Chapter 1

Digital Age Changes Job Chase

In This Chapter

▶ Growing your career with truly terrific resumes

▶ Blending human know-how with new technology

▶ Staying on the leading edge in job search

*A*re resumes outdated? Every few years an employment expert excitedly announces a "new discovery" — that resumes are old hat and unnecessary. The expert advises job seekers to forgo resumes and talk their way into an interview. This advice rarely works in real life. Very few people are eloquent enough to carry the entire weight of an employment marketing presentation without a resume.

A newer resume attack turns not on oratorical talent but on technology. In one scenario, recruiting professionals encourage employers who've grown weary of hiking over mountains of resumes to do away with them, replacing resumes with rigid application forms on the Web — complete with screening questions and tests — to decide who gets offered a job interview.

Another recent scenario — also technology dependent — reflects the view that social networking online profiles are pinch hitting for resumes as self-marketing documents. As I point out in Chapter 2, online profiles are equivalent to generic resumes. Handle them with kid gloves for a very important reason: All-purpose online profiles are likely to be ignored for the vast majority of available jobs.

Resumes Are Here to Stay

At some point in a hunt for better employment, everyone needs effective career marketing communications. That is, everyone needs a resume — or something very much like a resume — that tells the employer why

✔ You're an excellent match for a specific job.

✔ The value you bring matters.

> ✔ Your skills are essential to the bottom line.
>
> ✔ You're worth the money you hope to earn.
>
> ✔ You're qualified to solve employer's problems.
>
> ✔ Your accomplishment claims can be believed.

Resumes that deliver on these decision points remain at the heart of the job-search ecosystem.

Keeping Up with Resume Times

The ongoing need for terrific resumes doesn't mean the job chase is frozen in time. Far from it. In this digital age — when one-third of women in the 18–34 age range check Facebook when they first wake up, even before they go to the bathroom or brush their teeth — every job seeker needs to embrace the entire fresh package of tools and strategies for getting a new job. The package contains new and traditional components:

> ✔ Digital tools that are rapidly altering the nature of how jobs are found and filled in America and across the globe.
>
> ✔ Timeless know-how and savvy developed by the best employment giants over decades.

REMEMBER

New technological ideas standing on the shoulders of historically proven smarts are a winning combination. Technology changes in a decade; human nature doesn't.

Reset your concept of what you must know about resumes in the job chase. Writing great resumes is no longer enough. You must know how to distribute those resumes to people who can hire you, or at least can move you along in the process.

This book combines the details of how to create marvelous resumes, and also puts a microscope on various technological delivery options in the digital age. This chapter previews what's ahead in this comprehensive guide to resumes, and how to use resumes and other career marketing communications you need to reach your goal in the great job chase.

The targeted resume rules

Job seekers, brace yourselves: Trolling the job market is getting ever trickier and requires considerably more effort than the last time you baited your resume hook — even a short five years ago. The *generic resume* is at the top of the list of job search tools on the way out. (Read all about it in Chapter 6.)

Of friends and resumes

"The number one way to use your OnTarget resume is to find a friend to walk it into the hiring manager's office or recruiter's office with the friend's stamp of approval," advises Mark Mehler, cofounder and principal of CareerXroads and a long-time Internet job hunting expert. He says his firm's annual survey of how people get hired at major corporations shows that one out of three openings is filled this way.

You probably have an all-purpose resume lying around in a desk drawer somewhere. What legions of job seekers everywhere like about the all-purpose resume is that it casts a wide net to snag the attention of many employers — and it saves time for those of us who are too busy getting through the day to keep writing different resumes for different jobs. I appreciate that. But your one-size-fits-all work of art is obsolete, and it's getting lost in more and more recruiting sinkholes.

The generic resume has been replaced by the *targeted resume* (which I refer to in this book as OnTarget), a customized resume tailor-made for a specific employment opportunity.

An OnTarget resume is a valuable marketing tool to convince the reader your work will benefit a specific employer and that you should make the cut of candidates invited in for a closer look. An OnTarget resume

- ✔ Addresses a given opportunity, showing clearly how your qualifications are a close match to a job's requirements.
- ✔ Uses powerful words to persuade and clean design to attract interest.
- ✔ Plays up strengths and downplays any factor that undermines your bid for an interview.

