

Preparing Your Post-FBI Resumé For Your Next Career

by Alan A. Malinchak (1984-2004)

In 2002, just two years from FBI retirement eligibility with two college-bound daughters — and as a Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) retiree, not by choice — I realized I would need to continue employment beyond retirement.

Each of us — whether we are retired, eligible to retire or close to retiring — possess certain traits that proved successful during our FBI careers: dependability, discipline, integrity, teamwork, work ethic and experience. Other assets, such as arrests, convictions, prosecutions and informants, are great and valuable within the FBI but may not translate well to private industry. Because the people who read resumé typically get hundreds of them and on average take about seven seconds to scan and review them for keywords aligned to the position, it is important that you prepare your resumé carefully. Determine if you have the skills for the position then prepare a resumé with the right information — in two pages or fewer.

Translating Your FBI Success to Private Industry

You must include in your resumé those skills and attributes that can be easily translated to the business world — who you were in the FBI is not as important as who you will become in that next organization. Specifically focus your resumé and cover letter to each position and organization to which you apply. It must be easily readable and include information that supports a future employer's needs and gets you to the next level — the interview. Without a strong resumé and cover letter, you may be one of hundreds instead of the one person interviewed and, perhaps, hired.

In a nutshell, play to your strengths. Some examples:

- 20 years of service shows a loyal, dedicated work ethic
- Supervised 10 employees, administered seven projects, etc.
- Specify security clearance and the date of expiration (for example, Top Secret Security Clearance, expires January 2018)
- Identify military status — veteran, especially a Disabled American Veteran (DAV), reserves

- Identify professional certifications and ensure they are current (for example, certified Project Management Professional)

When translating your FBI career of 20-plus years to a two-page resumé, highlight only the last five to 10 years, with the last five years preferred.

Who You Are is NOT Who You Will Be

Preparing for your next career is time consuming — especially preparing your resumé, which has been focused on public service and now needs to focus on revenue and your ability to perform within private industry. Your resumé must reflect this professional reinvention.

Writing your new resumé requires a change in how you perceive yourself in the future. Change is always easier when you adjust to it gradually — conduct research on the Internet, contact retirees who have successfully transitioned to private industry and obtain a copy of their resumé as a guide, or outsource to a professional resumé writer or service. Do whatever it takes to avoid posting a 20-page resumé on Monster.com and then waiting for a call offering you a position. Cases didn't fall into your lap during your career and neither will jobs. You need to make the case for hiring YOU, and a resumé with standard business-focused components is a great start. Those components include:

- Objective
- Strengths/Overview
- Experience
- Security Clearances
- Professional Certifications
- Education
- Professional Associations
- Education
- Contact Information —

... All within two pages that are aligned to the specific position you are applying.

Your new resumé is an “active document” and needs to be rewritten for each position you apply. Whether outsourcing or writing it yourself, you must read and dissect the position description and modify your resumé for that position and for that company.

If you want or need to outsource writing your resumé, there are many affordable resumé-writing services (\$100-\$500)

that specialize in aligning current skills for a particular industry. A well-written resumé is one of the keys to being competitive in private industry and an expense that can often provide a significant return on its investment.

The process of writing a resumé has value, as does the process of self-assessment in internalizing and visualizing yourself in the future.

You may use this checklist to guide you through the process:

1-2 pages; font style should be professional, easy to read and no smaller than 10 pt; use bullet points rather than lengthy paragraphs

Use action words such as prepared, managed, developed, monitored, presented, led

List accomplishments and responsibilities (in that order), 3-5 for recent experience (last five years) and fewer as the experience gets more dated (Many experienced job seekers just list the title of first jobs

and provide little to no description because it was so long ago it's no longer relevant)

Be specific and quantify (use percents, dollar amounts and numbers) when reporting relationships, budget dollars, number of people managed, etc.

Do NOT include salary information or references on your resumé

Be positive – Do not include negative statements

Education – school, location, major (but NO graduation date)

Certifications and memberships (if applicable)

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PHOTO FROM THE FILES — UPDATE



In April 2013, the Grapevine published a photo titled "First FBI SWAT Team Celebrates 40th Anniversary." That SWAT class, composed of Agents from major offices, was the second SWAT class to complete training at the FBI Academy. The first SWAT class, designated Spider One, consisted of Agents from six smaller FBI offices and completed training in July 1973. Information submitted by Stephen B. Chenoweth (1967-1995).

Spider One class participants by office: Albuquerque — Ronald M. Hoatson, Ronald Wayne Kelly, R. James Mazza, Edward C. Sauer and Allen K. Tolen; Denver — Neil W. Fore, James M. Horn, James E. Huggins, Kenneth Parkerson and Gary W. Rayburn; Kansas City — John E. Cannon, Thomas E. Den Ouden, James R. Jay, Stephen S. Travis and Noel F. Vetter; Omaha — William P. Dion, John W. Hancock, Olen V. Harvey, Daniel E. Kelly and Earl J. Webb; Phoenix — Stephen B. Chenoweth, Colin Dunnigan, Lewis A. Fain, D. Michael Griffin and Julian J. Miller; Washington Field Office: Tase E. Bailey, Jr., Roger L. Depue, Thomas R. Easton, David W. Johnson, Jr., and John W. Minderman