

## Resumé Feng Shui

Ready to have the most rockstar resumé of your career? It's time to do a little **Resumé Feng Shui**. First, a few core principles you'll need to get down with, to really clear the clutter and rock this like a ninja.

**Rule Number One:** Your resumé is not a list of everything you've ever done. It is a marketing tool.

Read that again. I'm not kidding. If you treat your resumé like a list of everything you've ever done, you neglect to use your credits in the way they were meant to be used: **To get you your next opportunity**. The more crap you cram onto that page, the more you tell us you're simply desperate to work, to show us that you belong. Go SIMPLE with your resumé and you tell us you're confident in your credits and your abilities. Teach us how to cast you. Show us where you're headed, not everywhere you've ever been.

Just like clearing clutter from your home can shift the flow of energy in all areas of your life, cutting credits and training and skills from your resumé can create a shift of energy in your career. You won't believe me 'til you try it. But if you try it, you'll see. I get buttoloads of email from actors who've taken my advice, trimmed the fat from their resúmes, and increased their flow because of it. This works! Do not fear the white space.

**Rule Number Two:** Your credits don't need to be presented in chronological order.

Someone somewhere decided that "corporate rules" aligned with "Hollywood rules" and told actors to list their credits in chronological order. Nope. It's bullshit. Don't do it. There is very little comparison to what goes on in Corporate America and what goes on in Hollywood. That's not news. These are different worlds.

Lead with your strongest credits. Lead with your largest roles. Lead with your biggest studios. Lead with your most prestigious directors. Think like a journalist: Inverted Pyramid Style. Lead with the POWER items on your resumé (and end with your crap credits that you're simply unwilling to lose yet, no matter how much I beg you to slice 'em). Listing your credits in order of strength makes it very easy to trim credits in the future; you're always cutting the last credit when you're adding a new, stronger one.

Booked a top-of-show guest-star on a top-ten network series? Great! Off goes the one-liner in the spec pilot no one ever saw. Booked a studio feature film? Great! Off goes the student film which never yielded tape for your reel anyway.

Show us how to cast you next. Lead us to your next booking. Don't get sentimental over the old credits as you delete them. We sure aren't! And that leads me to...

**Rule Number Three:** No one has the same emotional attachment to your credits that you do.

I know that's not really a rule, but it's a guideline (hopefully) for the detachment with which you should approach this process. Just like sitting through someone else's home movies is exciting only for them (because they remember how it *felt* to live those moments) and is mildly interesting (at best) to those who are spectators, your sentimental credits mean nothing to 99% of the people reading your resumé. Yes, you remember getting your union eligibility on that indie film. We see a microbudget direct-to-video project no one will ever see... and that doesn't show us that we can take a risk on you as the lead of a studio blockbuster.

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You remember falling in love with your co-star. We see a one-liner on a cable series that got cancelled in its first season... and that doesn't show us that you could be qualified for a series regular position on a new project at network.

You loved that role. It was your breakout moment on stage. Good for you. You're never gonna be cast as that type, that age, that character again. It's been 20 years. Let it go! Show us how to cast you TODAY.

If you keep **Rule Number One** in mind, it really helps with all of the other rules. ;)

But enough about rules. Everyone in this town knows there are no rules (but—as Peter Guber says—you break them at your peril), so let's get to the **SMFA Essentials of Resumé Feng Shui!**

### 1. Include your personal contact information.

Yes. Even if you have an agent or manager who requires that you do not. Include your cell phone number. Your email address. At bare minimum, your website's URL. Why?

Well, we want to book you. We want to schedule you for an audition. We want to contact you for work or the possibility of work. And as much as your agent rocks, his *life* is not consumed with your career goals. He goes on vacation. He takes a day off. He has other clients. Sometimes he's just unreachable, no matter how much he has assured you he will always be reachable. And rather than having us go to the next guy on the list, make it easy for us to get to you when we can't get to your rep.

An agent or manager who *requires* that you remove your own contact info from your resumé is operating from a place of fear. He is concerned that you will cut him out of commissions on projects you book directly. There is so much wrong with that mindset. This is your teammate. You're gonna pay him commission on everything you book. And some stuff you want to go after might not even yield a commission (or much of one, anyway). Fine. If your rep will not budge on this, then give him the stack of resumé's without your contact info, but bring to auditions the one *with* your contact info.

