

# Career Center Services For Your Resume Building Blocks



## Part one in a Series

by Executive Director Nancy Savage (1977-2011)

Congratulations. You have decided to explore the opportunities for post-FBI employment. More than likely, you had one or two successful professional positions before becoming a Special Agent. Within the FBI, you have probably worked a variety of different criminal violations, potentially served in specialized or supervisory positions and moved a few times. You may have served on special assignments TDY, led task forces or served as liaison between the FBI and other agencies. How do you condense that experience into a top-notch resume? Before crafting the body of the resume, it is suggested that you develop an in-depth product that lists your skills and accomplishments. This can be a number of pages in length. Know that employers are going to be most interested in what you did the last five years of your career and that is what your resume should concentrate on.

### **Professional Experience Inventory**

Perhaps you were assigned as a squad supervisor over health care matters. List your supervisory experience and your investigative experience in health care. Translate this from Bureau speak into what you actually did. Instead of "Squad supervisor of a health care crime squad" write "led a group of investigators that resulted in a 50% increase of indictments and convictions over the previous two-year period." "Doubled monetary recoveries during a one-year period through development of a recovery asset program." If health care is pertinent, incorporate it. If not, leave it out. Do not indicate what you were responsible for — advise what you did, what the accomplishments were related to your actions, and what value these accomplishments added to the organization in concrete terms. Do this in bullet form for every critical assignment that you have performed. Vary your verbs and be descriptive in your use. Do not over rely on one or two verbs such as "responsible for." Remember, do not use Bureau speak nor acronyms unless defined. See box for powerful action verbs that you can use. Follow each verb with clear facts that convey impact and value to the organization.

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**Can I hire someone to write a professional resume for me or can I copy someone else's resume?** Not if you want to get the job and stay employed. Seeking your first post-FBI position is a project that takes commitment and should be started about two years before you want to launch from the FBI. We all know people who "just fell into dream positions," but for most this is not going to be the case.

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### **Awards**

Highlight the significant awards and attach them to accomplishments. You do not want to list every commendation, but the most significant awards you have received should be listed in your inventory and attached to an accomplishment.

### **Determining Type of Post-Bureau Career**

Equally important as starting your Professional Experience Inventory, is exploring careers to which other Special Agents have successfully aspired in your geographic location. You may already know what you want to do post-FBI, but many of us need to cast about. I have known several top investigators, who, as they put it, "do not want to ask another question" after their Bureau career. They have gone into the healing arts, glass working, dog training, etc. Others are successful private investigators and love it. I suggest you look at the many possible careers that the Society has highlighted and see if one of these careers is a good fit with your skills and interests. (See box for testimonies posted on the Society's website.)

Also, look through the Society's printed directory and observe the many occupations that are listed. Attend a local chapter meeting of the Society and talk to the attendees. The members know the local job market for FBI retirees and can give you some solid advice. Review the jobs posted on-line in the Society's Career Center. After you have done some exploration as to the type of post-Bureau career you are interested in, the best place to start is to begin preparation of a generic resume. This will serve as a starting place and can be tailored to meet each job posting that meets your interest in the future.

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### **POWERFUL ACTION VERBS**

Advised management	Led organizational review
Analyzed and recommended	Organized and directed
Briefed	Planned
Consolidated	Represented
Designed	Served as the Lead
Developed criteria	Revitalized
Drafted	Taught
Formulated	Validated
Initiated	Wrote policy regarding _____

# For Your Resume Building Blocks



## Part two in a Series

by Executive Director Nancy Savage (1977-2011)

## Writing a Resume

The goal of a resume is to simply make you stand out as a more desirable candidate than the competition. Of course, your competition has the same goal. Preparing a generic resume is not the end game in your future job search, but it is a starting document to put together in a recognizable format the building blocks we discussed last month. (See Box of the Building Blocks of a Resume below.) Your resume must be personal and it must present you as a great match for the individual posted position. The thought behind a generic resume is to provide a format and assemble the basic information into a one- or two-page document. This resume will have to be revised to fit each announcement, but it gives you a tremendous leg up in resume preparation when you finally are in a position to submit a resume or hopefully have a potential employer ask for a resume before any job is even posted.