Unfit resumes are zapped

The word got out, slowly at first. And then — *whoosh!* — millions of job seekers found out how easy it is to instantly put an online resume in the hands of employers across the country as well as across town.

Post and pray became the job seeker's mantra as everyone figured out how to manipulate online resumes and click them into the online world as quickly as fast-shuffling dealers lay down cards at casino tables.

Resume overload began in the first phase of the World Wide Web, a time frame of about 1994 to 2005. It became exponentially larger and more frustrating as commercial resume-blasting services appeared on the scene. Almost overnight, it seemed, anyone willing to pay the price could splatter resume confetti everywhere an online address could be found.

The consequences of resume spamming for employers were staggering: Despite their use of the era's best recruiting selection software, employers were overrun with unsolicited, disorganized generic resumes containing everything but the kitchen sink.

And what about the job seekers who sent all those generic, unstructured resumes? They were left to wonder in disappointment why they never heard a peep from the recipient employer.

The answer's in the numbers: A job advertised online by a major company creates a feeding frenzy of many thousands of resumes. Employment databases are hammered with such mismatches as sales clerks and sports trainers applying for jobs as scientists and senior managers, and vice versa.

Tried-and-true techniques remain

A resume that doesn't show off the great goods you're selling isn't worth much. Show off your assets in effective style by making sure that you follow the suggestions in this book. I show you how to

- ✔ Choose the resume format that fits your goals and situation. What goes where in a resume isn't a one-size-fits-all consideration. An example: Whether you lead with your education or the qualifications that suit you for the job depends on which job you want. Chapter 9 tells you about formatting your resume and provides templates for popular resume designs.

- ✔ Get your points across in powerful language. Make your strengths stronger by describing them in vibrant language that stands tall. I give you examples in Chapter 10.

- ✔ Use design techniques effectively. Big chunks of text cause eye strain (and boredom). Present your information in a way that enables readers instead of inhibiting them. Chapter 11 shows you how.

- ✔ Overcome hurdles. Getting attention from potential employers is harder in certain situations. If you're just getting out of school, for example, you have to overcome some less-than-ideal perceptions. Chapter 12 gives you suggestions for easing your transition into a new phase of life. Chapter 13 helps you manage any bits of your background that may turn off employers.

Web code ups privacy fears

In the next few years, a new heavy-duty technology for computers and mobile devices will become available to Web developers and may give marketers and advertisers a clear shot at who you are and what you've been up to.

The new technology is a Web language called HTML5. It buries "supercookies" in your computer that are difficult to ditch. The supercookies track your data — including e-mail and site visits — and hide the data in at least ten places on your computer where third parties can access it. Already in limited use, HTML5 has an upside: It makes your browsing easier (and faster — no retyping of usernames and passwords, for instance).

As with any feature of this magnitude, problems will inevitably surface. Who knows what damage supercookie snooping will do to your online reputation? As Pam Dixon, executive director of the World Privacy Forum in California, told a newspaper reporter: "HTML5 opens Pandora's box of tracking on the Internet."

TIP Send your resume off to job market battle by leading with strength: Feature your most impressive career accomplishments and honors at the top of page one, not tucked in as afterthoughts on page two. This simple strategy encourages employers to read the whole thing.

Technologies Facilitate Job Search

After the Internet caught job-search fire in the mid-1990s — instantly whisking resumes to and fro — little new technology changed the picture until the social Web groundswell burst upon us in the mid-2000s. Now job seekers have the tools to

- ✔ Use social networks to dramatically enlarge personal networks
- ✔ Tap their networks to identify jobs and for recommendations
- ✔ Go directly to hiring authorities
- ✔ Market accomplishments in professional profiles
- ✔ Pinpoint employment targets with position-mapping

REMEMBER Continue to apply for jobs with a customized resume and cover letter, just as you've done so far. Classic job searching methods continue to pay off, but they're not enough in an economy where jobs have gone missing.

Work every day on a well-rounded approach that includes the whole enchilada — from face-to-face networking, job boards, print ads, and professional associations, to the dazzling array of new social Web tools.

Social networking scoops jobs

Enormously popular social networking sites and social media are poised to gain even more fans in the employment process. Chapter 2 reports on the state of the industry and suggests how you can "go social."

