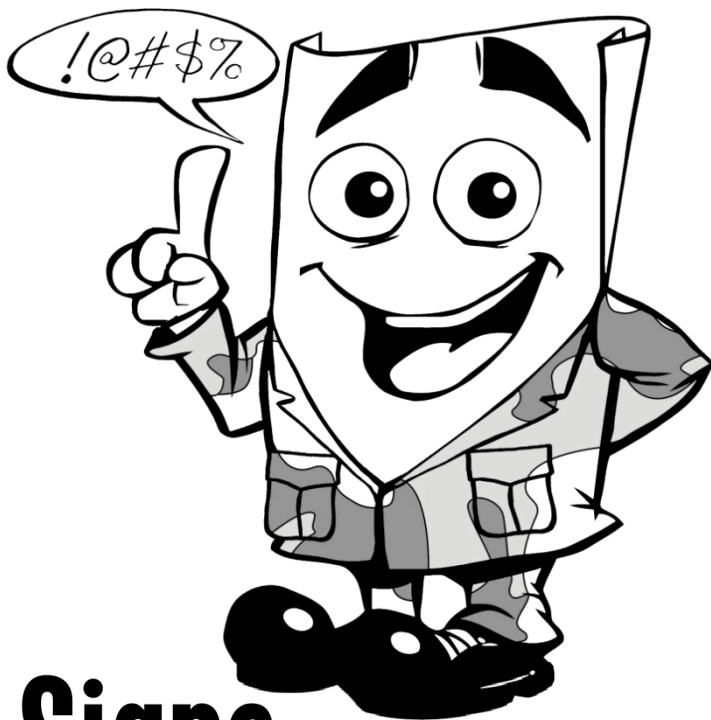


VETERANS EDITION



Signs of a Great Résumé

How to Write a Résumé that Speaks for Itself

Scott Vedder

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FREE PREVIEW: Signs of a Great Résumé: VETERANS EDITION
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To book Scott for in-person appearances, guest lectures, speaking engagements or résumé workshops, contact scott@scottvedder.com.

Contact Scott for information about how this book can be used as a fundraiser or a valuable tool to support your veterans service organization, non-profit or military support group.

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Signs of Great Gratitude

Thank you to the brave men and women who have proudly served our nation as members of the United States Armed Forces and their families. Our nation is strong and our prosperity endures because of your sacrifices and your dedication to the mission. This gratitude of course includes my father Warren Vedder and my maternal grandfather Jack Wingate. They each served our country well and have made our family proud.

I'd also like to thank the leaders and government officials with whom I've met. Your support of service members and their families during their military service and as they transition into the civilian workforce makes all the difference.

Thank you to First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden whose Joining Forces initiative is giving service members and their families the opportunities and support they've earned. Thank you to the Executive Director of Joining Forces, Colonel Rich Morales, U.S. Army for your leadership and passion.

Thank you to Lieutenant Colonel Yesenia Roque, U.S. Army and Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Ford, U.S. Air Force from the Warrior and Family Support program in the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for helping to bring together organizations throughout the country to support families across the veteran landscape.

I'd also like to recognize the Department of Labor's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Teresa Gerton and Timothy Green,

Director for the Office of Strategic Outreach. Their team is helping lead the Veterans' Employment & Training Service (VETS) to provide resources and prepare veterans for meaningful and successful careers.

Thank you to the thousands of resource groups and non-profits all over the country who are serving veterans and their families. I promise to encourage everyone who reads this book and everyone I meet to contribute time or resources to an organization in their community.

Thank you all for helping build a great future for our veterans and their families!

1

ATTENTION!

“ATTENTION!” Welcome to **Signs of a Great Résumé: Veterans Edition** – your résumé boot camp and training ground to prepare you for your next important mission: to get a great new job! I’m Scott Vedder, best-selling author, Fortune 100 recruiter and résumé expert. I’ve helped thousands of job seekers all over the world to succeed in their careers.

