



Burn Your College Resumé

Michael Poll

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▶ *A Few Words About This Publication*

1. This eBook is written for you...a busy college student. You've got lots to do and little time to do it. So, this eBook is written in a concise, easy to follow manner. Forget the fluff, the B.S. and mumbo jumbo. Let's not waste time here. And don't even think about a lecture!
2. You'll notice it's in a format that should pretty closely fit you computer screen. Again, done on purpose to make it easy for you.
3. You will find links to other cool things and references. Be sure to check them out!
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▶ *About the author, Michael Poll*

Your success in school depends on one person. And that person is reading this right now.

You are the one who will create your destiny, your future. It is in your hands. But it is dependant on what you do today. You have the opportunity, one might even say, the responsibility, to do everything you can to get you from point A to point B.

Trouble is, most college students don't know what or where point B is.

That is the purpose of resources by Michael Poll. Michael's worked on campuses in both academic affairs and student affairs. He worked with one college president to design a new campus building and was appointed Dean of Students by another one. Two more presidents served as senior reviewers for a student leadership assessments Michael developed.

For 14 years he has been speaking to college students at association meetings, conferences and on college campuses. In a nutshell, Michael works with colleges that want to develop better leaders and with students who want to get ready for the world of work. He has fun and really enjoys what he does.

Additionally, Michael runs a corporate consultancy where he has consulted with people from more than 1,200 different companies, businesses and non-profits.

Originally from the East Coast, Michael now resides in the Chicago area with his family.

He is available, *schedule permitting*, to speak on college campuses.

▶ ***Other publications by Michael Poll***

Ka-Ching! How To Make \$1,000,000 After Graduation

Wake Up, Stop Whining and Start Leading

Affiliation Is Not Enough!

Sweaty Palms, Pits and Parts! Present Like A Pro Without Peeing Your Pants

▶ *Dedication*

To Sammy, Julia and Declan...
With the promise that your experiences are exciting
and memorable...and easily fill the pages with
happiness and fulfillment.

Very Important Notice!

If you are like most people, you probably skipped over the page that's titled: *Copyright, Legal Notice and Disclaimer*. Well, all of the stuff on that page applies to this publication with the exception of your ability to share and forward this publication.

As a matter of fact, I'd like to enlist your help with this free eBook. Help us make it one of the most downloaded eBooks for college students on this topic on the Internet. So:

You may distribute this eBook, freely, sell it, or include it as part of a package as long as it is left completely intact and unchanged and delivered via this PDF file.

So, please forward it to your college friends, your fraternity or sorority, your roommate, you Mom! The concepts apply to everyone. Why keep all this info for yourself? Please share and help others succeed too! Pay it forward.

Send it compliments of me, and you!

Forward

You may think that my notion in calling a book by the title “Burn Your College Resume” is a bit crazy...but, let me explain.

What I really hope you will do as a result of reading this is to stop following the herd. The herd are the rest of the people who do everything the same old way. Same old way thinking just doesn't cut it today.

Your resume is a reflection of you, your work, your experiences. Honestly, you need to be kicking it into gear now, while you are a student. Don't wait until your senior year.

In my presentations titled [“Straight A's Won't Get You The Job!”](#) and [“Greeks Get Hired”](#) I explain what students believe employers are looking for when doing the hiring verses employers are really looking for. And, there is a difference. Big difference.

You need to be out there now getting those experiences, awards, scholarships and so on...so you have that stuff to put on your resume.

I have spoken and or consulted with people from hundreds of different companies, organizations, non-profits and professional associations. I have a personal book of stories from hiring managers. They tell me what

they are really looking for and what they dislike in a candidate and in a resume.

I have been writing and re-writing resumes for years. As a matter of fact, for the past three years I have made an offer to students during campus presentations and association keynotes. That offer was that if students were interested, they could email me their resumes and I would critique them. No fee, no strings attached.

I saw, read and reviewed tons and tons of student resumes. I no longer make this offer. Instead, I wrote this book in order to share information with many more students.

