

# Writing an Effective Executive Summary of your career



Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures®



Updated 08-2023  
**GWIMS Toolkit**

# When planning a career change internally or externally

- Need to re-conceptualize how to present yourself
- Need to determine which documents to develop and what to include in them

Need to explain who you are in writing.....

**The EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# What is an Executive Summary?

- **The Executive Summary is a narrative of two to three pages (maximum!), used in conjunction with a CV, to present ones-self in the best possible light when seeking a new position or opportunity.**
- **While the CV factually summarizes what the individual has accomplished, the Executive Summary outlines the individual's talents, personal qualities, traits, values, motivation (not part of a CV).**
- **Preparation of a good Executive Summary requires the ability to identify these personal strengths.**

# The Executive Summary

- Provides synopsis of background, competencies and accomplishments relevant to a *particular* career objective
- Particularly useful when applying for leadership positions; offered as a *companion* to a CV
- A strategic and focused document written for a *specific* position
- May lead with an **OBJECTIVE**, followed by a **PROFILE**, supported by a **SKILLS SUMMARY** that is derived from accomplishment statements.
- Therefore, the first thing to develop are several accomplishment statements

# Accomplishment Statement

(Appreciative self-inquiry)

- Begins with a brief description of a problem or issue that had to be resolved. This is followed by an active verb (how the problem was resolved) and a result – the outcome of the problem
- The action and result can be used as a bullet point on an executive summary

**By definition, it is always something positive – it is about a successful accomplishment**

# Identify Your Strengths

- Analyze your accomplishment statements for knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviors that led to each successful outcome. You will discover that some show up repeatedly in different situations: These are your *competencies*
- Competencies include
  - What you know - what you have *learned* and/or *acquired*
  - How / who you are - your talents, personal qualities, traits, values, motivation

# The Executive Summary

- **OBJECTIVE**
- **PROFILE**
- **SKILLS SUMMARY**

***NOTE: in some cases, the order of the PROFILE and SKILLS sections may be reversed. If personal skills and qualities are more important for the position than specific prior job accomplishments, it may be best to put the Skills section right after the Objectives, before the Profile listing previous accomplishments.***

# The Objective

- Written for a specific position, the objective details what you hope to find, that (hopefully) matches what the employer is looking for
- The OBJECTIVE is **targeted to the opportunity advertised**
- May use (and emphasize) key words from the position announcement or job description

*Writing the Objective may also lead to a re-evaluation of personal goals, making sure that the proposed position matches strengths, roles, culture and other factors*



# Objective - examples

- **Seeking a Senior management position in research administration, where 10 years of experience will add value and increased funding success**
- **To serve as President of a university which values outstanding research and scholarship, encourages innovative strategic planning, and values ethical community service**

# Profile

- **The profile outlines your actual experience**
- **The profile details your readiness for the position and experience with similar roles and responsibilities**

# Profile – Example

- **MD, Professor of Pediatrics, with extensive experience and achievements as Vice Chair of a major department. Responsible for development of a \$50 million outpatient system**
  - **Doubled number of physicians in system through recruitment and group acquisitions**
  - **Tripled outpatient visits**
  - **Led growth of the system from one site to more than 10 clinics in 8 counties.**

# Skills Summary

The skills summary tells them who you really are and what you are good at

**It IS about you..**

**It is OK to toot your own horn!**

# Skills Summary - Example

- **Ph.D. psychologist with successful administrative and teaching experience in the academic setting.**
- **Creative and effective management skills. Flexible and efficient working with changing priorities and diverse audiences.**
- **Three years' experience in design, development and evaluation of curricula, programs, and instructional materials. Strong commitment to quality in all aspects of work.**

# Skills summary - other examples

- **Responsible and dedicated faculty member with fundraising and academic administrative experience. Effectively manage changing priorities and diverse groups.**
- **Strategist able to assess situations and trends, internally and externally, to identify and secure funding opportunities for growth and development.**
- **Able to navigate through complex issues and conceive of solutions leading to cooperation between disparate groups and individuals.**

# Executive Summary developed in response to an Ad

- **Match** accomplishments and skills to the job requirements – use language from Ad
- Be convincing; show enthusiasm
- Customize wherever possible
- May use “T” format as a worksheet

# T Format -Example

Ad in *Science* for research faculty, Department of Radiation Oncology asks for requirements which closely match experience and skills