Now I’m here to help you – military veterans, transitioning service members, reservists and your families to write a résumé that speaks for itself. Think of me as your friendlier, less intense drill instructor. It’ll be challenging, but I promise not to shout at you or make you drop and give me twenty.



This book is your field manual to help you get a job in the civilian sector. I'll teach you how to explain and quantify your valuable military experience in a way civilian recruiters can understand. You'll see what I mean when I say your résumé should be full of !@#\$\$%, the Signs of a Great Résumé. I developed !@#\$\$\$ in my original #1 best-selling book, **Signs of a Great Résumé: How to Write a Résumé that Speaks for Itself**. While !@#\$\$\$ might look like a curse word in a comic strip, these signs don't represent something you wished you could have said to your drill sergeant. In this book I'll show you how each sign helps you describe your proud military experience and showcase your skills. I'll also share some proven techniques especially for veterans to help you stand out from the competition and get a great civilian job.

So you see, this book really isn't about calling you to attention. It's actually about how you can call attention to your qualifications on your résumé in a way civilian recruiters will understand. You're taught in the military that readiness is key. Are you ready? Then fall in line. Let's get to work!

Before we deploy on this next mission, let me take a moment to say "THANK YOU" for your service! It's important to acknowledge the sacrifices you and your family have made in service to our country. This book is my way saying thanks in a way that celebrates your service and helps you on your journey to a new career. There are also lots of employers who want to thank you too and they're doing that by hiring veterans. Did you know many companies even have specific veterans hiring initiatives? The problem is most civilian recruiters haven't the slightest clue what military words and acronyms mean. That's in part why you'll need help writing a great new résumé. So this is where I come in - I've "got your six."

I met the First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama at the Veterans Institute in Orlando. She commented and confirmed what I had already heard from many veterans about their civilian job hunt. She posed the question that many veterans wonder, "How do you translate all of those military credentials, those acronyms and jargon on [veterans'] résumés into civilian qualifications?" She went on, "It's really not for lack of interest that small and medium sized companies don't hire veterans. Often it's just a lack of information." I had the opportunity to talk one-on-one with the First Lady and she agreed that it's important

for veterans to be specific and quantify their experience on a résumé.

General Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made a great point when he spoke in January 2014 at the graduation for the National Defense University. He said, “We face a deficit that’s larger than our budget, and that is a deficit of understanding between those of us who serve in uniform and our fellow citizens.” He’s right. Folks in the civilian sector just don’t “speak” military. General Dempsey continued “...it’s really a lack of understanding about [military service members’] role not just during times of war, but in everyday life and the everyday business of protecting our national interests and promoting our values. That’s the part I think that we potentially have to renew our interests and renew our energy in articulating.”

I couldn’t agree more with both of them and with other senior officials from the Department of Defense, Department of Labor and more that I’ve met along the way. This book is going to help you articulate your experience in a way that ensures a civilian recruiter understands exactly what makes you a valuable candidate. That’s what the Signs of a Great Résumé are all about and why they’re a critical component of your next mission.

After meeting the First Lady, I was extended a personal invitation to the White House to meet in the Office of the First Lady. There I provided expert insight and learned more about Joining Forces, the First Lady’s initiative helping bring great resources together to support veterans. I was also invited to the Pentagon to meet in the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. There I learned that the JCS has developed the Warrior and Family

Support program to help folks across the veteran landscape find meaningful employment. In the East Wing of the White House and in the winding labyrinth of halls in the Pentagon, I provided some of the same great insight that I'm giving you in this book. Most importantly I helped senior leaders from the DoD learn what civilian recruiters like me need to see on a veteran's résumé.

To address these types of issues, I wrote this book. Whether you're currently serving, transitioning out or you're a veteran already working in the civilian sector, you'll learn how to showcase your military experience to a civilian recruiter.

This book is also for your family. They've been so valuable to you – moving base to base, assignment to assignment and sometimes country to country. Your family members often loyally put their own long-term career goals on-hold and moved place to place to support and love you. Unfortunately, the common, untrained civilian recruiter might wrongly see your family members' movement as a sign of someone who can't hold a job or doesn't have a consistent work history. But clearly that isn't true. Spouses and children of veterans make great sacrifices in the name of service too. Therefore, this book also helps them to explain the unique perspective and values that they too bring to the workforce.