It seems that there were consistent inconsistencies across the board. So, here's a list of a dozen or so quick and simple things you should keep in mind when crafting your resume.

I am not sugar-coating this either. Some of these items are simple, some more challenging. Some, you may not want to do...and that's up to you.

Of course, nobody can guarantee you that your resume will get read and you will get a job...and, I cannot do that either. Instead, these are strategies and ideas. In the end, you need to use your own judgment.

One more thing. In presentations, I say "Resumes are out. Marketing Brochures are in." In the presentation, I cover this in more detail but in short, understand that your resume should not tell everything. By listing everything out, you just do an information dump...and that is unlikely to be read.

Instead, think about your resume as a document that creates interest and creates curiosity. You should be focused on getting your reader to do one thing and one thing only: Take action. The action is to contact you for further discussions, questions, clarification. This becomes the beginning of the relationship that potentially leads to a more formal interview...which should be your goal.

So instead, motivate your reader to say something like "Wow, how did this candidate accomplish that? I wonder what they did to make it happen? I wonder if they can do it for our organization too?"

The only way they will know is if they contact you to learn more!

Burn your resume. It won't hurt. Start over.

To your future success!

--Michael

▶ *If You Must Go Beyond One*

If you've seen me speak in person or heard me anywhere at all, you know I am a big advocate of the one page resume.

Even though I can ramble on for pages about why I believe this is not just important but necessary, students constantly tell me that they can't fit it all in on one page.

See my entry about One Page Resumes.

But, if you must defy my wisdom...

At the bottom of page one, be sure to let them know there is a page two. Put something like "1/2" or "Page 1 of 2."

On page two, let them know they have landed there. Tell them "2/2" or "Page 2 of 2."

Also on page 2, don't forget to put your name on it. If they print out your resume, what happens if they pass it on to somebody and page two is missing? Or what if they pass on page 2 by accident? It's got your name on it. My recommendation is to put it at the top of the page, justified right. The following page is an example.

Poll, Page 2 of 2

▶ *Center the Focus*

Center the dear reader's focus on the center of the page.

Real simple. Right now, assuming you are using Microsoft Word, go to "Format," then "Borders and Shading," then "Page Boarder" and select "Box." That's all you have to do. If you are using other software to create your resume, find a way to do the same.

Oh, what did you just do? You just placed a small, thin Border on your page. That Page Border may seem meaningless to you but it does a lot.

People are more likely to read a page within a border than they are to read a page not in a border. Something like more than 60+% more likely.

Yes, you read that right. Your page is more likely to get read. A simple border seems meaningless but it works. And, it doesn't take up more space on your page to do this so it's really a no-brainer.

▶ *No Apples. No Flying Pigs either!*

I once received a resume from a student to review. She wanted to become a school teacher....and presumably by now she is.

However, her resume needed work. She had the experience. She did the student teaching. She had required credentials. Unfortunately, she was trying to be too cute.

The top of her resume had the required name, address, contact info. But on the left and right sides of that info she had place some very cute clip art. And it was cute.

On the left side was a small picture of a schoolhouse complete with ringing bell. How cute. On the right side, you guessed it, an apple.

I immediately crossed those items out and faxed it back to her.

First, cute is not needed...unless you are applying to become a "live in Nanny" I guess.

Second, if you are applying to become a school teacher for example, the Principal or Superintendent already gets the schoolhouse and apple bit. Don't waste space on your page this way.

You might say, "But Michael, I'm not going to be using that bit of real estate on the page anyway. What's the big deal?"

True, very true. But, it takes away from the reader's experience. It pulls their eyes to the hokey clip art...or whatever else you can think of and find.

Why would you want to pull the readers eyes away from the main content of your resume? Answer: You wouldn't.

▶ *Above The Fold*

The info above the real info is actually not as important as the information.

What was that you say? The information above the information...the name and contact info above the rest of the content info is not as important as the contact info.

Huh you say. "But they need to know how to get in touch with me." Of course they do. But don't try to throw too much stuff in that top section. And don't give it extra large font. Keep it simple.

