

LEADERS IN TRANSITION · PERSONAL BRAND

The Executive Resume Guide

The true purpose of a resume is to open the door to an interview — nothing more. It is not a list of responsibilities or a sales pitch. By the end of this guide you should have a self-written report card that conveys your ability to drive change, deliver results, and sustain that impact through culture.

PRINCIPLES

The Hiring Company

Nearly every company hires because its existing leaders are perceived as unable to resolve a particular challenge. Center your communication on how you have driven change, improved culture, elevated performance, and brought teams and peers together.

Length

Don't worry about length up front. Write in detail first, then refine. As a rule of thumb, one to two pages for most roles; senior executives can run to two, occasionally three, if every line earns its place.

Tailoring & the keyword screen

Tailor the resume to the role. Read the job description, note what it emphasizes, and make sure those themes are covered. Many resumes are filtered by software or a first-pass reviewer before a human reads closely — so mirror the role's key terms (modality, phase, function, systems) in your own words rather than relying on generic phrasing.

Style

Avoid large blocks of prose. Communicate with impact — the fewer words, the better.

Education, Awards & Languages

Place education at the bottom, so the reader works through your impact first.

- List awards given in a professional context.
- List the languages you speak — languages convey adaptability.

Use the Language of a Change Leader

Sell your experience with deliberate, senior adjectives: Key, Critical, Vital, Influential, Proactive.

A NOTE ON USING AI

Use AI to draft and sharpen if you like — which tool you use matters far less than what you feed it. AI's habit is to generalize, and generic bullets read as noise to a hiring board. The most important thing is that your **specific stats and figures** survive: the dollar impact, the percentage change, the headcount, the timeline, the site. Give the model your real numbers and make it keep them; never let it smooth your individual, quantified impact into vague competence.

LINGUISTIC SUBSTITUTIONS

INSTEAD OF...	USE...
Ran / Oversaw / Put into practice	Drove, Led, Implemented, Actioned
Team member	Subject Matter Expert / Team Specialist
Project	Change Program / Initiative
Created	Designed / Defined
Taught	Educated
Talked to	Presented
Big picture	Strategy
Day to day	Tactical
Reasons for a project	Business case for an initiative
Achieved support	Sponsored by / Secured buy-in from

FORMAT

Header & Objective

- Name and address in the header.
- Objective: concisely explain the role you are looking to move into and a summary of your key attributes.

Career History — written for each position

List the essentials for every role:

- Dates of tenure — e.g. Sept 2021 – December 2024
- Company name — e.g. Microgene Medicine
- Position title — e.g. Chief Technical Officer
- Org size — e.g. 250
- Direct reports — e.g. 5

The Contextualizing Paragraph

Add an introductory paragraph to educate your audience on the state of the environment that you inherited and to add context to your results. It sets up the achievements that follow:

“Recruited by COO to take responsibility for the \$1.2Bn Transcatheter Heart Valves and Cardiac Surgery Systems business unit, becoming an active participant of the Senior Leadership team. Charged with restoring full functionality of a 300K sq ft facility in Draper, UT after the site received a 483 notice from FDA. Inherited a demoralized team besieged by hostile stakeholders and lacking both technical skill and motivation. Approached the task by introducing LEAN Six Sigma processes on an aggressive timescale, identifying and building key relationships across all stakeholders, re-educating the shop floor, and completing a top-down restructure of the management team. Achieved the following...”

Achievements — in X-Y-Z form

Beneath the contextualizing paragraph, list achievements as bullets that promote your ability to deliver above and beyond — strategies and projects you over-delivered on, finished ahead of schedule, or used to cut cost and grow profit. State the action (X), the metric change (Y), and the business impact (Z):

“Drove LEAN Six Sigma implementation across the top three product lines, delivering a 30% increase in throughput and adding ~\$400,000 to site revenue.”

Clarify Every Statement

Detail the specific elements of strategy, the challenges, and the resulting solutions. Useful prompts: What was your track record across your last three roles — what did you inherit, and what did the function look like when you left? How did that success show up on the P&L or commercially, and what metrics measured it? Where did you champion new process, technical development, or cultural change? How did you operate in highly politicized stakeholder environments — who did you influence? How did your actions drive growth, profitability, or efficiency? What is your track record developing talent?

Close With

- Awards, with dates — e.g. President's Award '23; Most Impactful Project Award, BMS '22.
- Training & certifications — e.g. LEAN Six Sigma Black Belt; Board Training Program, Harvard University.
- Boardwork, memberships, and charity work, with dates — e.g. 2013–Present: Member of the Board, XYZ Therapeutics.

USING AI TO BUILD YOUR RÉSUMÉ

The principle

Which AI tool you use barely matters; what matters is that your specific stats and figures survive. AI's instinct is to generalize — 'a strong operational leader' — and generic bullets are invisible to a hiring board. You supply the facts; AI supplies structure and polish. Never let it invent a number, and never let it sand your individual, quantified impact down to vague competence. You own every word.

How it works — one role, five categories

The strongest results come from working one role at a time and answering five short categories before the AI drafts anything:

- Context & mandate — what you were brought in to do.
- Problems to solve — the state you inherited.
- Actions & change initiatives — what you actually did.
- Metrics & results — the numbers (% , \$, time, throughput, milestones).
- Commercial / P&L impact & team scale — business outcome, FTEs, consultants, and matrix scope.

PASTE THIS INTO YOUR AI TOOL

You are an executive resume writer and search partner for senior life-sciences leaders. Your job is to open the door to interviews - not to list responsibilities.

How to work with me:

1. Work ONE role at a time, starting with my most senior or recent role.
2. For each role, ask me short, concrete questions to gather five categories, ONE category at a time. Do not draft until all five are answered with specifics:
 - a. Context & mandate - what I was brought in to do.
 - b. Problems to solve - the state I inherited.
 - c. Actions & change initiatives - what I actually did.
 - d. Metrics & results - the numbers (% , \$, time , throughput , milestones).
 - e. Commercial / P&L impact & team scale - business outcome, FTEs, consultants, matrix scope.
3. If an answer is vague or has no number, restate it and ask again for the specific figure before moving on.

Then draft the role:

- One tight context paragraph (3-4 lines).
- 3-5 bullets, each in X-Y-Z form: action, measurable result (my exact figure), and business impact.
- Use ONLY the facts and numbers I give you; never invent or estimate - leave a [placeholder] if a number is missing.
- Replace passive, task-based wording with change-leader language.
- Keep my specific detail (modality, phase, site, \$ and %); never generalize it away.

Compile the full resume only after every role is done, with Education at the bottom. Start by asking me about my most senior role - category (a).

Then iterate and verify

- Answer each category with real specifics; if the AI drafts before you've given a number, make it wait.
- Check every figure against reality and complete any [placeholder].
- Ask for a tailored variant for each application, and cut anything that still sounds generic.

THE ONE GUARDRAIL

AI hallucinates. You are accountable for every claim on the page — verify numbers, dates, and titles, and never submit a line you couldn't defend in the interview.

Want a second set of eyes on your resume?

Phase 3 Search reviews executive resumes for the CMC, Quality, and Technical Operations leaders we work with. If you're preparing for a move, send yours over.

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