Speaking of families, I'm the proud son of a National Guardsman. My dad Warren served as an armory supply sergeant for the New Jersey Army National Guard. My maternal grandfather Jack was an Army Medic who served in the Philippines during World War II. Both of these men were Staff Sergeants who led teams, performed specialized skills and contributed to an important

mission as they proudly served their country. However, when their service ended, there was no resource book or résumé field guide that helped them explain their military experience to prospective employers. Dad and Jack probably didn't have a great résumé and no one was able to help them understand how to write one in a way that showcased their military experience. This led them both into jobs that didn't capitalize on the skills, achievements and leadership they learned in the military. For example, my father ended up working in the shipping department of a paint factory and my grandfather was a photo engraver. These jobs provided for our family and they were both wonderful men who worked very hard. I can't help but wonder where their careers would have led them had they been able to pursue jobs more aligned with their military experience. Unfortunately, many military veterans still experience this type of transition today. I've heard hundreds of stories like Dad's and Jack's from lots and lots of veterans, and I knew I had to help.

As a civilian recruiter I've done a LOT of interviews. In fact, I've conducted more than 5,000 interviews... and at this point, I've stopped counting! Almost every time I interview someone who has served in the military, I notice they have a hard time explaining their military experience in civilian terms. I also conduct résumé workshops and presentations for thousands of people all around the country. There are almost always veterans in the audience, and they often ask me "How can I explain my military experience on a résumé?" My response is that you have to speak in terms that civilians can understand and you have to articulate exactly why your military experience is relevant to the job you're applying for. If you don't, a civilian recruiter won't

understand all the value you can bring and you won't get an interview for the job you deserve. Most veterans will face civilian interviewers, recruiters and owners of small businesses who were never in the military. I want you to learn to speak to the civilian sector in their language. If you speak in military jargon, you will miss opportunities you fully deserve. And no one deserves an opportunity more than you.

Because of my experience and expertise in résumés, I understand a lot of what I read on a military résumé. But I'm not your "typical" civilian recruiter. (If I do say so myself!) I know that an MOS of 11B30 is an infantry team leader. I recognize the leadership values that come with that role. But most civilian interviewers and hiring managers don't have the experience to know what you mean. If you say "I was an 11 Bravo 30," most recruiters couldn't tell you if that means you ran the Commissary or served on the Joint Chiefs! This is the reality of what you're going to face in the job market.

I'm sure lots of managers will agree with me when I say that veterans have been some of my best employees. I want to bridge the gap between your selfless service and a job that lets you show and use all that you have to offer. I want to ensure that civilian recruiters understand why your military qualifications and experience are valuable. I want you to learn why the **best** way to articulate your military experience is to write a résumé that's full of !@#\$, the Signs of a Great Résumé.

How to Use This Book

Remember, this book is your résumé field manual. Your mission is to read this book cover to cover. Always keep it with you like any mission-critical asset. You'll eventually say to yourself, "This is my résumé book. There are many (that try to be) like it, but this one is mine!" Read through each chapter and follow the Signs. The Signs are the intel that will help you complete the mission. Take notes, re-read and re-visit sections as needed. Fill out the Self-Interview Worksheet at the back of the book. Make it a tool you'll take with you wherever you go.

Get ready to deploy for the most important mission of your civilian career. This book is your "departure point" for the exciting journey ahead. With this book in your rucksack and your military experience under your belt, you can be "at ease" when it comes to writing a résumé that speaks for itself. So hooah, hooyah, hoorah and oorah! Let's get to work!

2

PUT ON A HAPPY PREFACE

Hi! Thanks for reading! You're already one step closer to finding a great new job. This book is the culmination of experience I gained at my job as a recruiter at a Fortune 100 company. There I interviewed people just like you. Well, maybe not *exactly* like you, but each with a similar goal in mind: to get a great new job.

