



## **Why Employers Don't Respond to Functional Resumes**

Have you ever been advised by a well-meaning Human Resource Officer or Recruiter to jettison your chronological resume in favor of a functional one? You may have so many years of experience that the document becomes too lengthy in their opinion or they may believe that grouping your experience by function will allow you an easier path for transitioning your abilities into another industry. It may sound like plausible advice but let me ask you this: once you began using a functional resume in response to job postings that interested you, did it ever result in an interview or better yet, gainful employment? Statistics show that an actual "hire" rarely materializes from the use of a functional resume. Why?

Unlike chronological resumes, functional ones tend to mask educational deficits, gaps in employment, job omissions and even incarceration. Skills and achievements can be grouped together in such a way as to hide some things and showcase others. Experienced interviewers already know this and may even have experienced consequences themselves in the past so rather than even explore someone's qualifications further, they tend to reject anyone presenting themselves in such a generalized manner. Whether your particular background deserves that kind of negative scrutiny really doesn't matter because others before you have already manipulated the format for their personal advantage and as a result, injected prejudice into the equation from its inception.

In looking at various formats and styles for functional resumes for over 30 years now, we at the Executive Group can say definitively that we have not yet seen a single one that doesn't seem to be concealing some facts or truths about the person represented. In addition to that, many hiring authorities are accustomed to a chronological sequence in other documents such as job applications so they simply don't perform a credible job of reading functional resumes well enough to even understand them.

In all fairness we have to say that there can be fabrications on chronological resumes as well of course but it is far more difficult to do without being readily apparent. Let's be honest - just living life normally can still produce negative incidents in anyone's employment- company downsizing, mergers and poor management consequences for example. Being honest about the situation and adding brief explanations alongside any such incidents on your chronological resume will get you further in your job search than trying to mask the inconsistencies.



**One of our specialties is banking. It is worth noting that up until about 10 years ago, banks would not hire anyone with a bankruptcy in their background. Even a substantial level of indebtedness (in the opinion of the hiring authority) was suspect and often fatal. The circumstances did not matter to the hiring authority. Not so today. If a candidate is up-front about it along with any other “dings” in their job history and is able to provide an acceptable explanation, he has a pretty fair opportunity to compete for the position if his other skills and abilities fit the role well.**

**All that to say that truthfulness and transparency in job seekers have a more heavily weighted value in the hiring process these days, perhaps as much as someone’s experience. As one CEO mentioned just the other day, “We can teach skills but we can’t teach character. They’ve either got it or they don’t.” Don’t allow a functional resume to portray you as someone whose character is even in question. There are already enough hurdles to jump through in getting the perfect job for yourself without throwing in an additional needless hurdle of your own.**

**For more specifics on how to best represent yourself in print, please refer to the article entitled “Writing Your Resume”.**