Besides, how sure are you that this will be your agent or manager forever? For as long as we might hold onto your resumé after an audition, a showcase, a great play? Are you certain? Casting directors are packrats when it comes to the headshots of actors whose work we love. Say I pull your headshot and resumé out a year after your agency folded (or after your agent left the agency and you went with him somewhere else, or after you upgraded to a bigger agency, or after you were dropped during lean times at this agency). If I contact your *former* agent trying to find you for a new project I'm casting, it's not your former agent's job to help me find you. It's his job to not let me off the phone 'til I agree to see the NEW version of you he now has on his roster. And if I already have a "you" by the time I hang up with him, why do I need to keep trying to track you down when you couldn't be bothered to share your cell number on your resumé to begin with?

Just do it. And if you're uncomfortable sharing your number, at least share your URL. When I visit your website, I can fill out the contact form or see who your current rep is or click to email you or get your number there. Good enough. Sure, we could go to IMDb-Pro and look y'all up, but if we have two actors' resumé's and one of you provided us with exactly what we needed and the other expected us to go look you up (and hopefully know which of the four credited people who share your name is you, and then further trust that the

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contact info at IMDb-Pro has been updated recently), who is making our job easier? And when we're looking for anything to help us cut down the number of actors we're considering, you making it more difficult for us to find you is just a little Actor Darwinism in action. We welcome the assistance in thinning the herd!

Including your URL on your resumé (even if your URL is just redirecting to your profile page at Actors Access, IMDb, or another online service) is a great idea also because you can list, right there in the footer of your resumé, "additional photos, credits, demo reel, and updates available at [www.whatever.com](#)." That communicates with us that you have additional photos (duh), will probably update your credits (yay), have credits that aren't the "selected" ones on your hard copy resumé that you'd like to share if we're interested in seeing more (smart), have a reel (awesome), and have a website in case we need updates! C'mon, that's a no-brainer and a very efficient use of space at the very bottom of your resumé.

Oh, and if you have no current representation and are submitting your materials to agents and managers, there is no need to put SEEKING REPRESENTATION on your resumé. The absence of representation on the resumé lets them know you're on the prowl, just like the absence of a wedding band is enough, if you're at a singles' club. No need to wear a T-shirt that says "single and ready to mingle" too. ;)

## 2. Rework that third column.

Okay, so you use the three-column structure (see the templates I've included, below) in the film, TV, and theatre sections of your resumé. (In the training/education and special skills sections, you can just go all the way across the page; no need for three columns there.) But within the third column is another of those Corporate America structure things about which I'd like to shake your perspective.

At some point, someone decided that if you listed a director's name in that third column on one project (perhaps the one on which that director's name was really impressive), you now had to list directors' names on *every* project. Nope. Total myth. You go with what's strongest. Remember, lead with the powerful information!

So, that means if you did a supporting role in a no-name-director film for a major studio, you list that studio in column three! If you did a pilot for a "gun for hire" at ABC and his name is now mud in this town, you list "ABC" in column three. If the production company is the most prestigious item, go with that. *Mix and match*, baby! There is no reason to be *forced* to advertise the name of a director on a project if the director's name isn't nearly as impressive as the fact that this film was a USC grad film. List "USC grad." That's your production company, and it can mean a lot more than a director's name (if that director decided to stop pursuing filmmaking after producing that thesis film. Hey, it happens)!

(In general, mention student films' schools if they're the "bigs." That's AFI, USC, UCLA—especially at the grad level, Chapman, and NYU. There's no need to list that Cal State Northridge or NYFA was the program for which you shot your only "lead" role in film. That's a situation where the director's name might be better for you in the third column. Keep in mind that, unless we see a school or studio in the third column—or a director's name we recognize, of course—we're going to assume it was "just some indie film" and move on. No need to draw attention to the fact that your lead role was in a short or in an undergrad film or even non-sync. Save those details for the conversation that launches from, "Oh, I see you had the lead in an indie film," so that you control the spin.)

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### 3. Billing in Film/TV/Internet. Character name in Theatre.

I see this mistake probably more often than any other on a resumé. (Well, actually, that's not true. The biggest mistake I see, most often, is use of the word—and I cringe to type this—PRINCIPLE on a resumé instead of use of the only freakin' version of the homonym that could possibly be an adjective—which is what you want, since you're *describing* the size of the role—and that's PRINCIPAL. You can remember it's an adjective because of that handy *A* right there in the word. *A* for Adjective, get it? Same for "the start of principal photography" in shooting a film.) Anyway, the second most frequently made mistake on an actor's resumé is the use of character names in the second column instead of billing, for film and TV.

Here's your handy guide to billing, by project type.

