AI-Powered
Career Management for Agilists

LitheSpeed

Principles, practices and perspectives for Agile and Lean practitioners

1

About Me

Vice President, Consulting at LitheSpeed, Educator and Agile Coach

25+ years in technology, throughout all areas of the SDLC

15+ of those years in senior leadership roles (S/VP, CIO, CTO)

Was the hiring manager, or manager of those managers in over 10 different organizations and many more divisions/departments, and have participated in hundreds of interviews

Happy to share my experiences, observations and perspectives with you in this two-part series

John Halberstadt
(And yes, I do enjoy Scrabble.)

2

Part I: Resume Basics

3

Why Does It Matter If My Resume Is A Bit Imperfect?

Well…. A CareerBuilder survey in 2018* confirmed quantitatively common issues that hiring managers and recruiting team members commonly identify in declining to move forward with interviewing a candidate:

- Typos or bad grammar: 77 percent
- Unprofessional email address: 35 percent
- Resume without quantifiable results: 34 percent
- Resume with long paragraphs of text: 25 percent
- Resume is generic, not customized to company: 18 percent
- Resume is more than two pages: 17 percent
- No cover letter with resume: 10 percent

*The above referenced survey was conducted online within the U.S. by The Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 1,138 hiring and human resource managers ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed), including 1,023 hiring managers and human resource professionals and 309 HR managers in the private sector between June 21 and July 15, 2018. Data for employers were weighted where necessary by company size and job level to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. https://press.careerbuilder.com/2018-08-24-Employers-Share-Their-Most-Outrageous-Resume-Mistakes-and-Instant-Deal-Breakers-in-a-New-CareerBuilder-Study

4

4

Always Remember... Who Is Our Audience?

- As Agile, Technical, Project and Product leaders, we already focus on knowing our customer and providing value to them
- When defining and refining our resume, we need to apply the same principle
- **Who is our audience (aka customer) for our resume?**
  - An automated process (whether keywords, phrases, etc.)?
  - A recruiter?
  - A company's Human Resources associate?
  - The position's hiring manager?
  - The peer members on the Team?
  - Senior managers?
- Of course, the answer is…. **All of the above.**
  - We need to be focused but thoughtful, to ensure we balance the needs of these disparate customers

5

5

Positive Resume Patterns

1. Focused Over Generalized
2. Outcomes Over Activity
3. Meaningful Metrics Over Superlative Words
4. Clarity Over Excessive Jargon And Acronyms
5. Honesty Over Misrepresentation And Exaggeration
6. Professional Over Personal
7. Polished And Presentable Over Rushed And Inconsistent

6

6

Focused Over Generalized

Why?

Many of us, myself included, have held and are qualified for various roles. But while a generic resume is efficient for us to create and update, its lack of focus for specific roles may obfuscate or "water down" our key experience for a given role. Tailored content specifically focused on a role ensures the hiring team has relevant examples of what you have done aligned to what their posting requires.

Before:	After:
▪ Managed technical tasks for the Company's most important systems	▪ Provided 24/7/365 support for over 10k users internationally for the Company's Salesforce CRM platform, resolving over 750 tickets monthly while maintaining a 90+% satisfaction rating

7

Outcomes Over Activity

Why?

Whether technical task or business-oriented deliverable, hiring managers want to know the impact you have made in the work that you've done, and how that translates to the investment they are making to hire for a given role. It is the impact of the activity that matters, not the activity itself in being able to express what value your skills and experience provide.

Before:	After:
▪ Trained employees on using Scrum	▪ Transitioned three core teams to leverage the Scrum framework, resulting in 22% lower escaped defects and 31% improvement in overall cycle time

8

Meaningful Metrics
Over Superlative Words
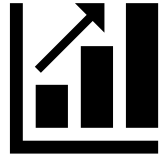
Why?

Expressing what work you have done as far as outcomes and impact is essential. But using phrases like "dramatically increased" or "greatly reduced" are meaningless without context. And that context comes through specifics, measured generally in terms of percentages, as they need less or no context for the hiring manager to understand.

Before:	After:
▪ Oversaw the development of the company's first online ordering application, greatly increasing volume and revenue	▪ Oversaw the development of the company's first online ordering application, increasing new business 23% and revenue by 12%, YoY

9

9

Clarity Over Excessive
Jargon And Acronyms

Why?

Technology has long had a well-deserved reputation for using isolating language, even if not intentional. Remember that not all involved with most hiring decisions will be involved in technology, let alone be the level of expert that you are. Shared language is essential to shared understanding for all who are involved in the recruiting, interviewing and hiring process.

Before:	After:
▪ Using ASP.NET, MSSQL and C#, built an app to connect to RealEC	▪ Leveraged Microsoft technologies to integrate the company's appraisal order placement and tracking capabilities to the RealEC vendor portal, resulting in 186% new order growth YoY

10

10

Honesty Over Misrepresentation And Exaggeration

Why?