My goal in writing this book is not only to prepare you for your job quest but also I hope to inform you, produce great results and even make you smile along the way. In fact, those were my goals in every interview I conducted.

In interviews I like to make people laugh. I make people laugh because let's face it, interviews are uncomfortable. I try to break down the barrier between me, the intimidating interviewer behind the big desk, and someone like you, the applicant. I also make people laugh so I can do a tooth check – good dental hygiene is a must! Just kidding... but seriously, I want my applicants to be comfortable so they can be themselves in the interview.

I also want you to be comfortable so that **you** can be yourself on your résumé. I'm going to give you tools that will enable you to showcase why **YOU** are the best applicant for the job. To many, writing a résumé is boring and tedious. Hopefully I'll make it as fun as possible. And to show you that I'm serious about having fun with résumés, let me start by sharing my favorite joke:

(I'm actually laughing while typing this.)

**Two résumés are sitting in a stack of papers.
One of them says, "Holy cow, it's crowded in here!"
The other one says, "Holy cow, a talking résumé!"**



I bet you can't wait to get started doing this résumé business with a fun guy like me! We're on our way to finding you a rewarding, financially beneficial new job and hopefully you're already laughing.

So enough about me – let's talk about you. I'll bet you're somebody who wants a new job, a better job, more money or just a new opportunity. Join the club! I'll bet you also want flexible hours, great benefits, free travel and a company car too. Great! You've already taken the first step towards those goals... ambition! You have high hopes, great goals and the drive to begin your journey.

Now how exactly do you get there?

Well before you get the travel perks and the company car, you're going to have to earn an interview by submitting a great résumé. For many people, the idea of summarizing their entire career on one sheet of paper is very intimidating.

Have no fear! In this book, you've got all of the tools you need to craft an effective résumé that speaks for itself. Many of the other résumé books already out there are *hundreds* of pages long. They are filled with useless examples of what hypothetical résumés *might* look like. "Jane Doe wants to be a Sales Manager." "John Doe wants to be an astronaut." How does all of that help you? – It probably doesn't.

There are even services that charge hundreds of dollars to write résumés. If you had that kind of money lying around, you probably

wouldn't have picked up a book about résumés. If I had that kind of money lying around, I probably wouldn't have written one!

If you went for one of those résumé books, I'll bet you were confused by whether to use a functional résumé, a blended résumé, a chronological résumé or maybe none at all. What I'm going to do is to simplify things for you with what I call the Signs of a Great Résumé.

While !@#\$% might look like a substitute for curse words in a comic strip, you'll soon learn how they're actually the simplest way to make your résumé shine. I've taken some of the best tools of the trade and my real life experience gained through conducting over 5,000 interviews and presented them here for you.

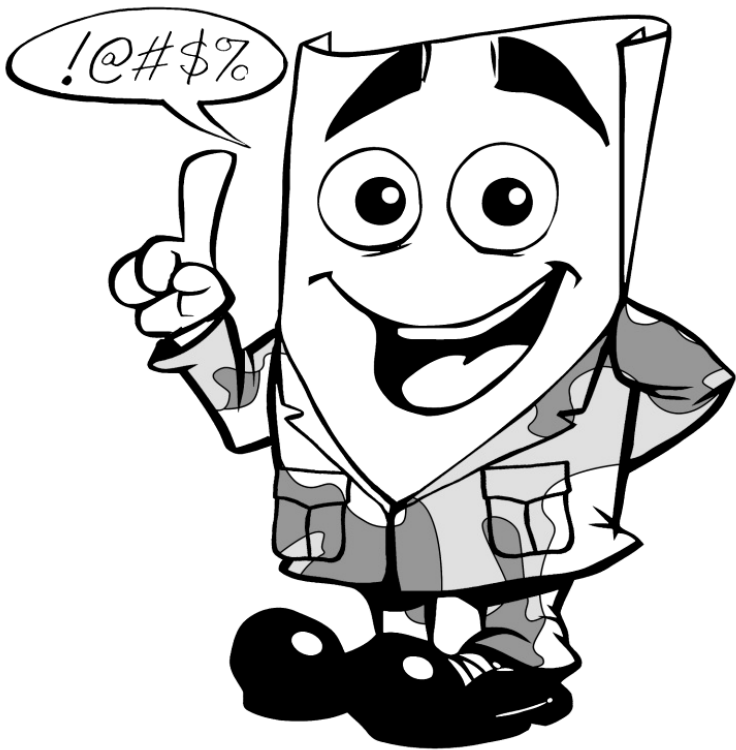
Before we start, you'll have to learn what a résumé really is. Your résumé is your personal professional advertisement. You're trying to get a prospective employer to buy a great product and that great product is your experience! You've made the investment, (or at least have started looking at this book inside the bookstore - now that's initiative!) so let's get started!