**FILM BILLING**—**Lead**: principal role in the film, in most scenes, on-screen credit is often in the credits that start the film (as well as in the complete end credits). **Supporting**: principal role in the film, in one or more scenes but not a lead character although important to the storyline. **Featured**: principal role in the film with one or more lines but easily cut from the final version of the film. Unfortunately, many extras have started using the term "featured" to describe their extra work and that means casting directors are less and less convinced that a job listed as "featured" actually was a featured principal role. **Extra**: non-speaking role in the film with no on-screen credit. This billing does not belong on an acting resumé.

**TELEVISION BILLING**—**Series Regular**: contract role with exclusivity to the series, network, and production company for a term of a year or more; paid for a predetermined number of episodes produced, on contract for all episodes, even those in which the character doesn't appear. **Recurring**: character returns over multiple episodes, either on standing contract or contracted periodically, based on negotiations and number of appearances. **Guest Star**: one-episode guest whose character's storyline is central to that episode, works at a weekly rate (and is under contract for the week, even if only shooting a day or two). Remember, billing helps with quote bumps later. At some point, you may receive average-range co-star pay on a gig but be billed as a guest star, which allows you to negotiate for guest star pay on your next gig. Many times, actors will accept lower pay for higher billing, since that helps ramp them up for better pay on the next project. **Co-star**: one-episode guest whose character's storyline may or may not be central to that episode (since co-star billing actually depends more on negotiation than size of the role), anywhere from one line to multiple scenes. **Extra**: non-speaking role with no on-screen credit. This billing does not belong on an acting resumé.

**INTERNET BILLING**—Ah! This is fun. If the Internet project is a one-off (like a short film), use film billing protocol. If the Internet project is an episode within a series, use television billing protocol. Cool, huh?

**SOAP OPERA BILLING**—**Contract Role**: daytime series regular or recurring character. **Principal Recurring**: an actor who recurs over time but is not under contract and can therefore work on other soap operas. **Dayplayer**: a character with five lines or more. **Under 5**: a character with between one and five lines. **Extra**: non-speaking role with no on-screen credit. This billing does not belong on an acting resumé.

**CANADIAN BILLING**—Canadian billing includes the terms **Principal** and **Actor** (and I've seen abbreviations of PP and PA for **Principal Performer** and **Principal Actor**). As I understand it, the ACTRA billing of Actor corresponds to our Under 5. An ACTRA Principal would have five lines or more.

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**THEATRE BILLING**—Billing is pretty much non-existent for theatre credits on a resumé. Most theatre credits include the character name, as role size is generally known. If, however, the production is of an original work or relatively new play, it is fine to include a parenthetical notation of "lead" or "supporting" after the character name. Also note that you originated the role, if that's the case. Depending on how well known the play becomes down the line, this could be especially impressive information.

With all issues of billing, when in doubt, check your contract. If you are working a union television contract, your billing will be spelled out specifically in your contract and there is no room for error. If you do not have a contract or deal memo for your work, check the original breakdown for the project, as the billing for the role will likely be listed after the character description. If you're still not able to nail it down, check with your agent or someone in production. You do not want to mistakenly upgrade yourself on your resumé and then meet up with the casting director in the future. "Oh! You got bumped up from featured extra to co-star? That's GREAT!" "Uh, no. I actually didn't. Oops." "Oops is right, and I already knew that, since I cast co-stars and the extras casting director is the one who cast you." *Cue the lights and creepy music. That show is over.*

Always remember that you're trying to help us with risk assessment and that means you need to show us that you're right for a guest-star because you've already done a guest-star. You're ready for your second co-star because you already scored that elusive first one. It's time to consider you for a lead in a studio feature film because you've had leads in a half-dozen indie films. Billing! That's all we care about in the film and TV sections of your resumé. In the theatre section, which I'll cover in more detail next, you're only going to draw interest from fellow theatre lovers anyway, so you list the character names there. People who care about this section will want to talk about these characters. And most folks will skip the section entirely.

#### 4. Minimize theatre credits.

Look, I know you love theatre if you love theatre. Heck, I love theatre. I started out as a stage actor as a kid and I have great fondness and respect for stage actors. Their discipline, stamina, and devotion to the craft and unpredictability of daily performances in front of a live audience are all awesome qualities. But almost everyone in Hollywood who is looking at you for a film or TV role (and, c'mon, you moved to Hollywood to do film and TV, not theatre, right?) doesn't give a poop about your theatre credits, and your insistence upon keeping that section packed full on your resumé simply tells the industry you're *not* working in film and TV.