## Their Requirements

Develop competitive research program

PhD, tenure eligible as Associate Professor / Professor

Experience in medical physics and an interest in oncology

Collaborative, innovative

## My Experience / Skills

Co-PI on RO1 grant and PI on institutional grant in neuroscience

PhD Physicist, certified for patient care, 8 years teaching experience

Interest in prostate cancer and significant research in this field

Team builder and player; creative



# Executive Summary [Sample]

Jane Doe, MD, FACS  
Professor & Vice Chair, Department of Surgery,  
Big State U, Mytown, Mystate, Zip

## OBJECTIVE

Build a Department of Surgery that is scientifically renowned, clinically active, and financially productive. As chair, I would mentor and assist in the development of faculty, teach medical students and residents, mentor surgeons in subspecialty fellowships, and develop a novel curriculum on Comprehensive Leadership Skills for Surgeons.

## PROFILE

*MD, Professor of Surgery, with extensive experience and achievements as Vice Chair of a major department. Responsible for development of novel clinical programs, through prioritizing and focusing interdisciplinary teams to accomplish their goals. Responsible for development of new surgeon leaders in the department and beyond*

- Built and led multidisciplinary colon cancer clinic that included colo-rectal surgeons, gastroenterologists, oncologists, a radiologist, 2 nutritionists, nurse practitioners, a social worker, a Pharm D, a laboratory technician, and support personnel. We evaluated and treated 40-60 complex patients per clinic. The staff held GI health fairs, and gave health information lectures at area churches.
- Started an ostomy service at MyTown General Hospital that allowed the quality of care from Big State U to be delivered in the community setting. By taking my staff to the site, we were able to care for the ostomy population on site, in their community.
- Identified, recruited and developed faculty from diverse backgrounds. Mentored them to reach their fullest potential. Three assistant professors were promoted to associate professor during the initial 2 year time period. Developed a successful leadership program for junior faculty, where over a 3-year curriculum, we covered the essential competencies for successful leadership in an experiential and safe environment. Several participants have already achieved leadership roles.

# Executive Summary- Page 2

- Wrote a staff development program geared towards the operating room environment. Our OR technician of 15 years has applied to a program to be a surgical PA. An anesthesia tech has been accepted to nursing school, with the plan to become a CRNA. An administrative assistant is making plans to finish college.
- Acquired formal training in executive management skills. Completed AAMC Early and Mid-Career Professional Development Seminars for Women Faculty, and Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine- Program for Women (ELAM)

## **SKILLS SUMMARY**

Clinically active surgeon with sixteen years of increasing administrative responsibility, teaching, and financial management. Proven administrative leader recognized for vision, energy and integrity. Demonstrated commitment to faculty development. Deep understanding of how to integrate teaching and learning styles of medical students and residents. Leadership experience and management skills include:

- Identifying, recruiting and developing people from diverse backgrounds to their fullest potential
- Leading and mentoring faculty and staff
- Working collaboratively with diverse constituencies
- Fostering a collegial environment
- Team builder: Able to gain consensus from diverse groups of professionals, so that they worked seamlessly in a highly productive team
- Able to see and “paint” the big picture in a way that engages people
- Attract external funding

# Bottom Line

- The Executive Summary is a valuable tool for *graceful self promotion*.
- The CV tells prospective employers what you have objectively accomplished, while the Executive Summary allows you to tell them what you are really good at, and how well you match the position they want to fill.
- It is often the first document they read.

# Author Biography

Roberta E. Sonnino, M.D., FACS, FAAP, is an Executive Coach (RES Coaching LLC), Professor of Pediatric Surgery [Ret] at Wayne State University School of Medicine, and a Contributed Service Professor in Health Policy and Ethics at Creighton University.

Before becoming a full-time medical school administrator, Dr. Sonnino served as Chief of Pediatric Surgery and Surgeon-in-Chief of the Children's Hospital at Mercer University School of Medicine, and Professor and Chief of Pediatric Surgery, at the University of Kansas School of Medicine. She completed the Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) fellowship in 1998. Dr. Sonnino has served as an officer and committee member for more than 15 professional societies, and is a past Chair of the AAMC Group on Faculty Affairs. In her faculty affairs roles, Dr. Sonnino established new offices of faculty affairs, wrote medical school policies, developed numerous successful programs in faculty development, professional career advancement, mentoring, promotion and tenure and women in medicine.



Contact Information:

Email: [RESCoachingLLC@gmail.com](mailto:RESCoachingLLC@gmail.com)

Phone: 804-286-9174



Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures

---

Learn

---

Serve

---

Lead

Association of  
American Medical Colleges