**Write to stand out.** The hiring manager will have numerous resumes to review and you do not want to use the valuable space to list skills that are expected and are not singular to you. If what you write applies to almost everyone, then you have placed yourself in the middle of the pack. One of the ways to stand out is through a compelling Career Objective Statement or a Professional Philosophy Statement. These should be carefully constructed to be clearly personal about you as an individual and what you can bring to the organization. You must seize the reader's attention within the first few seconds. The opening sentence must be followed by a portrayal of your potential value to the organization. Let's face it — the hiring manager looks at a lot of resumes — make your statement interesting and memorable.

A resume is not a position description and should not read like one, detailing elements of the job or required skills. Tell what you did in your prior assignments and the accomplishments and awards that were a result of your actions. Use items already crafted from your Professional Experience Inventory and plug them in. (For more details, see last month's Article "For Your Resume – Building Blocks.") Employers need to quickly understand your work experience and qualifications and the bullets from your inventory should fill the bill.

**Contact Information** — full name, city where you reside, email address and phone numbers. This information is personal so be cautious about whom you share your resume with. Employers want to know where you reside and how to get in touch.

**List relevant educational degrees and certifications.** If you are seeking an accounting or audit job, your Certified Public Accountant certification is critical and should be listed up front. If your desired occupation requires international travel, your foreign language skills should be front and center.

### Building Blocks of a Resume

- Decide the Type of Post-Bureau Career that you want to pursue
- Make a list of Awards
- Make a list of your job-related skills
- Prepare a Professional Inventory
- Prepare a Generic Version of your Resume



## Resume Tips

These are tips that will serve you well.

### **Consistency**

Be consistent in the opening words for bullets, whether you use verbs or nouns. Maintain a consistent person and tense.

### **Use of Person Pronouns**

Resumes should not include personal pronouns such as he, his, she, her, I, or me.

### **Requested Length of Resume**

Check length requirement and adhere to the requirements. Your resume should be only two pages in length. Some organizations require that submitted resumes be only one page.

### **File Format**

Choose the right file format. Since so many resumes are processed through an Applicant Tracking System (ATS), it is recommended that you choose a .docx or PDF format to ensure your file will be easily read by the system. Neither of these is the default option when you are saving a document. To choose the file format for your resume, click on File, Save As, and find the "Format" field. From a dropdown menu, you can select .docx or PDF.

### **Keywords**

Many companies use ATS software. ATSs review resumes and cover letters for key words that are used in the job description and/or job announcement. A careful review of the job description or announcement will reveal key words that are actually requirements such as "Certified Public Accounting" or "CPA" or "accounting experience." It is important to make a list of listed key words for each posted position and then make sure that your resume and cover letter incorporate those key words. This is not going to be as important in a generic resume, but the incorporation of key words is critical when responding to a job

announcement. If the key words are not incorporated, when the ATS software parses the submitted written material, your application may not make it to a hiring manager's desk. Mirroring their key words in your resume reinforces that you are a strong candidate for this position and would also be a good fit within the organizational culture. This does not mean mirroring the job description, just the key words.

### **Edit**

Review your initial draft in the context of skills and experience it should address. Those hiring are looking to ensure that you can perform the functions of their position in a different organizational culture than the FBI. Does your text flow logically? Review it from the perspective of the person reviewing the resume. After you have reviewed the initial draft, add, delete, or adjust information as needed. You may need to rearrange items.

### **Proofread**

Proofreading cannot be overemphasized. Once you have made it through the steps set forth above, it is critical that you proofread your resume so that you do not miss spelling errors, typos, grammatical errors, or other details that could undermine your work. Review your resume multiple times, line by line, word by word. Beware of redundancy, a frequent error in proofreading. No one can proofread their own work in the same manner as someone fresh to the material — so ask a mentor or other respected individual to proofread. This final step of ensuring accuracy demonstrates a commitment to excellence that future employers will expect.