Michael Poll
123 Lisa Turn Lake Crescent, IL 34885
michaelpoll@comcast.net - 303-123-4455

Looks much better than:

Michael S. Poll
123 Lisa Turn
Lake Crescent, Illinois 34885
E-Mail Address: michaelpoll@comcast.net
Phone: (303) 123-4455
Cell: (303) 494-4838
Web Page: www.mywebpage.com

It's cleaner.

It's simpler.

It takes up less space.

If they read your resume and you have written it in a way that makes them salivate...they will email or call you. Play with the format a bit....but, keep it clean and simple.

▶ *Change The Page*

On the Internet, we're you probably spend much of your time reading things, people read differently than they read a printed page. A printed page is usually read word for word the way we were taught....from left to right.

On line we read a page in an "F" pattern. Yes, like the letter F. So you have to ask yourself how the person getting your resume is going to read it. Most likely, on-line. They may print it out to show it to a committee or to other people. But they will just as likely forward it as an attachment.

So, why is this so important? Most students write their resumes for paper and not for the computer.

You included.

Instead, think short, sweet and in bullet points.

Yes, I know you want to get it all down there. You want to tell them everything. But in telling them everything, you are scaring them off. So, change the page...or at least how you think about the page.

▶ *Nobody Cares About You, or Your Resume*

Ouch! I know that hurts....but, it is very true. In the beginning, you are just a commodity to an employer. You are, well, a nobody...who wants to become a somebody. So, in essence, you are selling yourself.

“Just the facts” gets you nowhere.

The facts are important, and required. But the way you write the facts is more important. Give the facts but keep your dear reader in mind. They don't need, nor will they read, all of the facts.

Give them the bare bones facts. Things like job title, location of the experience and dates. Maybe location. For my money, reading this:

Intern, WJZ Television, Baltimore, MD, Fall 2006

is much better than:

Project Manager Intern, WJZ Channel 7 Television, Baltimore, Maryland, August 15, 2006 – December 12, 2006.

Honestly, which are you more likely to read? They both tell me the basics. The second one gives me more than I need to know.

Now imagine 5-7 of those long entries on a resume page....and you can see why "Just the Facts" matters.

▶ *Books Have Chapters*

Think of your resume like you think of a book. Well, a short book.

A book has a title, a forward, sometimes section headings, chapters and pages.

In the case of your resume, the title is you...your contact info.

The forward may be your cover letter.

The section headings for your resume would be things like "work experience" or "awards and recognitions."

The chapters would be the specific entries.

The pages would be the bullet points under each chapter.

Possible chapter titles to consider:

- Work Experience

- Professional Experience

- Volunteer Experience

- Awards and Recognitions

- Scholarships

Volunteerism
Community Service
Education

The point isn't that you need all of these. Select the ones that are relevant to you. Also, you might call them by other names. The point is, you have to help the reader quickly understand what you are writing...so, use section headings.

▶ *Pages*

My recommendation is that there should be no more than 3-4 page entries per chapter. That means 3-4 bullet points per entry.

I know, you did tons of things for your fraternity or sorority. You were majorly involved with the Residence Hall Council. You did tons of stuff in your internship. And you want to tell the reader about all this stuff. Well, lose the urge to do so. The more you try to tell, the more space you take up on the page. The less likely the reader will read it all.

Be short. Be succinct. Be clear.

In my talks with college students, I give this example.

Greek Week Dance Marathon
Co-Coordinator of large event.

Greek Week Dance Marathon, Co-Coordinator

- Raised \$37,000 in 24 hours.
- Secured \$4,200 in donated goods and services.
- Supervised 42 volunteers.

Which sells better? Which sounds better? Who would you hire?

The first person sounds, well, boring. So what, who cares. This could be on anybody's resume.

The second person has peaked my interest. I'm thinking "How did they do that and, how can I get them to use those skills in my company?"

If I'm hiring, I'll call the second person to discuss, ask questions, perhaps bring in for an interview. The first person won't get another look and the resume goes in the "Thank you but no thank you" folder.

