

JOBSEEKER TIPS:

CAREER JOURNALING FOR THE FUTURE

Takeaway Points

- Being prepared for a dream job opening means having an up to date resume ready at all times.
- Keep track of your accomplishments, no matter how big or small they are.
- Every detail in your journal can be used for a future job search – in your resume, cover letter, or interview.

By: Team Pongo

If your dream job opened up today, how long would it take you to update your resume and send it out? If your answer is measured in “days” rather than “minutes,” you might want to consider a more proactive approach. Keeping a career “journal” is a great way to organize the information you’ll need when it’s time to update your resume.

Add Your New Job to Your Resume

When you land a job, it’s tempting to throw your interview outfit into the back of the closet and your resume into the trash. Your job hunt is finally over, and you’re ready for a break. It’s understandable, but also short-sighted. In today’s ever-changing job climate, your resume (and interview outfit) needs to be refreshed and ready to go at all times.

One of the first things to do when you get a new job is update your resume with all the details:

- Company name and location
- Job title
- Starting date
- Main job duties

You can begin a proactive career management approach by keeping a career journal. This journal is where you’ll keep track of all the skills and accomplishments you’ll be acquiring on the job. It can be a spreadsheet, Word document, or even a folder with handwritten notes.

Keep Track of Your Accomplishments

The idea is to keep an ongoing record of anything significant that you achieve on the job, so that updating your resume will be quick and simple.

Consider adding a new journal entry each time you:

- Acquire a new skill (describe your new capability).
- Complete a project successfully (record deadlines that you met and budgets that you stayed within).
- Receive praise (save e-mails or make notes of compliments from supervisors or managers).
- Play a key role in a new product/service offering (describe your role if you worked alone or as part of a team).
- Increase revenue or profitability (use actual sales figures or percentages wherever possible).

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Did you know?

The Pongo ResumeBUILDER (www.PongoResume.com) provides you with all the tools you need to enhance your job search. You can build as many resumes as you like!

- Streamline a process (describe how bottlenecks were unclogged or how productivity improved).
- Mentor a coworker (mention specific ways you helped him or her).
- Enhance customer satisfaction (cite survey scores or testimonials).
- Prevent accidents or losses (mention safety commendations or lower insurance rates).
- Gain certification or licensure (and describe how it helped your employer).
- Win an award (explain the honor).
- Receive a promotion (record your new title and responsibilities).
- Acquire new responsibilities (describe your new role).

You should also note the dates of any memorable events on the job, what roles other people played relative to yours, how your accomplishments may have been noted in a performance review, and whether they led to an increase in responsibilities, a pay raise, or bonus compensation.

When a New Job Opportunity Arises

Remember that your resume is, first and foremost, your personal marketing document, and the key to marketing is understanding what your audience wants, then proving that you've got it.

Your career journal will have more details than you can (or should) put in your resume. Be selective and pick the ones that seem to best fit the specific job you're seeking. If you've kept the journal current, it will be a cinch to add strong evidence to your resume, showing that you have the specific skills, qualifications, and experience to do the job.

Some of the details that don't work in the resume might come in handy when you write your cover letter, or when you need a story to tell in a job interview. Reading your career journal can also be a great confidence builder, as you put all of your successes in one place.

Don't Push Your Luck

A career journal may seem like unnecessary work, but consider the alternative. Two years down the road, will you be able to recall quickly and accurately what you achieved on the project you're completing today, or the value of the contract you landed last week?

So, as you send your interview suit to the cleaners, start your career journal. It only takes a few minutes at a time, but it can pay off in a big way when you can quickly and easily update your resume with accurate, impressive facts. The next time opportunity knocks, you'll be able to open the door to your next career move.

www.pongoresume.com

Pongo Resume is a premier full-service online resume-building resource that provides a suite of tools to help job seekers market and manage their career. Pongo generates over 100,000 resumes per month through its 4+ million registered users and has in excess of 1/2 million unique visitors per month. The company is privately held and headquartered in Northborough, Massachusetts.