**Next month:** Preparing a tailored resume for a specific job announcement.

# For Your Resume Building Blocks

## Part three in a Series

*by Executive Director Nancy Savage (1977-2011)*



## Writing a Resume Tailored for a Specific Position

In this series of articles, we have already recommended that you prepare the following:

1. List of Awards
2. List of your job-related skills
3. Professional Inventory
4. Generic Resume

These building blocks are the difficult part of preparing a resume that is tailored for a specific job announcement or job opening. You have already completed these parts, making the preparation of a tailored resume much easier and faster. As the goal of a resume is to simply make you stand out as a more desirable candidate than the competition, the best method to make you stand out for a specific position is to ensure that your targeted resume portrays you as an excellent fit for the target or specific position. Your generic resume will provide you a format and assemble the basic information into a one- or two-page document. This resume now needs to be revised to fit each announcement. The revisions and additions should come from your Professional Inventory, which has been prepared.

### ***Do Not Compare Yourself Out***

When first reviewing job announcements, do not compare yourself out of the desired position if you can meet most of the key skills and requirements. Go ahead and tailor your resume and put your best foot forward. If the hiring manager believes you are the right person for the position and you have the majority of the skills, you have an excellent shot at being chosen.

### ***Review of the Job Announcement and Job Description for Key Words***

After carefully reviewing the Job Announcement and Job Description (if available), it is time to prepare a list of key words. Many companies use software called an Application Tracking System (ATS), which is designed to organize, track and communicate with applicants. ATSs have mechanisms to filter, sort and organize candidate applications. These mechanisms review resumes and cover letters for key words that are used in the job description and/or job announcement. A careful review of the job description and announcement will reveal key words that are actually requirements such as “Certified Public Accounting” or “CPA” or “accounting experience.” It is important to make a list of key words for each posted position and then make sure that your resume and cover letter incorporate those keys words appropriately. This is not going to be as important in

a generic resume, but the incorporation of key words is critical when responding to a specific job announcement. If the keys words are not incorporated, when the ATS software parses the submitted written material, your application may not make it to a hiring manager’s desk. Mirroring their key words in your resume reinforces that you are a strong candidate for this position and would also be a good fit within the organizational culture. This does not mean mirroring the job description, just the key words.

### ***Internal Company and Industry Language***

You should research the job title, industry and company related to the job posting and obtain a sense of the internal language used within a particular industry and company. It is also worth your time to look at job titles and industries through job sites such as Indeed or through networking sites such as Linked In. Someone else’s resume might feature a similar history as yours and offer an example of how to frame this experience in a compelling way. Remember, more than likely you are not applying for a position with the FBI, so avoid “Bureausee.” If, as suggested, you have incorporated a Career Objective Statement or a Professional Philosophy Statement, ensure that you have reviewed this to also incorporate language that indicates you can speak the language of the career for which you would like to be selected.

## **Tailor**

Tailor your resume to the job announcement, If the announcement or description, calls for a certain skill set, do not inundate your prospective employer with your other skills. Pull your skills and accomplishments from your Professional Inventory that are applicable to this particular desired position.

## **Edit and Proofread**

Editing and proofreading has already been performed when you prepared your generic resume. Both need to be done from scratch again as you have probably made significant changes and additions to this resume. Does your text still flow logically? After you have reviewed the initial draft, add, delete, or adjust information as needed. You may need to rearrange items. It is

critical that you proofread your resume so that you do not miss spelling errors, typos, grammatical errors, or other details that could undermine your work. Avoid duplication of information. You will have been cutting and pasting, both of which are fraught with potential for errors. Review your resume multiple times, line by line, word by word. Beware of redundancy, a frequent error in proofreading. No one can proofread their own work in the same manner as someone fresh to the material — so ask a mentor or other respected individual to proofread. This final step of ensuring accuracy and thoughtfulness demonstrates a commitment to excellence that future employers will expect.