▶ *Not Finished Yet*

If you are still a college student, you can't honestly state on your resume that you have completed your degree yet. Some students chose to leave off some details about their completion date.

How dumb. Especially if you are in an MBA program or finishing a Masters degree, or even getting a specialty certification such as a teaching certificate...you definitely should put it down.

You could enter it as "anticipated completion date," "scheduled completion" or something like that.

It is also important to list these "in the future" accomplishments because you may be submitting your resume for consideration via an on-line service. Many on-line services have sophisticated tools designed to weed out resumes that do not make the cut.

So if they are looking for a person with a BS in a specific degree including a minor in a language, and the computer programs sees you don't have that...bye-bye resume. Employers use these web tools because they get tons of resumes and don't have the time to go through all the resumes.

List your anticipated degrees, certifications, etc. assuming they are legitimate.

▶ *The Page Is Only 8 ½" By 11"*

You are already limited in space. Use it to the best of your advantage. One thing that students constantly do is "indent" sections or lines on their resume. Why waste the space.

Yes, it might be helpful to bring the reader to focus in on an important are of your resume. The question becomes, what other ways can you do this? Could you underline, bold, italics, change font size?

Whatever you do, don't overdo it. I'm not saying you should not indent. Just make sure it is relevant and be consistent.

While were on it, maintain consistency too with the way you underline, bold and italicize items. Additionally, don't overdo it or you'll end up with a resume that looks upon first glance, like a mess. Perhaps bold your titles, roles, locations, etc. and that is it.

▶ *Readability Matters*

You may notice that this eBook is written in a certain format (page size, font size, font choice, margins). That is done on purpose. The text and size selected are do so on purpose to increase your ability to easily read. (People actually do research on readability!) This text isn't always grammatically correct and punctuation sometimes does not flow in the most formal way. That is done on purpose as well.

This is an eBook...it's not your resume. Your resume should not have the word "I" in it. It should not sound like you are writing your diary or an entry on your MySpace page or personal Blog. It should be more formal it's approach.

Additionally, the selection of font you use does matter. Many people prefer Times New Roman as it is the preferred style in many books, newspapers, and publications. Some readers are just used to it and it is comfortable.

Another font that is popular is Arial. You lose the serifs that Times New Roman offers and some people like that. It may seem easier to read but it may be perceived as casual.

Some people use Veranda. That is the style selected for this eBook. It is larger and spreads out more than Arial. It might work well if your resume is lacking text and you want to make the page look fuller.

Some say it is a personal choice. There are actually studies done on font choices as they pertain to specific purposes. My recommendation is to err on the more traditional style...which may mean New Times Roman. However, I've seen some awesome looking resumes in Arial font.

You can even do some quick research on this topic by searching things like "increase resume readability" or "how fonts are viewed by end-users."

In the end, it is a personal choice you have to make. My recommendation is to select a font based on the ease of readability from the reader's perspective, not yours.

▶ ***No Shoes, No Shirt....That IS a Problem***

At least with your resume it is a problem. Your resume is a reflection of you and you only have a few brief moments to reflect your best. Don't blow it.

This eBook shares some ideas and strategies to help you maximize your resume when it is being viewed by a prospective employer. There's no guarantee that doing any of this stuff will get you a job. Nothing can do that.

Doing this stuff doesn't even mean your resume will get read. And if it does, it doesn't mean that your resume will end up in the "let's call this person for an interview" pile.

However, doing some of the following may give you an edge in a dog-eat-dog world where you have little time to make a first impression with a gatekeeper.

Your resume speaks volumes about you...keep the shoes and shirt on and try dressing up your resume with some of these ideas.

Close

As you can imagine, the future is up to you. What comes ahead is based on what you do with today. How you act, what you experience, when you engage. Your resume is the sum of all of your experiences.

And, now is the best time to get those experiences while in college.

For your consideration, there are other resources available at the website. [Ka-Ching!](#) is also an excellent resource that is available for purchase. As a bonus, when a school [schedules Michael to speak](#) on their campus, every student at the program gets a complimentary copy of Ka-Ching for FREE!