

Résumé Prep Exercises - to help you create a more effective résumé.

Exercise Part 1: Write "PAR" statements

Write several "PAR" (problem, action, results) statements. An effective way to shape your résumé is by using PAR statements to demonstrate your problem solving skills. Don't worry about your writing being perfect or your grammar correct. Just get the ideas down. I will do the rest of the work and weave your PARs into your résumé.

What is a PAR statement?

P = The Problem: Define a problem you have been faced with, not necessarily a negative, just some sort of challenge, preferably on the job.

A = The Action: Explain the action you took.

R = The Results: Measure the results everywhere you can. If you can't measure them, at least describe them and what difference they made. Keep in mind some of the main reasons you get hired: to make or save money for the company, make things more efficient, or enhance public relations.

PARs are fun to do.

Involve your friends and family members when putting PARs together. Sometimes people close to you remember details or even events that you might have forgotten. It is essential that you put the modesty our culture lays on us aside, at least for our work together. I tell my clients not to "get modest" on me or I cannot do my job as résumé writer. Think of PARs and résumé writing as telling your whole story if that helps you deal with the modesty issue.

Using PARs during the interview

An additional benefit of having a list of PARs written out happens during your job interview. When the interviewer, who is possibly untrained, says, "Well, (your name), tell me about yourself." Most people feel like the proverbial deer in the headlights at that point. You, however, will be prepared to start the interview off right. Your answer could be, "Let me tell you about some problems I have solved." Instantly you have the interviewer's full attention. All employers want to hire problem solvers. You open the folder you brought with you and describe the PARs you have written. Yes, it is fine to bring notes. The interview is off to a smooth start, and you feel confident that you are well prepared. Keep in mind that the reason employers are interested in you is that they have problems they cannot solve with their current staff alone.

Exercise Part 2: Bring supporting documents

Other helpful documents that will help shape your new résumé.

- Old résumés
- Job performance evaluations or some notes that describe them
- A list of awards you have won
- Community service and volunteer work you have done
- Formal education, continuing education and training
- Printouts of jobs you are interested in pursuing