

# April's Resume Critique

By: Law Bulletin Legal Career Center

Once a month, legal professionals put their cover letters and resumes against a panel of career counselors. The counselors rate each resume between one and five gavels, five being the best. Their comments and the resume are listed below!

## Law B. Publishing

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Motivated and team-oriented candidate with a strong core of ABA approved paralegal studies and demonstrated excellence in management, execution and training of a broad range of investigative services. Maintains meticulous record of client files and documents as well as daily progress/case reports for status developments. Expert trainer and mentor who produces elite investigative units through hands-on instruction and performance management. Well-developed office management and client relations skills, with strong knowledge of legal language, general law, courtroom proceedings and related ethical concerns.

### CORE COMPETENCIES

- |                                 |   |                                |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| ▪ Commercial/Corp/Civil Law     | ▪ Research/Analysis/Reports                             | ▪ Statements/Testimonials      |
| ▪ Investigation/Case Management | ▪ Pre-Trial, Trial, Post-Trial<br>Motion and Litigation | ▪ Skip-Tracing/Missing Persons |
| ▪ Courtroom Ethics/Policies     | ▪ Summation/Concordance                                 | ▪ Surveillance/Observation     |
|                                 |   | ▪ Training and Development     |

**Technology:** Westlaw, CaseMap, TimeMap, TextMap, Autotrak XP, Lexis Nexis, Accurint, Locate Plus, MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook

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### SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Successfully upgraded employer to preferred vendor status for several clients through effective development of key relationships and superior execution of project
- Frequently requested by name for the majority of investigative assignments received from Insurance Company and Anonymous Public Fund of the State
- Successfully maintained cover for over three years in a strongly successful undercover operation
- Results of claims investigations were adapted into national sales material by two previous employers
- Responsible for the successful training and development of 16 investigators for Investigation Company

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### **The A Group**

##### **Senior Investigator**

2011-

- Conduct detailed background investigations and perform ongoing surveillance. Locate involved parties and encourage/acquire statements. Responsible for skip tracing and location of missing persons. Carefully and accurately document daily progress reports and note evolving case matters

#### **B Group – Division of BBBB**

##### **Surveillance Investigator**

2010-2011

- Conducted background investigations on involved parties, performed surveillance, acquired statements and submitted daily reports detailing evolving case matters.

#### **ABC Investigations, Inc.**

##### **Field Investigator**

2007-2010

- Managed the investigative lifecycle from initial client request through all investigative and administrative stages.

Performed liability and scene investigations, surveillance and progress assessments; obtained written and recorded statements, gave service of process, conducted background checks, skip traced, performed asset searches and provided testimony

## **D and Company/D Investigations**

2001-2007

### **Investigator**

- Performed as a training/support investigator. Obtained statements and investigated claims involving property damage or personal injury. Acted as case manager during absences

## **EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT**

**Post-Baccalaureate Paralegal Certificate** (ABA Approved) | Anonymous University | City, State – 2011

**Bachelor of Arts in Psychology** | State University | City, State – 2001 (3.41)

**Associate of Applied Sciences in Criminal Justice** | Community College | City, State

**Certified Interview/Interrogation Specialist** | Law/Bulletin - 2004

# **The Critiques**

## *Review by Curtis Linder*

April brings (not only showers, in advance of May flowers) but also a good, but not quite great resume. My real question is - since when is it OK to use those vertical lines “|” when separating words on a resume? On any document? Talk about ungapatchka! What are those things, anyways? I would not even know what key to look for on my keyboard if I did want to use them. People. Please, on your resumes – just use regular or common punctuation, such as the purposeful semi-colon, the good old fashioned comma, the semi-cool em dash, or the ever-alluring en dash. Look those up for fun and enjoyment. Even the lowly parenthesis has a useful place on a resume.

Here are the other areas for improvement on this resume. I like the opening paragraph. It is a well-worded statement – it is a nice summary and objective. But it looks lacking without a proper section heading or title – which would be (take a guess), ta da - Summary and Objective: Especially since he has given names to all of his other sections: Core Competencies, Selected Accomplishments, Professional Experience, and Education & Development.