Misleading, obfuscating or straight-out lying isn't only wrong ethically, it ultimately is likely to immediately terminate any chance of getting to the next stage of the process. And even if you're ultimately hired despite misleading or misrepresentation on your resume, employers can and often will terminate an employee if a material misrepresentation is found.

Before:	After:
▪ Single-handedly designed, developed, tested, deployed and supported the company's most successful mobile app, resulting in 2000% user growth MoM	▪ Led the development of the recommendation engine of the company's first mobile app, organically growing the user base to over 500 users in its first three months

11

11

Professional Over Personal

Why?

Personal details are often added to resumes, especially for those directly out of college, about non-work interests, hobbies and related. Only interests that are directly related to the work, like membership in a professional organization related to business, technology or related generally should be included.

Before:	After:
▪ Contact info: 　da_baddest_ninja_penguin@gmail.com ▪ Hobbies/Activities: 　Chairperson of the local chapter of the Flat Earth Society, 2022 Northern Nevada Beer Pong Champion	▪ Contact info: 　Jhalberstadt@gmail.com ▪ Volunteer Work: 　Vice President, Professional Development, PMI NNV; Board Member and Volunteer Technology Support, Meals on Wheels

12

12

Polished And Presentable Over Rushed And Inconsistent

Why?

It's easier than ever to generate and send resumes; gone are the days of heavy-weighted paper stock and USPS delivery of resumes from a classified ad. This ease of generation and online submission for resumes has a downside for many of not slowing down and methodically reviewing the resume for consistency in font/formatting/style format, sentence structure, grammar, etc.

A reviewer can consciously or otherwise assume that if you have these issues on your resume, you are either not interested in the job enough to provide a professional resume, or that you are not concerned with delivering high-quality work in general.

Before:

JOHN S., HALBERSTADT
234 First AVE., LOOMIS, CA 95650
EMAIL: jhalberstadt@gmail.com
mobile: 916/502-3017 *Home:* 916.652.7918

After:

John Halberstadt
email: jhalberstadt@gmail.com | phone: 405.520.7303 | linkedin: jhalberstadt

13

13

Incorporating GenAI's Help

14

Why AI For Career Management?

Generative AI tools, like ChatGPT, Claude, Google Gemini and others have changed countless areas and aspects of our personal and professional lives

Our career pathing, growth and opportunities for change can be improved by leveraging these tools in our processes and practices in these areas

Resume creation and revision, company and role research and interview preparedness are key examples of areas where these tools can be invaluable

As with all usage of GenAI tools, ensure that you are thoughtful in reviewing and acting upon guidance they provide

15

Getting Started With GenAI For Career Management

For our examples, we'll be using a custom GPT we created and made available on ChatGPT

The inputs / prompts in our examples can be used in any GenAI tool of your choice

Explore other tools, including custom GPTs and resume / interviewing-specific options

Keep up to date with innovations in this area – the pace and scope of change is dramatic

Copilot
Your everyday AI companion

OpenAI

ANTHROPIC CLAUDE 2

perplexity

16
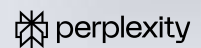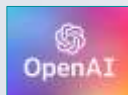
Getting Your Resume Ready

Design, Refine and Align With GenAI Help

17

Just Want Some Feedback?

- Many of us are comfortable making changes directly to our resume and don't want or need GenAI tools to re/create the entire artifact

- In my example, I uploaded a resume of mine that was over a decade old

- In my prompt, I was specific about the nature of the types of changes I wanted to have identified for improvement

- These were based on changes in the overall job market for Agile and Lean practitioners

- My observation, and desired improvements, are based on the move to specialization in areas such as Product (Operating) Model, scaling – with a focus on SAFe, and the move towards APMOs/VMOs

- It provided a list of key updates that I could make on my own if desired

18

9

Co-Design with GenAI

- Before creating specific versions of your resume, create a single general, holistic resume

- GenAI tools can use this single, general resume as a foundation to create unique resumes

- If you have a general area of focus for your desired type of role, indicate this in your prompt input for context

