



Elizabeth: What a Difference a Story Makes

*Concentrate your strength against your
competitor's relative weakness.*

Bruce Henderson,
Henderson on Corporate Strategy

Every résumé has a pitch—although it may not be what the job hunter wants it to be. In scanning Elizabeth's "before" résumé, we can easily see that she has had communications and advertising positions in a number of computer companies. That's the total extent of her pitch. When she went on interviews, managers commented: "You sure have worked for a lot of computer companies." Her résumé read like a job description: She wrote press releases, product brochures, employee newsletters, and so on.

Thousands of people can write press releases, so citing those skills will not separate Elizabeth from her competition. But we can get to know her better if she tells us about specific accomplishments.

Elizabeth agreed to do the Seven Stories Exercise. She didn't feel like writing down "the things she enjoyed doing and also did well" because she felt as though she kept doing the same things again and again in every company for which she worked, and she enjoyed them all. Still, I urged her to be specific—details can make a résumé more interesting. And working on the Seven Stories Exercise is a sure way to develop a strong overall message.

She started with an experience on a job early in her career. She had thought of a terrific idea:

Her company's product could be sold through the same computer systems that were used to sell airline tickets and car and hotel reservations. She convinced the company to let her go ahead with the idea, and she promoted it to travel agents across the country and also to the salespeople in her own company. It was so successful, it became the standard way to sell foreign currencies when people were going on a trip.

Most job hunters tend to ignore accomplishments that took place when they were young. But if you had accomplishments early in your career, they may be worth relating because they let the reader know that you have always been a winner.

I said, "That sounds great. Where is it on your résumé?" Elizabeth said, "Well, it's not said exactly that way. . . ." Many times job hunters are constricted when they write their résumés, but the Seven Stories Exercise can free them up to express things differently. So we restated that accomplishment.

Elizabeth then worked on another story. She had participated in a conference that had "generated 450 letters of intent."

I said, "It's nice the conference generated 450 letters of intent. But from what you said, I can't tell that you had anything to do with those results, and I don't know if 450 is good or not. Tell me more about it."

Elizabeth said, "There were only 1,500 participants in the conference, and 450 letters of intent is a lot because our product is very expensive. I had a lot to do with those results because I developed an aura of excitement about the product by

Packaging Yourself: The Targeted Résumé

putting teasers under everyone's hotel door every morning.

"And before the conference, I had sent five weekly teasers to everyone who planned to attend. For example, one week, I sent each person a bottle of champagne. This direct-mail campaign had everyone talking about us before the convention started. People were asking one another whether or not they had gotten our mailers. When they got to the convention and found teasers under their doors, they were eager to come to our booth.

"I also trained the teams of employees who were demonstrating the product at the convention. I made sure that each demonstrator delivered the same message."

Now I understood how Elizabeth had played a major part in generating those letters of intent.

Next we needed to think of the message behind this accomplishment. Was her message that she could stick mailers under doors? Or send out bottles of champagne? No, her message was that she knew how to launch a product, and that's what we put on her résumé as the main point for that accomplishment.

In her "before" résumé, Elizabeth said that she wrote press releases and did direct-mail campaigns. Her "after" résumé provides some examples of what she accomplished with those efforts and gives us a feel for her ingenuity and hard work.

The successful person has the habit of doing things failures don't like to do. They don't like doing them either necessarily. But their disliking is subordinated to the strength of their purpose.

E. M. Gray, *The Common Denominator of Success*

The Summary

After we reviewed all of her accomplishments, we tackled the summary. What was the most important point Elizabeth wanted to get across? It

wasn't just that she could write press releases and speeches or do direct-mail campaigns.

She had to think hard about this. The most important thing was that Elizabeth was a key member of the management team. She sat in on meetings when the company was discussing bringing out a new product or planning how to handle a possible crisis. Elizabeth would not be happy—or effective—in a job where she simply wrote press releases. She needed to be part of the strategy sessions.

What you put on your résumé can both include you and exclude you. A company that does not want the communications person included in those meetings would not be interested in Elizabeth—but then, she wouldn't be interested in them either.

In her summary, instead of highlighting the companies she had worked for, Elizabeth highlighted the industries represented by those companies. She listed Information Services and High-Tech first, because they represented areas of greater growth than Financial Services did.

