



Tips for Selecting a Professional Resume Writer or Career Services Provider

Career professionals come in all shapes and sizes, with different levels of experience, qualification, and recognition. So, how do you pick one that you can be confident will be a good match for you?

There are several factors to consider in finding a career professional:

Industry Certifications

While an industry certification is not a guarantee that a particular consultant will be a perfect match for your needs, if from a reputable organization with continuing education requirements, it is an endorsement that the professional has met strenuous testing and evaluation procedures to demonstrate he/she is a highly qualified professional. This testimonial of skill will better ensure that the professional is qualified to meet your needs.

What to look for:

- A credential that can be verified through a credible organization such as CDI. It's always a good idea to make certain that the individual holds the credential they claim to have and that it is from a reputable (and real) organization.
- A credential that requires continuing education requirements. Especially in industry specialties such as resume writing, you want to know that a professional is continuing to expand their qualifications to stay abreast of industry changes. CDI's [Certified Advanced Resume Writer](#) and [Certified Master Resume Writer](#) are resume certifications that require continuing education units.

Avoid scams: Be sure to always visit the granting association to verify credentials as there are many fake coaching and resume credentials listed on the Internet.

Service Model

The Internet tends to play a big part in how career professionals do business today, however, you need to find a professional who offers a service that meets your needs and can provide it in a way that is most comfortable to you.

It is rarely a good idea to make a buying decision based on a Web site alone. Be sure to speak to the professional and ask questions such as:

- How does your process work? (You want to know whether it is face-to-face, on the phone, through questionnaires, etc.) There is no one method that is right, but it must feel right for you.
- Will I work with you or a third party? If a third party, what are the qualifications of that individual? Can I speak with him or her before purchasing the service?

You also need to consider your comfort level with the individual? Is he/she motivating, friendly, and encouraging or brisk and indifferent? If you feel comfortable with the individual you will have a much greater chance of working together successfully to meet your goals.

Be careful of guarantees: A money-back guarantee can inspire confidence but it is not the only mark of a qualified professional. Don't base your decision to work with a professional based solely on a 'guarantee'. Remember, a resume or coach alone won't individually find you a job!

References & Testimonials

One of the best ways to determine how successful a career professional will be is by reviewing client testimonials and contacting references.

What to look for:

- Substantial testimonials that stress actual outcomes of the job seekers. Fluffy testimonials that talk about 'increased confidence' in their job search is not an indicator that a document will be successful.
- Real-sounding testimonials; if you have doubt, inquire.

Ability to speak to former satisfied clients. PLEASE NOTE: Not all career professionals are able to provide these because of their privacy policies to protect their clients, especially in this age of identity theft. In most cases, you should be able to learn enough about the career professional through a consultation, review of written testimonials, and evaluation of credentials. However, if available, this could be another way to evaluate that a professional is a good match for you.

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Expertise & Specialty

In career services, there are generalists and specialists. For instance, if your career is in information technology, then you want to make certain that the professional you select has expertise in your field. Alternatively, if you are seeking a career coach, you should find out if they are adept at working within your goal area (such as a female seeking promotion to the executive level) or a job seeker looking to make a career change to an unidentified field. While many professionals offer multiple one-stop services, make sure they can meet your needs.

On Specialization: A professional doesn't have to specialize only in your field to be able to provide you with the expertise you need. Be sure to ask if the professional has experience in your field, look for samples on their Web site (if you are seeking resume services), and watch what they say to gain a sense of their comfort zone with your field. Many professionals are adept at interviewing and researching so that they do not need to specialize to provide you with superior service.

Industry Recognition

One sure way to determine the currency of your prospective professional's qualifications is to look at what he/she has done. Top career professionals will stand out from the crowd with:

- Certifications;
- Publications / books / article authorship / industry program development, and contributions to career compendiums such as resume writing guides;
- Industry awards such as CDI's [Toast of the Resume Industry \(TORI\) Award](#), [Lifetime Achievement Award](#), [President's Award](#), or [Career Innovator Award](#);
- Authorship of a blog or other information site;
- Speaking engagements at the local, national, and Internet (webinar/teleclass) level;
- Expert status for specialty groups or associations (endorsements);
- Community and industry outreach / volunteerism.

How to learn more: Use www.google.com to search for the name of the career professional. Put the first name and last name of the individual in quotes such as "Tom Jones" and then review the listings. Are there any about this individual such as quotes, books, a blog, articles, committees, or industry awards? The professional's online identity can tell you a lot about how involved, recognized, and up-to-date the professional is in the careers community.

Product Samples

Not all career professional specialties can furnish samples such as coaching, recruitment, and outplacement. In fact, probably the only professional who will have samples available are resume writers.

Expect to be able to view JPEG or PDF samples on the web, or printed samples in the office (for professionals who offer face-to-face service).

What not to expect: Don't expect to ever receive samples by email or be given samples to take home, and don't expect to be able to print, copy, or save Web-based samples. These are there to show the quality the professional can produce and not for you to reproduce since they won't be tailored to your needs.

Also, don't expect to see samples of documents such as cover letters, thank you / follow up letters, or references. If a professional demonstrates the ability to write a results-driven resume that emphasizes unique selling propositions, he/she will be able to write strong supplemental documents.

Continuing Education

Again, while not a definitive single selection criteria for picking a career professional, a professional who shows significant continuing education in his/her profile of qualifications is going to be more up-to-date than someone who has not/does not pursue life-long learning.

Ask about continuing education or look for attendance at conferences or attainment/retention of credentials that require continuing education units to maintain them.

Find a Career Professional

You can find a wide variety of CDI career professionals using CDI's [member search](#) feature. Professional specialties that you can search for include:

Career Coach

Career Counselor

Career Researcher

Desktop Publisher
Employment Law
Federal Resume Writer
Human Resource Specialist
Interview Coach
Job Developer
Job Search Firm
Outplacement Professional
Placement Specialist
Branding Strategist
Technical Writer
Recruiter
Resume Writer
Secretarial Service
Trainer / Instructor

You can also search by industry certifications, zip code (U.S.) proximity, state (U.S.) or country (international).
For resume writers, focus on the Certified Advanced Resume Writer, Certified Master Resume Writer, and
Certified Resume Specialist designations.

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