



An Introvert's Guide to Resume Self-Promotion

How to get over your humbleness and bring on the brag.

By Lisa Vaas

Consider the meek: They may in fact be set to inherit the earth, but it's not easy for them to portray that birthright in their [resumes](#).

Toward that noble end, Susan Cucuzza, an Executive Coach with [Live Forward LLC](#), sits humble introverts down, one on one, and asks them to think about their career accomplishments. The responses she's received: "Well, I can't think of too many. ... I've just done my job. ... I just did what they asked me to. ..."

Do you have a tough time getting over shyness when it comes time to play up your accomplishments? To give you a bracing shot in the arm, we talked to executive coaches and resume writers to discover the tricks they use to turn wallflowers into prom queens and kings.

Interview yourself

Rachael Davies Hayes, a CPRW (Certified Professional Resume Writer), gets plenty of humble people who come to her with a list of job duties and tell her they "haven't accomplished much," she said.

She said the key to getting them to open up is to ask good questions that serve "as effective lead-ins." Once the information starts flowing, then she can polish it up for that "billboard flair," Davies Hayes said.

Here are the questions she's had good luck with. [Interview](#) yourself and write down your answers while brainstorming your resume:

- Describe one of the hardest days you've ever had at work. It could be that you were crushed under the workload or everything that could possibly go wrong did. How bad was it, and how did you get through it?
- When you look back on your career, what are you proudest of?
- How would your co-workers describe you? Why?





“Once my clients start to think about these things, their selling points begin to pour out,” Davies Hayes said.

Tell your story

For her part, after Cucuzza challenges introverts to think about the results of their work, they become “amazed” at how many accomplishments they have, she said. She then works with them to translate those accomplishments so that their resumes aren’t merely reiterations of job descriptions, but truly the results they achieved in their careers.

How do you meld description with achievement in this way? Armed with raw bragging material from your self-interview, you can begin to use your resume to tell your story. [Steve Savage](#), a technical project manager who speaks, writes, and blogs on what he calls “Geeky Jobs,” said he thinks of a good resume as being “like a novel or a movie.”

Here’s how he advises his tech-pro clients to set it up:

1. [Executive Summary](#): This introduces the main character of this story — that’s you — and presents, in succinct form, our hero’s skills.
2. [Work History](#): This is what Savage refers to as the backstory. Details flesh out the character and tell of his/her conquests, such as awards and relevant achievements — particularly quantifiable ones. Brag about the dragons you’ve slain.

Approaching a resume as a storytelling exercise serves introverts well, Savage said, since it’s a creative exercise that plays to their rich inner lives. It’s also good practice for improving communication, he said. “They develop [elevator pitches](#). They develop ideas of [how to talk about themselves](#),” he said. “Armed with that knowledge — and with seeing a resume differently — they’re more confident in the [job search](#).”

Lisa Vaas covers resume writing techniques and the technology behind the job search for TheLadders.

