

WORK AND LIFE:

HOW TO FIND YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Takeaway Points

- To land the right job, you need to sell your potential employer on your relevant marketable skills and talents.
- Your value proposition is built around the key job roles you have played and your significant accomplishments in the workplace.
- An effective resume that lands job interviews comes down to how well you know yourself and how well you can sell yourself.

By: Team Pongo

Whether you know it or not, you have skills and talents that are marketable. The trick is to advertise them in a way that entices your potential customers (i.e., employers) to buy.

Unless you're a sales professional, you probably don't think of yourself as a salesperson or advertiser. But if you're a job seeker, you most definitely have a product to sell – and *you* are it. Consider your resume as the advertisement for what you're selling.

What Is a Value Proposition?

Jill Konrath, author of *Selling to Big Companies*, defines a business's value proposition as “a clear statement of the tangible results a customer gets from using [its] products or services.”

So, your *personal* value proposition should be a statement of the tangible results a company will get from hiring you, the unique benefits you will bring to an employer that others won't.

How to Define Your Own Value Proposition

Here are a few questions you should ask yourself to define your value proposition. Each question will help you clarify the value you bring to an employer, and knowing your value will improve your resume ten-fold.

1) What are the most important roles you have filled for current and previous employers?

Start with the basics. List the job titles you have held and the duties that came with them.

Example: Let's say you were an account executive for a widget maker, providing sales and support for 10 of your company's clients. Your duties might have included selling products to 10 businesses, cultivating relationships with their buyers, engaging in ongoing dialogue to ensure their satisfaction, and trying to sell them more products or services.

2) What significant accomplishments did you achieve in these roles, or what did you do better than people in similar roles did?

When you look beyond the titles and duties, you begin to realize your value proposition.

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“It’s good practice to take an occasional inventory of your skills, job accomplishments, and personality traits. Together, they can serve as a marketing statement that can help illustrate the value you can bring to an employer.”

Example: Going back to the account executive: Were your customers satisfied with the value they received from your company’s products or services? Did you consistently win more business from your accounts? How much? Did they communicate their satisfaction to other companies, enabling you to win more business? As you helped deliver better results, were you entrusted with oversight of more important customers?

3) What special projects were you assigned?

Did your supervisors entrust you with key projects that contributed to the company’s growth? Did you complete them on time and within budget? Did you manage the project efficiently? Did you supervise other project team members?

4) How did working with others affect your work assignments?

How you answer this question is critical because it can tell an employer if you have valuable “soft skills,” which can indicate how well you might fit in with the rest of the organization.

- Did you have to share ideas and solve problems by working with others?
- Was there a high degree of cooperation?
- Did you pitch in when others needed help, such as to meet a deadline?
- Was there a strong sense of camaraderie on the team?
- Did they like working with you?
- What might have happened to the project if you had *not* been on the team?
- Were you able to work effectively with people from other parts of the organization who have very different areas of expertise?

5) Did any of this work help you realize something about yourself that you hadn’t realized before?

These may have been your moments of epiphany when you realized something new about yourself. Maybe you discovered that you could work effectively as part of a team even though you thought you couldn’t. Maybe you discovered that you could effectively deliver an oral presentation before a group of executives in spite of having stage fright. Maybe you learned how to effectively use a software tool to help you improve your organizational skills.

6) What kind of recognition did you receive for your efforts?

Were your employers so pleased with your work that they gave you more challenging assignments? Did you receive any formal recognition for a job well done?

Consider this the icing on the cake. Recognition may reinforce your professional accomplishments. It may also be the point at which your value proposition comes into focus. In other words, if there’s a recognition that sticks out in your mind, it should lead you to the reason you earned it.

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Did you know?

The Pongo Blog (<http://www.pongoresume.com/blogs/1/pongo.cfm>) offers real-time tips and advice on maintaining a work-life balance in the Work/Life section.

So, how might you express a value proposition in a resume? Try this example, which can comprise most or all of the Professional Summary on your resume:

An experienced project manager with a strong track record of meeting deadlines on high-impact projects that have saved employers \$10 million and boosted revenue \$15 million over five years, earning three corporate awards and widespread company recognition. A strong leader who has brought together colleagues of various professional disciplines to work as a team to achieve corporate goals.

An effective resume that lands job interviews comes down to how well you know yourself, know your customer, and can sell yourself. So, it's good practice to take an occasional inventory of your skills, job accomplishments, and personality traits. Together, they can serve as a marketing statement that can help illustrate the value you can bring to an employer. Also keep in mind that if the employer sees a high level of value in you, you just might land a dream job that can boost your value proposition even higher.

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