Elizabeth was—and wanted to be again—a corporate strategist, a crisis manager, and a spokesperson for the corporation. That's how we positioned her.

In every summary in this book, the reader can tell something about the writer's personality. It is not enough that someone knows what you have done; they also need to know your style in doing it. For example, a person who had run a department and doubled productivity could have done it in a nasty, threatening way or could have motivated people to do more, instituted training programs, and encouraged workers to come up with suggestions for improving productivity. Your style matters.

Look at this case study, and then do the Seven Stories Exercise. Come up with accomplishments that will interest your reader. Let him or her know what to expect from you if you are hired.

In Elizabeth's case, we hope the hiring manager will look at her résumé and say: "That's exactly what I need: a corporate strategist who



Accomplishments: The Backbone of Your Story

knows how to handle crises and can also serve as a spokesperson for us.”

This is the response you want the reader to have: “That’s exactly the person I need!” Look at your résumé. What words pop out? Is this how you want to be seen? If not, let’s get going.

*Great minds have purposes, others have wishes.
Little minds are tamed and subdued by
misfortune; but great minds rise above it.*

Washington Irving,
Elbert Hubbard’s Scrap Book



"Before" Résumé**ELIZABETH GHAFARI**

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Phoenix, AZ 44444

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EXPERIENCE**CITRUS COMPUTER SYSTEMS**

1999–Present

Director Corporate Communications

Plan and supervise all corporate communications staff and activities for diversified financial information services company on a global basis.

- Develop, direct, and implement global media, public relations, and internal-communications programs in support of corporate and sales objectives, working closely with executive management team.
- Direct all media-relations activities related to new product introductions and product enhancements; initiate media contacts; respond to press inquiries; coordinate and conduct interviews; and develop all press materials.
- Develop and direct advertising and promotional literature activities, overseeing all corporate publications, including corporate and product brochures, sales materials, and customer and employee newsletters.

ELECTRONIC DATABASE SYSTEMS

1997–1999

Manager, Advertising and Promotion

Developed and implemented marketing and promotion strategies for the company and its North American subsidiaries.

- Worked with market and product managers to identify opportunities for product and sales promotions and new product development for multiple market segments. Conducted market research, developed marketing strategies, and implemented tactical plans (e.g., direct response marketing and sales incentive programs).
- Responsible for planning biannual securities analyst meetings and communication product information to investors and industry analysts.
- Orchestrated six product introductions during three-month period, including public-relations activities, promotional literature and training materials.
- Responsible for forecasting and maintaining \$4 million budget.
- Managed corporate and product advertising programs, hiring and working with various agencies.

ELIZABETH GHAFARI

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CREDIT LYONNAIS

1995–1997

Corporate Investment Officer and Product Manager

Planned and directed the sales and promotion efforts for the bank's corporate and correspondent sales staff for a variety of products including foreign exchange and precious metals.

- Developed active and profitable business relationships with correspondent banks for sale of precious metals and foreign exchange products.
- Established and developed new account relationships. Brought in eleven new corporate accounts which produced significant business in precious metals and foreign exchange trading areas.
- Managed market study to identify size, segments, and opportunities of various markets. Prepared analysis and recommendations for new product development and trading vehicles.

WASSERELLA & BECKTON

1990–1995

Director of Marketing

Managed all activities of the Marketing Department, including product development, sales promotion, advertising, and public relations activities for diversified financial services company.

- Conceptualized and developed national marketing strategy for foreign exchange services offered to travel industry professionals via automated airline reservation systems.
- Developed and implemented business plans for a variety of products, including responsibility for product positioning, pricing, contracts, advertising, and promotional materials.
- Promoted from Foreign Exchange Trader to Marketing Representative to Director of Marketing in three years.

EDUCATION

B.A., Psychology, University of Phoenix

1990

"After" Résumé

ELIZABETH GHAFFARI

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Work: (493) 345-7777

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS EXECUTIVE

with 14 years' experience in

- High-Tech
- Information Services
- Financial Services

Experience includes:

- **Global Media and Investor Relations**
- **Customer Videos and Newsletters**
- **Advertising/Promotional Literature**
- **Employee Newsletters**
- **Employee Roundtables/Awards Programs**
- **Speech Writing/Papers/Public Speaking**
- **A corporate strategist and key member of the management team** with extensive knowledge of financial markets.
- **A crisis manager:** bringing common sense, organizational skills, and a logical decision-making process to solving sensitive, time-critical problems.
- **A spokesperson for the corporation:** developing and communicating key corporate messages accurately and convincingly, under deadline pressure, to multiple audiences including employees, the media, customers, and investors.

