to me as an excellent choice and I obtained my CPRW Certification in 2005, making me the first qualified Certified Professional Résumé Writer from India.

The Certification gave me a solid grounding and requisite competency to design résumés suiting specific client needs and explaining the logical content and structure with reasoning to my clients. You might ask what my approach was earlier. I was doing much the same but at a very rudimentary level! The Certification gave me the distinct pace and edge to beat competition, which I did successfully!

The new qualification and experience attracted media several times over with coverage in leading newspapers and business magazines! By this time I had built a credible database of clientele. I was not a ‘Specialist’ in any specific function/trade/industry and attracted people from diverse walks of life and experience. I have clients from the routine functions like Marketing, Sales, Manufacturing, Projects, IT and Operations. Interestingly I also have offbeat professionals like Scuba Divers, Hair Stylists, Cocktail Mixers, Zoo Wardens and more.

Business Model

My business model thrives on a reference approach – satisfied clients referring my name to their close contacts. I personally believe this is an excellent model, especially in the Indian context.

To understand a volume model, Career Catalyst was associated with Monster, India and International for nearly five years. While there was a lot of money in this approach, it stifled creativity and the customization. But it gave us the opportunity to accelerate our business pace, hire Résumé Writers and meet commitments while keeping quality and time paramount. However it took away the joy of caressing every résumé and seeing it through till the client was completely satisfied. In the remote model (no direct communication with clients) there was a hiatus between us and end customers.

Like any Résumé Writing business, we have had our “ups and downs.” Typically, here in India, it is seasonal and there tends to be a reduction during holiday seasons (India being culturally diverse we have more holidays than the rest of the world) and downturns in the economy have also made an impact. The one thing that clearly defines this business is that it is totally “need based.”

Business Expansion

As we progressed in our experience, we realized the importance of “Counseling,” especially in our discussion-based approach. We started acting as a mentor/career coach; giving a clear sense of direction to our clients regarding career choices and decisions about résumé formats. Inclusion of interview assistance services also became imminent, bringing clarity to clients to crack their dream jobs.

Currently we offer end-to-end services that include Career Counseling, Résumé Writing, Cover Letters, Interview Assistance and Statement of Purpose documents for clients seeking admission to Universities overseas. We work with India-based clients and clients overseas who could be Indians or global citizens. We also design résumés for India clients seeking career opportunities overseas.

We have expanded our business horizons by representing clients from the Asia Pacific region & Middle East being associated with Certified Professional Résumé Writers from these regions.

Difference between India and US résumés

The British left an indelible impression on us – so British English is what we use predominantly. Unless we get a specific request to use American English.

As a community and country, our belief system is more towards personalization and interaction unlike the remote or impersonal approach. On that premise the discussion based approach is more time consuming. The other thing we do that the Americans may find shocking is that we do not curb a person's discussion/talking time. So you can imagine when you have a heavy weight with 20-years experience! It could last anywhere between an hour to two!

Improvising on this approach, the first step we have introduced more recently in the past one year is requesting clients to respond to our questionnaire in writing before we talk to them. This has actually helped us understand their experience in totality, making our one-on-one discussion very focussed while saving considerable time in the information gathering interview. At the same time the client realizes the seriousness of our pursuit!

We also tend to be verbose. So one-pagers are mostly a 'no no.' We present a maximum three page document.

In the Indian context we use only MS Word and PDF formats. We are in pace with technology but not anywhere close to US standards.

Pricing

In 1997 our prices were quite low compared to the current industry prices. As we developed awareness for the importance of this service and the quality of our work influenced careers building overall industry awareness, we gradually escalated our prices becoming almost equivalent to the US dollar.

Future for this industry in India & our plans

Résumé Writing has a bright future for India with:

- ◆ Several foreign educational institutions setting-up base here.
- ◆ Multinational Companies' insistence on well-crafted résumés.
- ◆ IT industry's need to present effective résumés with the primary goal of winning large projects in the global context. We have a strong IT presence in our part of the world, Bangalore, India.
- ◆ Student community currently not being addressed at all.

There is a long way to go for India to catch up with the latest happenings in this industry. We can certainly do with a lot of awareness and fostering understanding about the importance of this service, "professionalism" and need for Résumé Writers with core competencies besides technology enablement.