Since our business is risk assessment, we need to see evidence of your work in exactly the area we're looking to hire you. Again, refer to **Rule Number One**. Show us how to cast you. List your "biggies" in theatre (and here, that means Broadway and London stage, maybe a few major LA or Off-Broadway theatres, very few regional houses and only then when award-nominated productions) and change the header to say: "Theatre (selected)," so we know we can ask you about what else you've done, if we happen to be theatre types. (Be prepared to rarely be asked about this section. I know. It hurts your heart. Mine too.)

Remember that your goal is to show us how to cast you next, and that means you don't want to distract us from the meaty credits you have that relate to how we *want* to cast you, in order to show us children's theatre or summer stock or even off-Off-Broadway credits. You do that stuff to feed your soul and keep your craft sharp. To reduce the level of importance of your one and only network co-star by surrounding it with a half-page of stage work is to tell the industry you're happy working on stage and don't really care whether you ever

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get your name left at the gate of CBS Radford again. Think it through. What's your goal? Show us THAT on your resumé, not *all* the things you've also done.

Now, I'm not advising that you cut so much stuff that your resumé is left looking like a tree stump. Just prune the limbs back. You know the difference between getting a trim so that your hair is healthy and shaving your head. Be smart. Do as much trimming as is required to show us how spectacular you can look. (And the theatre section is the section that can usually stand to lose the most, on actors' resúmes. Another is the film section—especially if it's filled with student films and never-seen indies.) You can note that these are **SELECTED** credits, if you want to open the door to conversation about the other credits you do have.

The best part of listing *any* section of your resumé's credits as "selected" is that you open the door for a rich conversation during an audition or meeting. "Oh, your theatre credits are fabulous! But it says here these are selected credits. Obviously, you have chops. What else have you done?" Hey, cool! You've just encountered a member of the industry who loves theatre and wants to talk shop with you. That means those credits you lopped off the resumé are actually *helping* you in that room. You're getting to bond with a fellow theatre rat about all of the cool stuff you've done (but that isn't on your resumé). Bonus!

## 5. Commercial conflicts upon request.

Don't list your commercials. Even if you no longer have a conflict airing, don't list 'em. Commercial clients and ad agency reps worry when they see the word "Verizon" on an actor's resumé that the actor might have been as recognizable and as product-associated as "The Verizon Guy" even if you were only a hero mom in a regional spot and never even actually touched the product, much less said, "Can you hear me now?" to camera. Doesn't matter. You scare 'em off when you list the commercials you've done. And you don't need to add obstacles to a career that already has a ton of 'em. Oh, if you have done **ZERO** commercials, that "conflicts upon request" line is perfect. When requested, your reply is, "Oh, I have no current conflicts." Yay, you. :)

## 6. Minimize "all the other stuff."

Here, I'm talking about voiceover, stunt, background, industrial/non-broadcast, stand-in, modeling, singing, stand-up comedy, hosting, directing, writing work of any kind showing up on your acting resumé. Get rid of it. And if you cannot bring yourself to get rid of it, then relegate it to your resumé's Special Skills section.

What?!? I know. Calm down. You worked hard to become an amazing... whatever else. But this is an *acting* resumé and the BUYERS looking at it are trying to decide whether you should be invited in for a shot at an *acting* role. Sure, having TelePrompTer skills is awesome if you're a host. Create a host resumé. And if you're sure you should keep your host info on your acting resumé, then include in Special Skills that you have "extensive host experience—reel and credits available upon request," and leave it at that.

*Anything* that distracts us from your juiciest ACTING credits and takes us down the mental road of, "Oh. So desperate to be in the industry that she'll do ANYTHING to get on our radar," is potentially costing you acting work. So what if it's true that you've done a thousand different things? Share your "crammed full of everything" list with your favorite reality show recruiter and get your 15 minutes of fame. But if you're serious about an acting career, an acting resumé needs to be focused on your acting credits and skills. Period. Everything else is a potential distraction.

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Yes. I know you're certain that your years of background work proves to a principal casting director that you have valuable on-set experience. No. It doesn't. You might as well have spent those same years as a PA. It's a totally different skill set. That doesn't mean that the experience doesn't have value (since it absolutely does); it means it doesn't belong on an acting resumé.

## 7. Ongoing training is worth noting.

In your training section, if you're currently studying somewhere, note that! Just a simple parenthetical notation after the name of the coach with whom you're studying is plenty. For example:

Lesly Kahn: Comedic scene study (ongoing)

Done. That lets me know two things. One: You're actively working on your craft, keeping your instrument tuned up, and pushing yourself as an actor, even when you're not on set. Two: There's someone with whom I can check in if I want to know whether you've got the chops to handle something I'm casting.

"Les, hi. I'm thinking of casting Chris in this really hilarious comedy and I only see dramatic roles on the resumé. What's the work like in class lately?" And the answer helps me know whether the risk (there's that word again) is worth a slot on our audition session calendar.

