

Mr. Bill began his job search right away. For the next six months, he networked, answered Internet and newspaper ads and contacted recruiters and prospective employers. He mailed more than 350 resumes and had 10 interviews. None led to a job offer.

Clearly, something was wrong. Mr. Bill thought it might be his resume, specifically the introductory section. Here's what he initially included in this section:

Hands-on manufacturing, quality and supply manager with over 15 years of diversified experience in aerospace, entertainment and mining-equipment manufacturing supported by a Scottish engineering apprenticeship, a B.S. in industrial technology and an M.B.A. in management and organizational behavior. Excellent communication and analytical skills and the ability to influence cross-functional teams through coaching and mentoring. Internal and external leadership in formulating manufacturing and quality strategy, policy and procedures. Experience in developing world-class supplier relationships to achieve budget and schedule goals. Demonstrated leadership in implementing strategic and tactical process improvement initiatives that increased shareholder value. Key strengths include:

- Project management
- Supply-chain management
- Estimating and budget development
- Contract negotiations
- Lean manufacturing
- TQM trainer/implementer
- International business development
- Employee development

Mr. Bill was correct. After reading this introduction, few employers would likely want to meet with him. Like most resumes, this gives readers a good idea of Mr. Bill's past duties. However, it doesn't relate his successes to his work or establish his value.

It doesn't say how he increased past employers' output, decreased production costs or improved product quality. These all are key responsibilities of a manufacturing manager.

Second, like most resumes, the introduction contains many buzz words and phrases, such as "diversified experience," "excellent communication and analytical skills," "coaching," "mentoring," "leadership" and "strategic and tactical process improvement initiatives." Still, readers don't know what contributions Mr. Bill made and how he improved any company's manufacturing performance. They have no reason to keep reading his resume.

"Nothing turns off executive recruiters more than an introductory section that has no substance," says Dave Opton, chief executive officer of ExecuNet Inc., an Internet-based center for career management (ExecuNet is an alliance partner of CareerJournal.com).

Judy Rosemarin, president of Sense-Able Strategies Inc., a New York career management firm, agrees: "Never begin a resume with statements like, 'A dynamic, results-oriented executive with a record of achievement at driving companies to the next level of success; also a creative problem solver and team player who thrives on challenge, excels under pressure, and continually exceeds corporate goals.' This is fluff, and readers know it."