I expect a never-ending stream of new technical bells and whistles in going social. Location awareness is one example of what's new. When Facebook launched its Places feature in late 2010, social media expert Charlene Li explained: "Until now, Facebook knew who you were, what you are doing, and when you did it. Now they add an even richer dimension — where you are — that completes the picture." Facebook added Places to its posts, a smart phone app, and a mobile site.

How can a location-aware feature facilitate a job chase? Suppose you're looking for a retail or restaurant job in a given locale. The activity stream of a location feature indicates which restaurants and retail stores are the most popular — and, thus, good prospects for employment.

For breaking news about social networking, become acquainted with the following two Web sites:

- ✔ **Mashable** (www.mashable.com) is a top guide to social media and a hub for those looking to make sense of the online ream.
- ✔ **Altimeter Group** (www.altimetergroup.com) focuses on all things social, including the new field of social commerce. Be sure to read the Group's admirable disclosure policy.

Chapter 5 discusses ways to keep your online reputation in good shape for the job search.

Mobile's on the move

Smart phones came on fast. Tablet computers are picking up steam. Mobile communication is what's new and it's already happening. Even when you're not rooted to a desktop computer, you can send and receive e-mails, network online, and download apps. Chapter 3 examines the latest in mobile job chasing.

Quick-change process customizes content

In this employers' market, you may have to apply for 100 times as many jobs as you would in a candidates' market. As Chapter 6 details, the generic resume has become a nonstarter, and successful seekers are writing customized resumes.

Time is the problem: How can you whip out effective customized resumes and still get three hours of sleep at night? Expert Kathryn Troutman answers that perplexing question in Chapter 6 as she steps you through an eye-opening "Custom Lite" resume process.

Resumes find digital docks

Here's a digital definition of frustration: Craft a perfect resume that looks and markets like a jewel only to discover that your intended digital dock, or *platform* — job board, Web site, recruiting firm, smart phone, and so on — won't accept anything but plain text. There is a solution, and Jim Lemke, this book's technical editor, neatly packed the answers into chart form; find the Lemke Guide in Chapter 7.

Bios gain new importance

The short professional bio (see the Sarah Tobin bio in Chapter 2) is positioned for immense popularity, thanks to social media. The short bio helps when you want to apply for a job, network, post on a guest blog, and so on. It tells people quickly who you are, what you do, and why they should care.

Plan on writing a bio in three lengths — a micro bio, a short bio, and a longer bio. A micro bio is a sentence you can use on your Twitter profile (140 characters). A short bio is a paragraph (about 100 words). A long bio can be up to a page.

"YourName.com" becomes vital

More people are living their lives on the Internet, and episodes of name high-jacking are rising. Realization is mushrooming that controlling the exclusive online rights to your own name makes sense, even if you're not a business owner.

When technology fails: The human antidote

The job market is made up of A-list candidates and B-list candidates (and many candidates who are perceived to be farther down the alphabetic scale).

If you're a seasoned worker, have you ever noticed that A-list candidates are typically younger than you and have recently done the very job the employer is trying to fill?

On the other hand, when you're a rookie, does it seem as though those on the A-list are typically older than you and have recently done the very job the employer is trying to fill?

The definition of frustration is when you are treated like an ant at a picnic because you're not perceived as an A- or B-list candidate.

Unfortunately, your exclusion rate from interview offers may be high when the employer uses online recruiting tools.

An answer to your dilemma. Get personal.

✔ Develop your own job leads by doing substantial research, and then target your resume.

✔ Network your way to a referral chain, asking each of 20 or more people whom you call daily: "Who else should I be talking to?"

✔ Follow up on job ads, but diffuse the crushing competition by figuring out who the hiring manager is and contact that decision-maker directly. You can even write a resume letter (see Chapter 9) to that person, but do not mention the job ad. Your approach is that you've been researching companies where your excellent qualifications may be a good fit. Even if this "happy coincidence" causes the hiring manager to send your resume to the HR department, now it arrives from an important executive and is likely be examined.

✔ Remember that the vast majority of jobs are found in small businesses. Some aren't yet using modern job-search tools and will value your person-to-person approach.

You can protect your identity in its purest Web form by buying a domain for your name — YourName.com. You can also purchase a URL (Web address) for your resume — YourNameresume.com. See chapters 2 and 5 to see why owning your own name has gained red-alert status in a digital age. Claim your name!