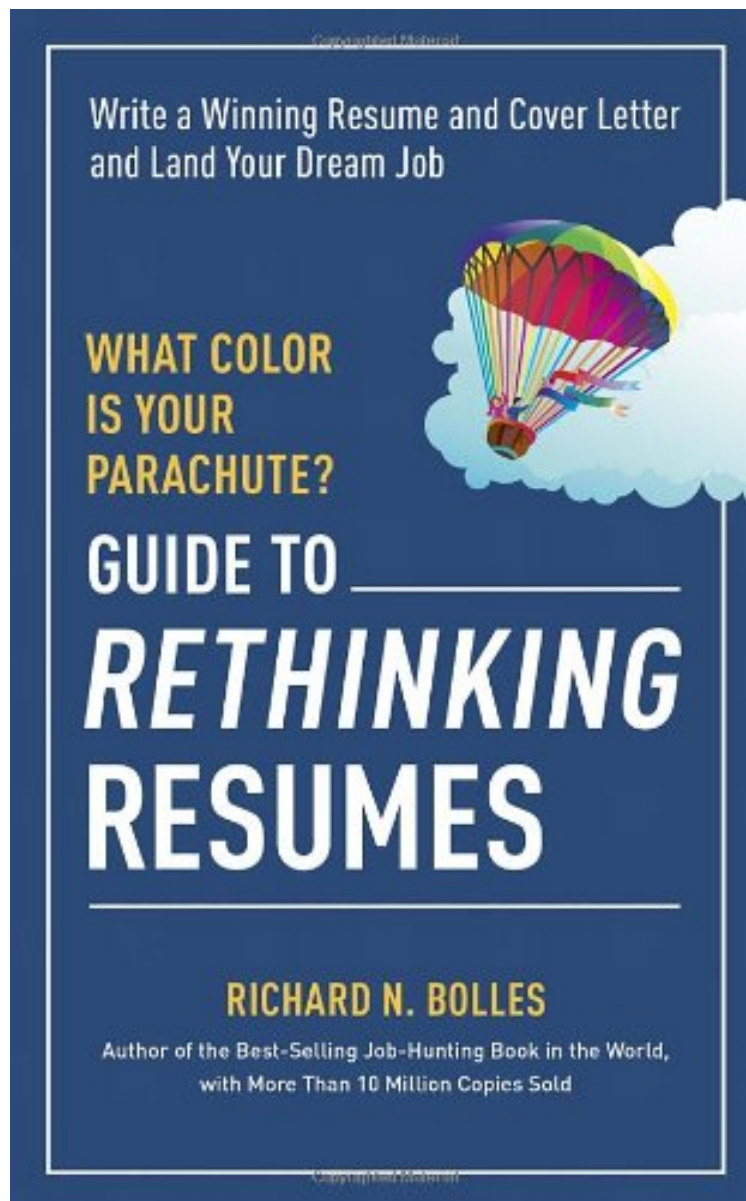


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What Color Is Your Parachute? Guide to Rethinking Resumes: Write a Winning Resume and Cover Letter and Land Your Dream Interview

Richard N. Bolles

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The first resume book from the *What Color Is Your Parachute?* career guru Richard Bolles. Resumes get an average of eight seconds of attention before going in the trash or getting on the shortlist. Thats just one of the findings reported here, as legendary career expert Richard N. Bolles presents new research about resumes in a guide that summarizes everything job-hunters and career-changers need to know about this essential tool. This timely resource features the latest research on important resume topics such as key words, soft skills, scanning software, social media, and online posting. Bolles argues that on the basis of what we now know, we need to rethink what a resume is and how it should be written. He details the words that must be avoided, and the words that must be used, on a resume that wins you interviews. This slim volume distills a huge amount of information down to its very essence. Armed with tips and shortcuts based on the authors decades of experience, you can craft a resume and cover letter that will stand out to your dream employers and increase your chances of getting interviews and landing jobs.

