



## Top 6 Job Tips for Journalists

For the journalists who can read the writing on the wall and are looking for ways to get out of traditional newspapers and into web-based writing, now's the best time in the history of the web to do so. Journalists who follow market and business trends know that, but how they are currently doing it is missing the mark.

The traditional resume template is no longer a sure fire way to get your foot in the door, particularly with technology and web-based companies who have the creme of the crop to select from. Now more than ever, journalists need to differentiate themselves and show their worth, rather than just talk about it.

The top six tips for getting noticed:

1. First, throw out everything you ever knew about traditional resumes. Start thinking in terms of telling your professional autobiography. What does that look like? Think headlines, compelling leads, a bio, not bulleted skills lists. As a matter of fact, don't use any sort of template, just create something that reflects your accomplishments, your personality, and your vision. This is your anti-resume and it will give any employer in any industry a true snapshot of who you are and what you want, not just another rambling ho-hum list of the usual job descriptions, dates, and names of companies.
2. Yes, listing all the jobs you've held is important, but what's most important is showing an employer WHY they should hire you instead of the 75 other applicants with the same skill set, the same job titles and the same job duties. The fact that you've been a staff writer at the same paper for four years is impressive, but what did you write? Who did it touch? What happened as a result of your stories? What sets you apart from other staff writers? Are you good at getting state troopers to talk? Do you have a way of portraying victims in a way that preserves their dignity, yet touches reader's hearts? Your anti-resume should answer these questions.
3. As professional story tellers, you should be using your resume as an opportunity to tell your story! Turn your resume into a scrapbook/portfolio of stories, photos and slideshows you've shot, edited, or produced. Pick a theme for the book that truly represents what you stand for, or that represents your beat, and start compiling your best stuff. Have you won any awards? Include those too.
4. Include testimonials from co-workers as well as bosses. You can't really ask a source or anyone you've covered for a reference, but you can go back to some particularly moving or significant stories and follow up on what has happened since you wrote the story. Include that

along with your original clip. Has your reporting resulted in any new bills, or action by city officials? Then tell the story about how! We can all toot our own horn all day, but when you can back up your words with facts, they mean more.

5. Don't be afraid to get creative. A lot of writers are so used to being objective with their news stories that they're afraid to show their true self when it's appropriate to do so. Well, the story you're telling this time is yours. How do you want to be viewed? Give your reader the opportunity to get to know you through reading your anti-resume. The #1 purpose of this is to get you the interview. Make it compelling enough so the person reading it wants to pick up the phone and schedule a time to meet you right away.

6. Editors have their pick of the creme-of-the crop. So, even if you chose to stay in traditional media, you'll still need to stand out. That means being a double or triple threat - able to write, shoot video and photos and produce web pages or podcasts. So create a website with your name and do just that. Your site should look, read and sound like what you are capable of producing. If you can pull an editor into the site, they'll know you can pull readers in to. Take time to learn some basic programs and the basics of design, layout and photography. If you haven't had a chance to produce a Soundslides project, then do it. The demo program is free and will show an editor that you can edit and produce. Can't think of a slideshow to do? Then do one of yourself. Be creative. You get one shot so don't waste it.

Finally, target your prospective employer. Don't just create the same package and shoot off links to 100 papers. Pick two or three papers you'd really like to work for and study them. Do they use a lot of photos? Features? Hard news? Alternative formats? Video? Soundslides projects? Then customize your offering to reflect that. Spend quality time on two or three potential prospects, not hurried time on 100. It WILL make a difference!

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