- Upload or paste your current resume or CV

- If you don't have one but have a LinkedIn profile, you can paste its contents or upload a PDF export
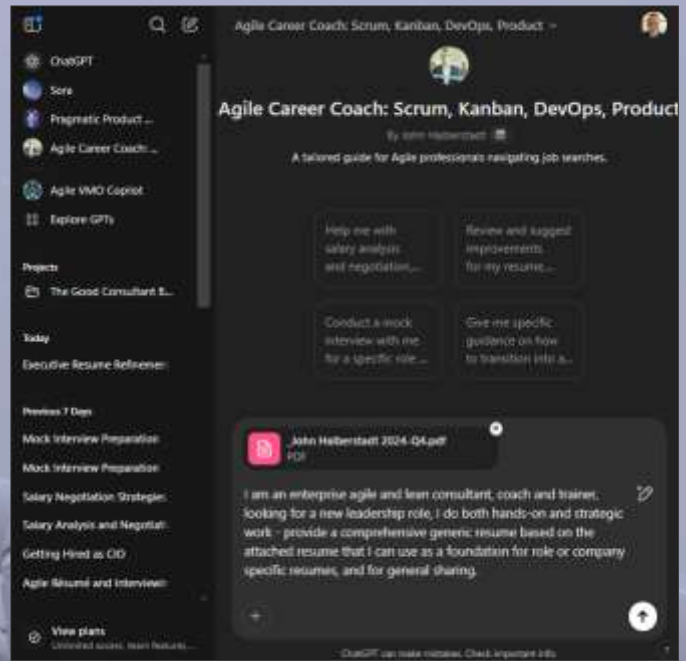
19

Review The Results

- Generative AI tools are exceptionally powerful in helping with creating, refining and enhancing resumes

- They also often struggle with keeping context, providing accurate or appropriate answers and still "hallucinate" (make up facts that aren't there and present them as facts)

- It's important to ensure that you check and validate the responses, not just for accuracy but tone, focus, etc.

- In some instances, manual correction is faster and more effective than continued iteration with prompts
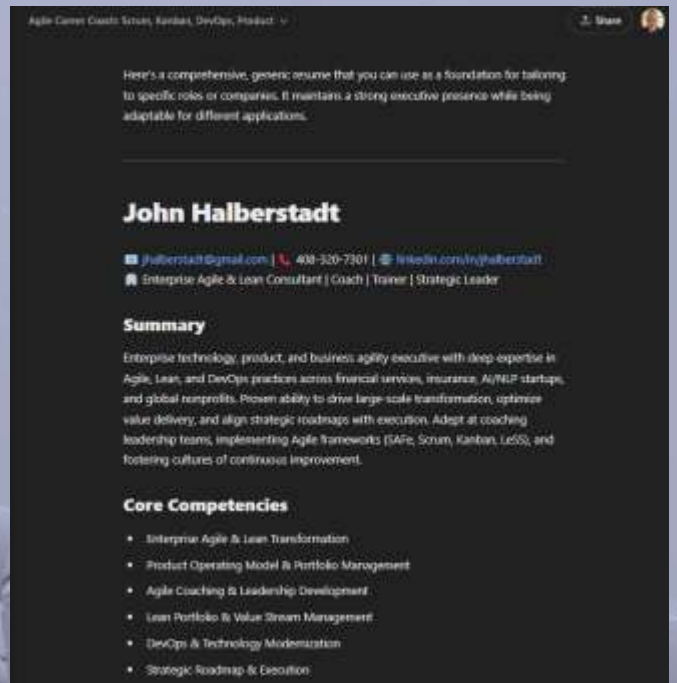
20

Align To Specific Roles

- Once you have a solid, refined and holistic resume, use GenAI to create tailored versions
- If you are considering different types of roles, generate a tailored version for each type of role you may be interested in
- For my example, an Agile PMO or VMO leader version would be focused on the key aspects of Agile Project Management and Value Management, and in a Scaled Agile environment, focusing on core SAFe principles and practices

This version keeps your resume polished and adaptable for various leadership roles while ensuring it aligns with best practices in Agile, Lean, and executive consulting. Would you like any refinements based on specific roles you're targeting?

generate a version specifically for a vp or director of transformation, with a focus on my scaled agile and vmo experience

Here's a tailored version of your resume, emphasizing your **Scaled Agile, Value Management Office (VMO),** and **Transformation** expertise for a VP or Director of Transformation role.

John Halberstadt

jhalberstadt@gmail.com | 408-320-7301 | linkedin.com/in/jhalberstadt
Enterprise Agile Transformation Leader | Scaled Agile | Lean Portfolio & Value Management

Summary

Results-driven transformation executive with extensive experience leading enterprise-scale Agile transformations, Lean Portfolio Management (LPM), and Value Management Office (VMO) enablement in Fortune 500 companies, financial services, and global nonprofits. Deep expertise in Scaled Agile (SAFe), Lean-Agile portfolio governance, and value stream alignment to accelerate digital transformation and optimize enterprise agility. Adept at coaching senior leaders, establishing enterprise transformation roadmaps, and integrating Agile frameworks at the strategic, portfolio, and execution levels.

21

Refine, Refine, Refine...

avoid cliches like "results driven" - focus on concrete actions and outcomes

Here's a refined version of your VP/Director of Transformation resume that avoids cliches and emphasizes specific actions, measurable outcomes, and leadership impact in Scaled Agile, Lean Portfolio Management (LPM), and Value Management Office (VMO) enablement.