**Next Month:** Preparing A Cover Letter

## **Building Blocks of a Resume**

- Decide the Type of Post-Bureau Career that you want to pursue
- Make a list of Awards
- Make a list of your job-related skills
- Prepare a Professional Inventory
- Prepare a Generic Version of your Resume
- Prepare tailored resumes as needed

# For Your Resume Building Blocks

## Part four in a Series

*by Executive Director Nancy Savage (1977-2011)*



## Writing a Winning Cover Letter

You have found a position that you are interested in, you believe that your qualifications are a substantial match, you have prepared a resume that is specific to this position. Now you need a cover letter that is tailored to this specific position. Remember that many hiring managers rely on these letters to gauge an applicant's personality, attention to detail, and communication skills.

Cover letters should be no more than one page, with a 300 word count. They should be relevant to the job and no more than three paragraphs. They should be formatted carefully as set forth:

Professional Cover Letter Header which includes the following:

- The date
- Your name
- Home address or city and state of residence
- Telephone number
- Email Address
- Social media accounts at Linked In and Twitter

The header must reflect that you are a professional. Make sure your provided email address is from a respected provider and includes only your name and possibly numbers. Do not use your current work email address. Ensure that all of your contact information is consistent amongst your resume, cover letter and social media.

### ***Proper Method to Address the Hiring Manager***

The letter should be addressed to the name and address of the company to which you are applying, as well as the name of the hiring manager and his or her title. If you do not have the name of the hiring manager, then address it to the department at the company to which you are applying. For example the salutation should be "Dear Mrs. Smith" or if you cannot determine the name of the hiring manager, you can address it to "Dear Hiring Manager." Research on the company's website might determine the appropriate person or you can reach out to a Society employee who works for that company for additional information. If you list the name of the hiring manager, triple check the spelling.

### ***Opening Paragraph***

The few sentences at the beginning should hook the hiring manager into wanting to read more. You should let the hiring manager know that you are very interested in the posted position and let them know that you bring experience that matches the requirements that the job entails.

### ***Second paragraph***

This paragraph should be tailored to show that you have the skills and qualifications for this position. The first sentence should show that you are an expert in the area for which they are looking to hire. Remember to include the significant key words in this paragraph that you included in your tailored resume. Cover

letters are often processed through Application Tracking Systems (ATS), which are designed to organize, track and communicate with applicants. Correlate your skills to concrete problem-solving activities or results from your current job. Make sure you are not speaking "Bureau-ese," but are tailoring this to the language and culture of the company that you want to join. These mechanisms review resumes and cover letters for key words, which you have already prepared.

### ***Third paragraph***

Let the hiring manager know that you understand their company and what current endeavors they are undertaking. Explain how your expertise is a match for the current work of the company. Let them know that you would be excited to be part of their team working on the challenges they are currently facing. Do not include everything in your cover letter that is in your resume. One or two anecdotes of what you have accomplished is all that should be included. Explain that you would expect to stay with this company for quite a while if given the opportunity.

### ***Final Paragraph***

Let the hiring manager know that you would like to meet in person and discuss how your experience and expertise can help the company meet its goals.

## **Closing**

You can close with any of the following:

- Sincerely,
- Best Regards,
- Thank You,

Follow with your typewritten name and signature.

## **Delivery of the Resume and Cover Letter**

Resumes and cover letters are most often emailed. You can be a step ahead by including the important portion of your cover letter into the body of the email, as well as sending it as an attachment.

## **Final Thoughts**

You have worked hard and written a power-packed cover letter that is tailored to the position. Now is the time to print it out and proofread carefully — looking for errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar. Look for phrasing that does not work well or sentences that are too long. Have a friend or colleague also go over it and make sure it is “letter perfect.”