And we then see Page Two. Nothing wrong with that – but he’s using only the top one fourth of the page. With better page formatting – this could be a one page resume – and it should be. But I think we even still better formatting and page margins – page two could be better and more fully utilized. It is 3 gavels presently.

## *Review by Sarah Haley*

The summary should clearly communicate the type of job that the candidate is seeking. Based on the first sentence, I cannot tell whether this person is targeting a paralegal, investigative, or management position. The summary is not absolutely necessary; in fact, I think this résumé would be stronger without one because it is mostly soft skills and information that is either apparent from the rest of the document or that would appear in a cover letter. Also, I think this should be a 1-page résumé. Similarly, core competencies should be included only if the candidate is certain that the employer wants to see exactly those skills. The list here seems scattered, and I’m not sure how it helps to market this candidate. Always write out full words (“corporate” instead of “corp”). I recommend deleting the section “selected accomplishments” and instead connecting those accomplishments to specific employers. If the accomplishment is relevant to more than one, it can be discussed in the cover letter.

In the “professional experience” section, add months, cities, states, and multiple bullet points for each employer, focusing on primary responsibilities and key accomplishments. In the education section, list the name of the school first, then

location, then degree, then dates, similar to the format in the previous section. If GPA is listed for one school, it should be listed for all. If dates are listed for one school, they should be listed for all. I recommend listing the certification in a separate section. 2 ½ gavels

*Review by Nancy Glazer*

Thank you so much for submitting your resume. Your work experience is excellent! Your resume looks nice, and here are some suggestions:

- Your resume comes across quite corporate with the Core Competencies and the initial summary. That's okay, just know that lawyers don't typically use this form. What I would rather see than the initial adjective-filled paragraph are your "Selected Accomplishments," or a Career Highlights. If you do that, a prospective employer knows immediately that you are a winner and that you have hit it out of the park in many instances.
- If you opt to leave in your initial paragraph, I would bust it up into bullet points, starting with the verbs you have already used. "Gained ABA ..." "Demonstrated excellence ...." "Maintained meticulous ..." etc.
- Do you really need your Core Competencies? If I pointed to your skills there one by one, could you immediately tell me what you accomplished in that regard? What did you do with Pre-Trial Motion (you maybe need an "s")? What do you know about courtroom ethics? Are these skills you can attest to? If not, get rid of them and create another line for yourself to describe what you did using what exact skills and how you hit it out of the park.
- Your Accomplishments: This is what your entire resume should be built on.
- With your first accomplishment, you don't tell me what you did exactly. Pull the clients apart into two separate bullets if their matters were different or required different skills or actions on your part. How did "effective development of key relationships and superior execution of project" give you the great result you achieved? It's fantastic what you did; I just don't understand what you did to get that result.
- Why did the company you mention always ask for you? I don't know. I need you to tell me why.
- Can you describe why your undercover work was "strongly successful?" If not, just find a better way to describe it, more like "exceptionally successful?"
- Your fourth bullet is outstanding in spirit. How about "Performed successful claims investigations for two previous employers which were then adapted ..." This is a great bullet that shows your value. Can you tell more? Can you bust up the two investigations? (Highly recommended)
- Last bullet: "Trained and developed ...."
- The A Group: 2011-Present
- I would bust up the sentence into 4 bullets. This is your current job. I would even add more to this section as it is your meat and potatoes, post paralegal degree.
- Same with ABC Investigations, bust up the paragraph into bullets. No one reads anymore, they scan.
- Same with D. Last bullet should read, "Filled in as case manager when needed."
- GPA is great. However, you have to list your GPAs across the board if you elect to provide a GPA.
- Can you describe what Law/Bulletin is? Do they certify? Maybe you should say so.
- You have room to add a brief section about your Community Involvement/Interests. You have the room, so why not?

Nice job overall. 3 gavels

Does your resume rate with the best? Send it in to [resumecritiquing@LBPC.com](mailto:resumecritiquing@LBPC.com) today for an opportunity to have your resume critiqued by a panel of legal career experts! (Your name, contact information, and places of employment will remain confidential.)