John Halberstadt

jhalberstadt@gmail.com | 408-320-7301 | linkedin.com/in/jhalberstadt
Enterprise Agile Transformation | Scaled Agile (SAFe) | Lean Portfolio & Value Management

Summary

Leads enterprise-scale Agile transformations, shifting organizations from project-based funding to product-based delivery models. Establishes Lean Portfolio Management (LPM) and Value Management Offices (VMO) to align strategy with execution, improve decision-making, and accelerate time to market. Designs and implements Scaled Agile (SAFe), Agile Release Trains (ARTs), and governance models that increase transparency, reduce waste, and improve the predictability of technology investments.

- Resume refinement with GenAI tools takes time, focus and effort
- The first response is often insufficient, inaccurate or just not what is wanted
- Interact with the GenAI tool to specifically ask for the types of changes you wish to see
- In my example, even though the role was for a PMO / VMO leader, the changes made weren't as significant as I wanted
- Reframe your prompts and provide context if you're not getting good responses
- Take as many iterations as are required until you have a final product

22

11

Generating Targeted Resumes

- Hiring managers will want to see the specific areas and aspects of their posting in your resume

- The requirements from the posting should be directly aligned to specific achievements and work efforts from your background

- It's not only having those specific items, but also about removing things that aren't relevant

- The ability to use GenAI tools to quickly generate unique versions of resumes is a great superpower

- In this example, I'll take a compelling job posting from LinkedIn and have my GenAI tool create a resume just for this application
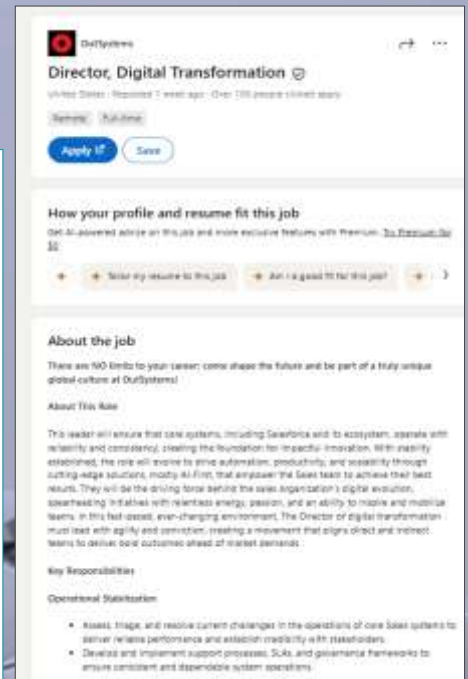
23

Generating Targeted Resumes

- ChatGPT wasn't able to access the LI posting directly, so I simply copied and pasted the posting

- I then just asked for a customized version of my new generic resume, focused specifically on this new role

- Note that even the "Core Expertise" section is now new and aligned to the posting

24

Need A Cover Letter Too?

- You can also ask the GenAI tool to provide a cover letter if the role requires it
- This will also ensure a targeted introduction with your application
- Specify how the cover letter will be sent if necessary
- Provide details in your initial prompt to save time and effort
- For my example, I hate cliches like "game changer", overly generic or hyperbolic or salesy words or phrases, and avoid them
- Refine the final output if needed to use a tone and language that aligns with how you speak and write

25

Then What?

- You don't have to stop there
- If you aren't sure what to do next, after you've submitted your resume, ask GenAI
- In our example, in response to the specific role for which we applied, it provides specific suggestions on next steps
- As with all things GenAI, assess the ideas and use them as suggested, with your own variations or not at all
- Continue to ask for refinements or improvements in subsequent interactions

26

Key Takeaways

1. **Avoid Common Mistakes**: Typos, bad grammar, and unprofessional email addresses can eliminate you immediately.
2. **Know Your Audience**: Customize for ATS systems, recruiters, and hiring managers to maximize impact.
3. **Be Focused and Outcome-Driven**: Tailor your resume to the role and emphasize measurable results over tasks.
4. **Use Meaningful Metrics**: Replace vague terms with quantifiable achievements to showcase real impact.
5. **Ensure Clarity and Professionalism**: Avoid excessive jargon, personal details, and inconsistent formatting.
6. **Be Honest and Authentic**: Misrepresentation can end your chances at any stage.
7. **Leverage AI for Resume Refinement**: Use GenAI to generate, edit, and tailor resumes based on job postings.
8. **Use AI for Keyword Optimization**: Ensure your resume includes role-specific keywords for ATS compatibility.
9. **Generate Targeted Resumes and Cover Letters**: Quickly customize applications for different job opportunities.
10. **Refine, Review, and Iterate**: Validate AI-generated content, refine based on feedback, and ensure alignment with your career goals.

27

27

Q&A&Thank You!

28

28