## **Building Blocks of a Resume**

- Decide the Type of Post-Bureau Career that you want to pursue
- Make a list of Awards
- Make a list of your job-related skills
- Prepare a Professional Inventory
- Prepare a Generic Version of your Resume
- Prepare tailored resumes as needed
- Writing a Winning Cover Letter

# For Your Resume Building Blocks

## Part five in a Series

*by Executive Director Nancy Savage (1977-2011)*



### Strategies for a Winning Interview

Congratulations! You have done the hard work of preparing a resume and cover letter that match your skills with the job that you want. The employer liked what you provided and believes you are a real possibility for this position. You are scheduled for an interview and want to put your best foot forward. Prepare carefully and you will have the right mental attitude going into that interview. Again, building blocks are the key to going in strong and the steps you need to take are set out below.

#### **Review, Review, Review**

Review your skill set that you have already provided to this potential employer and make sure that the key words that you identified for this specific position are on the tip of your tongue. Review your resume and cover letter that you submitted and commit to memory the skills and accomplishments that you highlighted. Analyze the job posting again and make sure you are prepared to talk about your skills and accomplishments as they match the posting. There are sure to be several opportunities for you to relate to your interviewer in a substantive manner how you are the perfect fit for the position. This preparation will help you be ready to answer specific interview questions designed to determine if you have the knowledge, skills, and qualities needed to perform the job.

#### **Research the Company**

You should have already researched the company before finalizing your resume. This is the time to take a deeper dive, as company research is a critical part of interview preparation. It will assist you in answering interview questions about the company and in asking knowledgeable questions in turn about the company. Start with the company website and go over it thoroughly. A Google search should yield articles about the company and its standing within its industry. Refer to the Society Directory to find other members who are working for the company and/or are in the same industry. Contact them and obtain their insight and advice before the interview.

#### **Practice Interviewing for this position**

If you can find out the nature of the interview it will be a plus. Most will be in person, but you may be interviewed by one person or it may be a panel. Try to practice in the same format as the interview will be conducted. Enlist family or friends and supply them with sample questions of substance to ask you. At this point, some candidates actually engage a career coach to get them fully prepared for the interview.

#### **Attire**

You're an FBI Agent. You know how to dress for court. Hopefully, you will already have an interview outfit ready to go so you are not stressed out about shopping for the perfect professional outfit. This is your first physical impression, so make it a great one.

#### **Remember to Listen**

It is critical to listen carefully to the questions and what information they do provide about the position. Listening allows you to be responsive to the question and the information provided. Take your time if you need to compose and deliver your best answer. You know how to build rapport when you are interviewing, now you can do the same from a slightly different perspective. Developing rapport is critical as they are assessing your fit for the company at this point. Your resume showed you had the requisite skills.

#### **What to bring to a Job Interview**

1. Leather portfolio
2. Extra copies of your resume
3. List of references
4. List of questions to ask the interviewer
5. Pen and paper

Make sure your phone is on silent and do not bring in coffee, water, etc. They will more than likely offer you both. Accept water if desired.

#### **Directions to the Interview**

Make sure you have the correct address for the interview. Have printed directions from Google Maps or Map Quest. In advance obtain a time estimate for the likely drive time and then give yourself some extra time to arrive slightly early. Pre-program your GPS so you can find the best route and check on parking availability.



## ***Your questions***

Have a list of questions that show you want to fit into the company. Typical questions would be:

1. What is a typical day? Work week?
2. Where did the last incumbent go?
3. Who does this position report to?
4. How much travel is involved?
5. If I am extended an offer, when would I be expected to start?
6. What is the general office atmosphere?

Remember, these questions are still part of your sales pitch. You should ask about a variety of things and avoid discussion of

benefits, potential prior commitments, and schedule adjustments. If offered a position, you can bring these issues up.

At the end of the interview, you should let the interviewer know that you believe the job is a perfect fit for you and that you are highly interested.

## ***Thank You Note***

Follow-up the interview with a thank you note expressing your interest in the position and thanking them for the opportunity to meet with them in person. If you need to clarify anything concerning the interview, this would be an excellent time to do so.