



New Professionals Subcommittee Report

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The New Professional's Resume

What I have learned from reading resumes, is that reading them is the best way to learn to write one. After each stack I read, I go back and edit my own just a little. I recently read through what you might call "a statistically significant sample" of new-graduate resumes. Many went straight into the "no" stack. The rest I ranked and re-ranked until I was confident that the person I should hire would be near the top. The resume reader's job is guesswork, that is judging which person will succeed and best contribute to the organization. The writer's job is marketing, that is making himself seem to be that person.

A new physicist will often under-appreciate the extent to which his resume is not just a collection of facts, but also an example of his best work. Everyone knows that content is important, but it is also important that you make your document shine. There are many good guides to resume design, but you should use them with caution. They often suggest, for example, starting with an objective statement. This is pointless for new physicists as, when you mail your resume, this leaves little mystery as to your objective. These guides often advise against including references on your resume. But, you should definitely include a list of references when seeking your first job. A good list will include people from both inside and outside the classroom. The best references will sound objective while saying good and specific things about you.

To succeed, your resume must survive as the reader's "maybe" stack gets shorter and shorter. When a resume moves from "maybe" to "no", it rarely returns. I encounter many resume shortcomings that could have been avoided with just a little reflection. Use a clean format that is readable and skims well, but not the exact format that everyone else is using. Be succinct, using only one page if possible. Be complete, leaving no large time gaps. Make important facts easy to find and crucial facts can be in bold. Spelling and grammar are important, and truthfulness is non-negotiable.

A hiring manager will not often offer suggestions to improve a resume submitted for consideration. Have your friends and colleagues do this for you. Your resume must also be clear to people who do not understand our profession, I have seen HR gate-keepers screen-out superior candidates merely for using words that were not the exact words they expected. Do not over-share personal information that might conflict with anti-discrimination policy, and do not include a photograph. My own institution now requires an on-line application that converts resumes into a form that can be challenging to read. So, try hard to get your "real resume" into the hands of the hiring manager.

Writing a good resume is your first critical step toward landing the job that launches your career. Competition is fierce and the stakes are high. It may seem strange that we are first judged, as physicists, based on our skills at self-promotion. But, writing a good resume is about communicating effectively, and this is one of the many skills that you will need to thrive in your new profession.



54th Annual Meeting July 29 - August 2 • Charlotte, NC
AAPM New Member Symposium
 Tuesday, July 31 • 4:30pm - 6:00pm
 Charlotte Convention Center
*Are you a new AAPM member
 (joined in the last 3 years)?*

Don't forget to select the ticket option for the New Member Symposium when you register for the AAPM Annual Meeting in Charlotte.

Following an introduction from the AAPM President, Michael Woodward of the AAPM staff will provide a crash course on the AAPM structure and organization, as well as some pointers on navigating the website. Next will be Dr. Michael Mills presenting on the current state of the U.S. Medical Physics Workforce and Residencies.

Registered attendees will receive a raffle ticket – enter to win a complimentary registration for the 2013 Annual Meeting in Indianapolis!

In addition, all new members who register for the Symposium will receive a drink ticket, good for one complimentary beer or soda served at the New Member Symposium during the social with committee chairs from the 4 AAPM Councils: Science, Education, Professional and Administrative.