Proven team leader and troubleshooter with highly developed analytical, organizational, and strategic planning skills.

CITRUS COMPUTER SYSTEMS

1999–Present

Director, Corporate Communications

- Gained extensive positive media coverage in conjunction with launch of company's first product for new market segment.
 - Planned and conducted **media events in 8 countries.**
 - Resulted in **positive stories in 30 major publications** and trade press: *The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Barron's, The Financial Times, Forbes*, and various foreign publications.
 - A first for the company, **positive TV coverage in the United States: CNN, CNBC, and Europe:** Sky Financial Television, Business Daily, The City Programme.
- Successfully **avoided communications crisis**, gained positive press coverage and customer support when company sold a major division. Within a 60-day period:
 - Planned and managed all aspects of a **13-city, interactive teleconference.**
 - Developed all written materials including various employee and customer communications, background materials, and press releases.
 - Wrote speeches for six executives including both company presidents (present and acquiring companies).
 - Wrote and produced an extensive question-and-answer document covering **union, compensation, and benefits issues and business rationale.**
 - Selected and trained staff representatives for each of 13 cities.

ELIZABETH GHAFFARI - Page 2

CITRUS COMPUTER SYSTEMS, contd.**Director, Corporate Communications, contd.**

- Developed and implemented **company's first employee awards program** for service excellence.
 - Honored employees who participated in planning sessions.
 - **Led to changes in key areas** including improvements in software manufacturing efficiencies, shortening of the product development cycle, and improved employee morale.
- **Introduced desktop publishing** program for in-house production of all promotional materials and various customer and employee newsletters.
 - **Reduced outside services expense by 75%**.
 - Created new **corporate standards manual** and reorganized promotional literature system to replace inconsistent product literature.
- Conducted group and individual **employee meetings** to gain and disseminate critical information in identifying and resolving employee-relations problems.
- Prepared quarterly management reports and written/oral presentations to top management and employees to describe corporate accomplishments compared to goals.
- Managed all customer/media/employee communications for sale of three business units.

ELECTRONIC DATABASE SYSTEMS

1997–1999

Manager, Advertising and Promotion

- Prepared written and oral **presentations to boards of directors** and senior managers on various services, concepts and results.
- Planned **product launch** and company participation in global foreign exchange conference. Successful product launch resulted in **generating 450 letters of intent from 1,500 participants**. Assured successful product introduction:
 - Developed 5-week **direct-mail campaign** to stimulate interest and create an aura of excitement around product prior to conference. Campaign continued at conference with daily newsletter and door stuffer.
 - Maximized impact of **product demonstrations** through use of compelling visual presentation and environment.
 - **Trained teams** of product demonstrators to assure that information regarding benefits and features would be delivered in a consistent way.
- Strengthened company relationships with **industry analysts and investors** by arranging product demonstrations in conjunction with biannual industry analyst meetings. Demonstrations stimulated interest and **gained support for strategic direction from investor community** by communicating important strategic and product information.
 - Selected products to be demonstrated, developed promotional materials, organized display area, selected and trained product demonstrators to assure delivery of consistent corporate message.

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CREDIT LYONNAIS

1995–1997

Product Manager

- Established and developed new account relationships.

Brought in **11 new corporate accounts during 10-month period**, producing significant business in precious metals and foreign exchange trading areas.

WASSERELLA & BECKTON

1990–1995

Director of Marketing

Developed breakthrough idea to sell foreign exchange services (currency and travelers' checks) through travel agents the same way hotel space and airline tickets are sold

via automated airline reservation systems.

- Sold concept to senior management and **negotiated contracts with three major airlines.**
- Developed sales and operational procedures. **Hired and trained 10-person sales and operations staff.**
- **Promoted concept to travel agents** across the country through industry trade shows and sales program.

EDUCATION

B.A., Psychology, University of Phoenix, 1990