



HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE B2B SALES RESUME

The purpose of your resume is to move you to the next step in the hiring process. Whether that is the initial interview, or to complete personality, compatibility or skills testing, if your resume moves you forward, it was effective. Over the years, I have seen hundreds, maybe even thousands of B2B sales resumes, the vast majority of which did nothing to help the applicants obtain employment. In fact, in most cases, it did the exact opposite!

So why are even the best B2B sales professionals being passed over by their desired employers? Most times it is because the sales professional, in an attempt to sell themselves on their resumes, never proved to the potential employer that they could actually sell their product or service!

The Importance of Cover Letters

Today, most cover letters are emails as opposed to actual letters as they were in the past. The old printed cover letter used to be part of the actual resume as it was normally stapled to it. Now, the email is read once, the resume printed and/or saved, and then the cover letter email deleted.

As such, the format of the cover email must change from its printed ancestor. It must be short, to the point, and must not contain any information that is not in the actual resume itself as that information will never be seen again. It must entice the reader to read the actual resume. Having said that, just sending an email that says you have attached your resume is not sufficient.

The format that has worked extremely well for me is as follows:

Please find attached my resume outlining my qualifications for the position of (name of position) as advertised in (name of publication or website). My (number) years of business to business sales experience qualify me as a valuable asset.

Some of my career highlights include:

- (List 3 to 5 bullet points that highlight your best accomplishments or that match the qualifications listed in the job advertisement)

Thank you very much for your time and effort. I look forward to discussing this opportunity with you.

Regards,
(Name)
(Phone)
(Email Address)

The Format For An Effective B2B Sales Resume

As most resumes are submitted by email, you must create and submit it using a file format that the employer can read. Sometimes this is specified in the job ad itself. If not, then use Microsoft Word .doc or Adobe .pdf format. If this is not possible, then use rich text .rtf format. Virtually every word processing program can create and read this file format.



Sales managers and recruiters are extremely busy people, and the task of reading resumes is a necessary evil on their road to success. As such, no matter what, the length of your resume must not exceed two pages. If it is longer, edit it. Anything longer is not being read anyways, so what's the point?

Your contact information, including name, address, phone and email, must be front and center. Only list a phone number that you want potential employers to call, and ensure that there is the ability to leave voice mail because a recruiter will rarely call back twice. If there are instructions on how you are to contact the recruiter, follow them as they are actually testing your willingness to follow direction. Also, check your email daily and turn your spam filters off. Countless career opportunities have been lost because the email from the potential employer was never answered.

The main headings of your resume should be: Employment History, Education, Other Skills and Activities. Contrary to popular belief, in B2B sales, your future career goals are to be discussed in an interview, not on your resume. Besides, for a recruiter, after reading resumes for hours, everyone's career goals start to sound the same!

Your resume must be accomplishment based. Anyone can say that they are an "overachiever" or a "sales superstar". However, if you do not quantify your successes and list your accomplishments, you are actually raising hiring red flags as opposed to lowering them. By not showing the numbers, the recruiter thinks, "Is this candidate trying to hide less than stellar sales results?"

To highlight your accomplishments, each listing in your employment section should discuss your responsibilities, your achievements, and the skills you developed while holding this position. In the achievement section, you can also focus on your daily activities as a B2B sales professional, as many sales managers believe that consistent daily activity is an accomplishment! This format is a very effective way to show your potential employer what you have done, how well you have done it, and whether the skills you have learned are transferable to their company.

Lastly, the format of the resume itself must not just be readable, it must be able to be scanned. In other words, the reader should be able to scan your resume in just a few seconds and still know where you have worked, and the positions that you held. This is accomplished by the spacing and font formatting that you use. Also, please ensure there are absolutely no spelling mistakes. Nothing says that you do not pay attention to details louder than having spelling mistakes in your resume!

On the next two pages is an example of a resume that encompasses the suggestions discussed in this article. It is the same format that I have used successfully for many years. It was given to me by one of my university professors as it had worked for him for many years. More importantly, as a sales manager, if I received a resume in this format, I would be reaching for the phone to set up an interview before I reached the end of page two!

Good luck in making your career connections!

Susan A. Enns
B2B Sales Connections Inc.

Susan is managing partner of B2B Sales Connections Inc. With over 20 years experience in B2B sales, she has a proven track record of recruiting high quality sales professionals, while keeping turnover rates extremely low. Currently, Susan provides revenue-generating consulting services to sales organizations and sales professionals in the business to business marketplace. For more information, please visit www.b2bsalesconnections.com, or contact Susan directly at senns@b2bsalesconnections.com.



Example of a B2B Sales Resume

JOHN A. REPRESENTATIVE
717 Any Street, Anycity, ON H0H 0H0
Home: (613) 555-1234 Business: (613) 555-4321
jrepresentative@sales.com

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

- 2005-Present ABC COMPANY **Senior Sales Representative**
Responsible for acquiring and servicing a corporate client base for widget systems in the business technology industry. Achieved an average sales level of 120% of assigned sales quota; Sales Representative of the Year in 2007; served as Sales Representative Training Assistant. Developed skills in all aspects of competitive business to business technical sales, including prospecting, fact finding, closing, and territory management.
- 2003-2005 123 INCORPORATED **Corporate Account Manager**
Responsible for establishing and servicing a client base with the promotion of a new corporate line of gadgets. Demonstrated consistent daily activity of 10 prospecting calls per day. Developed skills in creating and executing a sales process, troubleshooting, product development, delegation, and sales forecasting.
- 2000-2003 PROFIT INC **Sales Representative**
Responsible for creating and serving a client base for business financial services. Awarded the Rookie of the Year in recognition of sales results. Developed skills in direct sales, establishing a client base, independent work habits and quotations.
- 1998-2000 BIG RETAILER INC **Summer Management Trainee**
Responsible for customer service in the clothing department in a large retail operation. Consistently received exceptional employee performance reviews. Developed skills in leadership, customer service, and problem solving.

EDUCATION:

- 1996-2000 UNIVERSITY OF PROVINCE **Bachelor of Commerce (Honours)**
Finance and Marketing major, Faculty of Management; overall grade point average of 3.59 on a 4.00 scale; Dean's Honor List, 1984, 1986, 1987; U of P Alumni Pledge Program Vice Chair, TSE Stock Market Simulation and Manitoba Marketing Management Competition participant. Developed skills in study habits, time management, class presentations, group decision making and case analysis.



1993-1996 HOME TOWN COLLEGIATE **Grade XII**

Graduated Magna Cum Laudi; Kinsmen Award Winner for good Citizenship, Sportsmanship, and hard work; Volleyball and Fastball team member, 1980 to 1983.

2006 PROFESSIONAL B2B SALES TRAINING COURSE

Further development of sales and communications skills for the business to business marketplace.

OTHER SKILLS:

Microsoft Office, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and Explorer; numerous database and CRM programs; numerous proprietary software programs; intermediate French.

ACTIVITIES:

2002-Present Graphic Arts Curling League, League Vice President, 2004; voted All Star Skip, 2006

2001-Present Volunteer at the Hospital for Sick Children

2001-2003 Study Group Curling League; voted Most Sportsmanlike Player by membership, 2002.

RECREATION:

Golf, curling, gardening, and reading.

REFERENCES:

Will be provided upon request.