

## HELL IS WAGING WAR ON YOUR CAREER

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General William T. Sherman once stated a profound truth in three words, “War is Hell.” Of course, most of us don’t fight the type of blood and guts war Sherman was referring to, yet we do engage in battles within the business arena, where the motto for the Christian professional is, “Hell is waging war on my career.” Our battleground is divided into two parts. One is spiritual, and therefore intangible, whereas the other is physical and full of very real characters.

The spiritual battle being waged against our careers is as old as the fall of man. Don’t forget, Satan was there when it all happened. When God pronounced judgment on Adam for original sin, that he would toil and struggle for his sustenance (Genesis 3:17), Satan was only too happy to help fulfill the judgment. He loves seeing Christian professionals living in constant fear of job loss, feeling vulnerable to being replaced as they grow older, or giving up on pursuing God’s plan for their work-lives. And when he can’t beat us with discouragement, he cunningly flips everything and tries to make the career so important that it becomes the only thing some professionals focus on. In other words, he tries to make it into an idol.

Satan’s no fool. His weapons are common, but very effective. They include confusion, demoralizing fear, emotional fatigue and mental despair. If that doesn’t work then he appeals to man’s natural attraction to greed, envy and lust for power. Together, these represent the fingerprints of an enemy who wants to choke the life out of your career.

God on the other hand, makes work tough and challenging because it perfects our faith. He intends difficult career situations to shape us the way fire perfects gold (First Peter 3:6-7). He wants us to have godly ambition as great as the stars He created and to understand that all things are possible with God; after all, He made us in his image and the image of God is one of glory. Therefore we should reflect the glory of God. Where better to reflect God’s glory than in our work. The fact that our labor is the thing that God punished in the Garden of Eden proves the importance of our career. Work is important because that’s where our faith is tested, family needs are met, and tithing and alms are gathered.

The second battleground, the tangible one, is fought on the job-site where real people with real authority can stymie, disillusion and dissuade us from believing God for great things. These men and women can come in the form of bad bosses or overly competitive co-workers. A jealous boss may prevent your career advancement. Or, you may be confronted by co-workers so devoted to winning a promotion that nothing will stand in their way of reaching their career goals. This is where office politics comes into play. Sometimes it feels like we are swimming with a school of piranhas, not exactly impossible, but rather treacherous.

These hurdles in your career-path must be jumped to succeed on a professional level. Jumping hurdles is essentially the purpose of a resume. We all know the statistic that 99 rejections occur for each new hire, which causes headhunters, corporate recruiters, and Human Resource managers, the professionals who seek employee talent, to be cynics by default. The cynic’s negative mind-set is a hurdle that must be jumped by persuading them to change their opinion regarding who you are and what you have to offer.

But the first and most important opinion that you must change is your own. You must be convinced in the core of your being that God has a special plan for you and that plan largely entails your work (Jeremiah 29:11). You see work is where your talents are on display and God doesn’t want us hiding our talents. If capitalism is defined as exploiting raw resources, then it is fair to say that God is a type of capitalist; He wants to accentuate His people’s talents and abilities, now, in our world, for mankind’s benefit.

In order to accentuate your personal worth on the employment market, you need to write an inspired resume. A truly good resume acts like a guide, or map as it were, to reveal to potential employers your professional attributes in order to win their favorable impression and their support of your job candidacy. If you are going to win full and rewarding employment you must be ready to grab a “pick” and go prospecting in the mineshaft of your career. Don’t get lazy, many people gladly sacrifice four years of their life to go to college (and take on substantial student loans), spend five years buying a car or add new credit card debt for a vacation each year, but give passing attention to the one document, their resume, that can easily pay-off school loans, car notes and enable them to afford a grand vacation.

No one is really at fault when it comes to writing a boring, two-dimensional, bland resume. Nearly every book, resume software and personal friend has the same “vanilla” looking style. It’s difficult to stand out from the crowd when the

crowd is fighting so hard to look homogenous. But you can stand out within the context of acceptable business etiquette and to do this correctly, you must learn how to stand out in the proper 'light'.