About the Author RICHARD N. BOLLES is considered to be the father of the modern career development field and is the author of the best-selling job-hunting book of all time, *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, which has sold more than 10 million copies in twenty languages. He has keynoted hundreds of conferences and has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Fortune*, *Fast Company*, the *Economist*, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. He lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with his wife, Marci. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Rethinking What a Resume Is Yeah, I think I know what you want. You want me to get right to it. Tell you how to write a winning resume, give you an outline or template, tell you how to fill it in, tell you where to post it. And thats that. Well, much as I would love to do that, I just cant. Resumes need a lot more thought these days. Since the Great Recession of 2008, resumes arent working too well. Im guessing you knew that. Everyone assumes this is because there are no jobs these days. Well, there are jobs. Im looking at the governments little-known report, sitting here on my desk right now. Its called JOLTS for short, but its full name is Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey. You can look it up on the Internet. Its issued monthly. This one is for January 2014. It reports that during that month, 4,500,000 people in the United States found jobs, and there were still 4,000,000 vacancies unfilled at the end of that month. Thats a total of 8,500,000 vacancies filled or waiting to be filled. That month! Thats pretty typical in the United States. Every month. Now admittedly, thats not enough jobs or enough vacancies to fix our distressing unemployment problem. Still, somebodys getting those eight million jobs. Each month. Why shouldnt you be among them? Well, one reasonable reason may be your resume. It almost certainly needs fixing. Yesterdays resumes just arent up to the task today. Yesterdays resumes are like a dull knife trying to cut food. Need sharpening. Badly. These days, you cant just fill out a resume, post it, and expect it to go anywhere. Resumes now take more time than they used to. They take more thought than they used to. In this economic climate, you have to work harder to make yours effective, in finding those jobs that are out there. But you can do it. Yes, you can. Thats what this little book is about. Lets start simple, with some thinking. Or, rethinking. Lets Start Simple Okay, heres the story: You want to find work. To find it, youve got to secure an interview with some employer or employers who actually have the power to hire you. And employers are busy people. Theyre not necessarily anxious to spend all day doing interviews. So, since you know that, you send someone on ahead of you, to plead your case for you. And thats someone is not actually a person but a piece of paper. Yes, you send a piece of paper on ahead of you, to make the case as to why you should be invited in for an interview. And that piece of paper has a name. It is called a resume. Or resum. Or rsum. Or its near cousin, CV (curriculum vitae, meaning the course of my life). Now, the most interesting thing about this piece of paper (digital or real) is that while it looks like just a bunch of words, it really is a painting. And thats because employers have the same thing you do: imagination. Yes, your resume looks like just words. A lot of words. But when theyre reading your resume, the words are lifting off the page and painting a picture of you in the imagination of the employer who reads it. Employers wouldnt call it a painting; they would call it an impression of you. Same thing. They are looking at this piece of paper, covered with words, but they are thinking in terms of pictures. They are visualizing you. Now, heres the question. Do the words they read make them visualize you as a competent worker, or not? Do the words they read make them visualize you as energetic, or not? As joyful, or not? As a team player, or not? As honest, or not? And lets throw in: Do

they visualize you as tall, short, or average height? Young, middle-aged, or old? Yes, those things aren't covered in your resume, but employers can't turn their imaginations off, just because they've finished looking at this piece of paper you sent on ahead of you. Rightly or wrongly, they see, they imagine, beyond your words. That's just human nature. But to my main point: It's not just words that determine whether or not they decide to call you in for an interview. It's the picture of you that these words paint in an employer's imagination that determines whether they invite you in, or not. So, when you set out to compose your resume, you would do well to think of yourself overall as a painter, not a writer. Your paintbrushes are your words. What is the picture of you that they paint? That is the question you should ask yourself, when you or someone you hire are debating what words to set down in your resume.

Eight Seconds Let's say you see a job posting. Some employer is looking for someone to fill a vacancy or a job newly created. You send in your resume. And you want to know how long an employer will likely spend looking at this resume/painting of you that you are sending on ahead, to plead your case for you. The answer will vary, of course. There's a difference, for example, between how long the owner of a restaurant will spend looking at the resume you drop off, when you are applying to become the manager there, versus how long a multibillion-dollar corporation will spend looking at your resume when 250 came in that day. With a small employer you might get as much as two minutes. With larger employers, we know (because people have measured it) that generally your resume will get between four and fifteen seconds of attention. The average is eight. Eight seconds! Yikes! An employer is going to be reading down your resume fast. In fact, they may not get all the way to the bottom in those eight seconds. So, what they read first, what they see in the top half or even top third of your resume, is going to be determinative. What can you do about that? What can you do about this painting that the employers may be taking only a fast look at? Well, real painters of course paint in various ways. But, as we can tell from the sketchbooks of famous painters like Rembrandt (right*), they usually begin by laying down in broad strokes the outline of the whole portrait or picture. Then later they fill in. Details, shading, and such. If your resume is only going to get eight seconds of attention, then it must do something like that. In the top third of your resume you must lay down in broad strokes an outline of who you are, using the words you write. Enough to make the employer hungry to see what else you have to say for yourself, as during the remaining two-thirds you shade and fill in. So to speak.