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TELL A STORY

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Quick Summary: Show who you are with stories in your resume.

Abstract:

Facts in your resume are important, but being interesting is more important. Encompass your facts with simple one or two-sentence stories that reveal who you are and what you have accomplished. Interviewers want to hire the best candidates that they can find as measured by the candidate's past accomplishments, but they also must feel confident that the person can fit into their organization. "Who you are" is equal in importance to what you have accomplished.

Many years ago, there was a very popular television series called "*Dragnet*." It featured the actor Jack Webb, known as Sargent Joe Friday, who was a police detective. He never smiled or showed any emotion. With his stone face and monotone voice, he often said, "Ma'am, all I want is the facts, ma'am, just the facts." That approach worked for him, but it does not work for resumes. To be sure, numbers – especially numbers that show results, not just hard work – are important. However, numbers do not tell the reader "who" you are. All organizations want to fill their ranks with successful individuals who can complement their existing team. Both terms are critical. *Success* is measured in results, but the *individual* must fit into the organization. Show that you are a person! Words like "with a team," "leadership," "challenges," "inspired," "motivated," "coordinated," and "influenced" reveal who you are. As an example, which statement is the most effective?

- "Delivered 120% of our sales goal within the period."
- "Lead the team that delivered 120% of our sales goal within the period."

Even if your target position is for an individual performer role, doesn't the second statement resonate better with a hiring manager?

Weave who you are into what you have accomplished. Your "story" about yourself can be told in a few short sentences. Tell the story, don't just list facts. Also, start with the story to encourage readers to keep reading. Don't forget to discuss what you do outside of the job. Show that you have a life outside the office. Be human!

Your goal is simple: help them get to know you before they meet you. If they are predisposed to think of you as a well-rounded, competent individual, they will likely to simply look to re-affirm that impression when you meet. The most important tactic you can use to prepare your resume is to be interesting. Create interest with short stories.