Writing a resume is both 'art' and 'science'. The science refers to structure, meaning that a resume needs to have a certain acceptable format that appeals to the greatest number of readers. Art in a resume refers to the prose or the wording, especially as those words paint a picture that compels the reader (i.e., hiring manager, human resource professional or recruiter) to take notice.

The problem is that the 'science' of writing a resume has completely eclipsed the 'art' of the resume. What sense does that make? Writing in itself is an art, and ask yourself, when you buy an important product like a car, do you only want the scientific explanation of horsepower, torque, towing capacity, speed? Or, do aesthetic qualities, such as color, design and form attract you? Considering how much Madison Avenue spends to create a compelling image and thereby, open our wallets, the art of selling the car is as important as the science of selling the car. When writing your resume, the key is to balance the art and the science. Don't focus on format to the exclusion of creativity.

The resume you need to write is not your father's resume. It's not a dry, didactic treatise on functional rules (proper fonts, typographical point size, page count and key words), but rather a dialog between you and the employers you are targeting who long to read dynamically compelling career stories within the context of the resume style.

The heart of a divinely inspired resume is illustrated in the "The Ten Commandments of a Perfect Resume". These rules can guide your composition. Since visual art, especially paintings, have several factors that affect the way we perceive the image, it's worth noting that an artist strives to balance a number of disparate issues concurrently such as; how certain colors harmonize, complement or clash together. Likewise, the words, categories and combination of phrases contained in your resume will reveal the image of your professional portrait. Just remember, if you word-smith a beautiful image that compels decision makers to acquire your talent, your resume will have individual characteristics that make it unique and different from everyone else's story.

#### THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF A PERFECT RESUME

1. **Thou Must Prove Your Value.** Your resume must overcome a skeptic's hurdles and build positive perceptual value to justify the employer's risk. Proving value means you use numbers, percentages and quantities to show how you made an operation better, more efficient or effective.
2. **Thou Must Eliminate Career Problems:** Whatever issues that confront you; choppy career (quick job changes), job gaps, obsolete industry experience, being fired, etc., must be repaired and replaced with results and contributions.
3. **Thou Must Turn Your Resume Into A Script.** Every good story line has three main parts. Your resume must have a beginning, middle and end.
4. **Thou Must Use Numbers To Quantify Your Value.** Numbers are the spice of a great resume, without them the reader has no idea how to measure, benchmark or scale your value.
5. **Thou Must Elevate Your Professional Profile.** The three levels of elevation are: the business unit (also called an office, department or division), the corporate enterprise, and the industry you serve. Try to reveal contributions made at each of these levels.
6. **Thou Must Have A Cornerstone Accomplishment.** Every building has a cornerstone as reference point. Likewise you must have cornerstone results that prove your worth.
7. **Thou Must Be Part Of A Project Team.** Whether you're a manager, executive or line staff, you must demonstrate that you are a team-player who can help the team reach its goals.
8. **Thou Must Define Your Impact On The Bottom Line.** Your contributions to the organization must be quantified monetarily.
9. **Thou Must Prove Your Career Path Is Progressing.** You must show that each step in your career made sense, supports your professional goals and points to the next step, which is the current job opening you are pursuing.
10. **Thou Must Be An Exceptional Performer.** Recruiters are paid to hire the best. You need to prove that your results make you the obvious choice amongst your peers.

Obviously the Ten Commandments of the Perfect resume are a rule of thumb, not an explicit template. The idea is to get you to think about communicating the information that will get you selected out of a large stack of candidate applications.

But writing is an art and in every art there is the need to find balance. In a visual art like painting, there are several factors that affect the way we perceive the image. It's worth noting that an artist strives to balance a number of disparate issues concurrently such as; how certain colors harmonize, complement or clash together. Likewise, the words, categories and combination of phrases contained in your resume will reveal the image of your professional portrait. Just remember, if you word-smith a beautiful image that compels decision makers to acquire your talent, your resume will have individual characteristics that make it unique and different from everyone else's story.

Robert Meier is a career coach and Christian career author who can be reached at [coach@godsjob.org](mailto:coach@godsjob.org) or by phone at 813-746-5844