3

SIGN LANGUAGE

So why exactly do I call this book Signs of a Great Résumé? You'll notice that I use the signs !, @, #, \$ and % throughout the book. Right now !@#\$% may look like a substitute for curse words in a comic strip and I admit that writing a résumé could certainly drive some people to curse. But by the end of this book these signs are going to be your friends. So let's get familiar with them.

Each sign represents an important part of a successful résumé and each has its own job to do. They'll be easier to understand by the end of this book but if you ever forget, remembering them is as simple as looking at the keys of the first five numbers on your keyboard. I'll bet you just looked at your keyboard, didn't you?... see what I mean? The 1 has an !, the 2 has an @, the 3 has a # and so on. So when it comes to writing a résumé, what do they mean? Let's have a look...



From now on, almost every single word that you write into your résumé should relate to one of these signs. If you're not using these signs, you're not being specific enough. If you're not being specific, why should an employer hire *you* specifically?

Use these signs often. They'll help your résumé speak for itself in front of your potential employer and will make you stand out from the rest of the applicants.

!

The first sign is an exclamation point. An exclamation point really isn't much of a point at all – it's more like a baseball bat. Do you see it? It's actually *shaped* like a baseball bat! And when it comes to knocking a résumé out of the park, it's your key to a home run. (Pun intended.) ! represents any part of your experience that was amazing!, totally unique! or one of a kind! Look for ! achievements throughout your experience and keep them handy for when it's their turn at bat.

In the “SELF-INTERVIEW” chapter, we'll talk more about the specific ! achievements you'll want to look out for. Here are a few questions to get you thinking:

What did you do to WOW! people?

What did you do the BEST! compared to others?

What did your boss say was GREAT! about your work?

And finally, don't ever *actually* write ! at the end of a sentence. You want to convey the quality of the work you did, without sounding like you're yelling the words on your résumé!!! (See what I mean?)

@

The next sign is an @. You probably recognize this sign from your email address. It's actually an abbreviation for the word “at.” C'mon... You've got to hand it to whoever came up with a symbol that is meant to eliminate the need to write a TWO LETTER word!

On your résumé you'll use the meaning behind the sign, but not the actual symbol, to define points in your career when you took certain steps and also for places, dates and things. For example:

@ which school did you get your education?

@ which company did you work?

@ what phone number can you be reached?

@ what mailing address can you be contacted?

@ what dot-com can you be emailed?

(Yes, of course you can use the symbol for your email address.)

Start thinking about some of these questions now. We'll come back to this sign in the "SELF-INTERVIEW" chapter.

#

You might not know that the clever little number sign is so special that it even inspired its own game: tic-tac-toe. It's true... ok, maybe not. You're probably thinking "Didn't we just cover phone numbers and addresses with the @ sign?" You're right. But in this book and on your résumé, the # sign represents numbers that quantify and prove your past successes. Think about these questions...To be continued in the book!

We hope you enjoyed your FREE PREVIEW chapters of Signs of a Great Résumé: VETERANS EDITION! There is more valuable !@#\$\$% in the book! Review the table of contents for more information. Buy your copy today on Amazon.com. Available in paperback or Kindle.