

## **The Functional Lawyer Resume**

*By Claire Bellon*

Today's lawyer resumes generally fall into one of two broad categories: the chronological resume and the functional resume. The chronological lawyer resume lists all your experience from the most to the least recent in reverse chronological order. The functional lawyer resume, on the other hand, focuses on your skills and experience, rather than on your chronological work history.

While the chronological resume is the most popular form of resume used by lawyers, the functional lawyer resume can be a good alternative in certain circumstances. Lawyers who may want to consider a functional format include:

- Experienced lawyers who want to present a unified theme in their work experience, or who want to take the focus away from their age and experience as not to appear “overqualified” or too senior for a position.
- Lawyers who have practiced in different fields or practice areas from the type of position they are seeking (e.g. from law firm to in-house, or from litigation to corporate).
- Lawyers who left the practice or who have gaps on their resumes (e.g. such as women who took time off to raise children, or those who have had more than a 6-months gap between positions).

That said, unless you are in a situation where the functional lawyer resume makes the most sense (e.g. you are returning to the work for after a long hiatus), you should note that most legal employers and recruiters generally do not favor the functional resume. Most legal employers are accustomed to the chronological resume, and many online application programs do not accept functional resumes.

To be safe, you should try to create both a chronological and functional lawyer resume, present both resumes to colleagues and recruiters in your field, and see which one they feel best reflects your skills and experience. Again, before sending any resume, you need to know your audience, their expectations, and determine what type of resume format they will be most receptive to.

Here is a general template of a functional lawyer resume:

## **JANE B. DOE**

555 Palmer Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11205 222-555-5555 jbdoe@gmail.com

### **SUMMARY**

Chief legal officer of an industrial manufacturing company with over 20 years of practice experience in corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, litigation management, and complex commercial contracts. Experience includes attorney training, budget management, and outside counsel oversight.

### **EXPERIENCE**

#### **Transactional Experience**

- Negotiated and drafted legal documents for thousands of manufacturing projects with commercial, state, local and federal customers around the world.
- Designed and implemented a contract review and contract administration system for a business featuring more than 5,000 active, unique contracts.

#### **Mergers & Acquisitions**

- Completed over 50 separate acquisitions domestically totaling more than \$1 billion in aggregate purchase price.
- Completed mergers and acquisitions internationally, in countries including France, Germany, China, Brazil and Mexico.

#### **Litigation Management**

- Managed a litigation portfolio of nearly 100 active lawsuits or claims in a variety of countries and legal jurisdictions.
- Resolved complex claims and litigation, including several claims in excess of \$100 million.

#### **Legal Department Management**

- Responsible for a legal department budget, internal and external, of approximately \$20 million.
- Hired, trained and supervised a staff of ten lawyers plus five support staff to handle the complex legal affairs of the company.

### **WORK HISTORY**

**Manufacturing Company**, Brooklyn, NY  
General Counsel, 1999 – Present

**Law Firm**, New York, NY  
Associate, 1989 – Present

## **EDUCATION**

**Fordham School of Law**, New York, NY  
J.D., 1989

**New York University**, New York, NY  
B.A., English, 1986

## **BAR ADMISSION**

New York (1989)

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

This is where you can list any publications, presentations, professional organizations, or activities related to your practice.

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