Now, that sort of thing might not happen often, but it happens enough, so it's worth the notation on your resumé. You never know the relationships folks have in this town. Adding this info could definitely help to keep us in the loop on what's going on in your world, in terms of training.

## 8. Remove special skills that are more about your survival job than about you as an actor or about you as a person.

I regularly see "bartending" or "typing 85 WPM" listed among actors' special skills. All that tells me is that you have a survival job as a bartender or as a temp. And you don't want to remind me that you even *need* a survival job, when I'm wondering whether you're the best actor for the role. (Sure, we know you do need a reliable way to make rent. Just don't remind us about it while we're looking at your acting credits and skills.)

Unless by "bartending" you mean "flaming flair juggling bartending" and by "typing 85 WPM" you mean "typing 85 WPM blindfolded and with 100% accuracy," leave it off the special skills section. Instead, tell us things that are the standard actor stuff (athleticism, dance, vocal ability, accents and dialects, etc.), and then share a personality item. A "stupid human trick" you can do. Something you can either do in the room or be asked about in the room, so when you leave we remember you as "that guy who played the William Tell Overture on his cheeks" when we're down to our top four and trying to decide who we liked best hours before.

Yes, it's fine to share something that takes us out of your "acting self" for a beat. This is the one place on your resumé where there's a great opportunity to do that. Your personality can shine through, here. And it needn't be more than a few words of real estate on the page. This helps us get to know the real you, but only after we've consumed an entire resumé filled with great acting credits pared down to their most powerful, due to **Resumé Feng Shui**.

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## 9. Share those good reviews!

The last play I ever did before retiring from acting yielded an *LA Weekly* review that included the words, "Bonnie Gillespie is excellent." Can't ask for a better four-word review than that, I'd say. (Especially when they didn't really dig the play.)

You bet those four words, followed by, "*LA Weekly*, August 2000," went on my resumé, right under my name, union affiliation, and contact number. And had I kept acting, I'd have lopped off the date after a year or so, because you don't want to draw attention to the fact that your last amazing review was that long ago.

Same with film festival wins. If a film in which you starred went to a major festival, find a place to say that on your resumé. Some actors will note it parenthetically after the film's title. Others will use an asterisk and resolve it at the bottom of the page or section. *\*Best Narrative Short, Sundance, 2012* is a great blurb. Until 2013. Then you just delete the year and leave it as a conversation starter. "Oh, wow! When were you at Sundance?" "In 2012. We won Best Narrative Short that year." "I see that. Awesome!" "It really was. Thank you."

You earned the goodies. Share 'em with the folks who care enough to look at your resumé (or website, for that matter). Don't go overboard and get all "glowy" about yourself. Pick the best. Don't let the review from a rag no one has ever heard of crowd the fact that *Variety* called you talented. Shine spotlights on the biggie.

## 10. Let someone else proofread your resumé.

Oh dear God, for the love of all that is holy, please do this if you ignore everything else I've suggested (but please don't ignore it all... it's really good advice, y'all): Have someone else proofread your resumé. You're too close to the work of art to see its flaws. You don't realize you've used the wrong word, misspelled a director's name, didn't align your tab stops in Word, or left off your contact information altogether.

Just as those really cool home-buying shows I've recently become obsessed with do, have someone who knows whether you're "staging" your space in an optimum way to attract buyers take a look at your product before you put it in front of the buyers.

Take a breath.

Okay, ninjas. Ready? We're now going to "interview" your resumé. That's right. On the next pages, you're going to write down every credit currently on your resumé and then ask the credit the following question: "What do YOU tell the buyers about me?"

I want you to hold off on passing judgment on yourself, your credits, the space you were in when you agreed to work on that crappy student film or that no-budget indie for which you got horrible footage and a parking ticket while on set. This first step is just about asking that question—honestly—and writing the answer down. If I were interviewing my old casting resumé, I would put next to "Death By Beaver" the answer: You tell producers that I signed on to cast a \$150,000 SAG Limited Exhibition film in 2005, cast eight actors, and then got word that the producers had parted ways and the project would not be going forward. There is no footage. There is no IMDb entry. Yes, I did the work, but the "story" of this credit is one that ends badly.

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If I were to interview my current casting resumé, I would put next to "Bite Me" the answer: You tell producers that I can sign on for a nonunion indie webseries and get such a rockstar cast that—along with all the other stars that aligned for this gamer zombie apocalypse project—for season two, we're transported to "the big leagues" when Lionsgate acquires the series, the series goes union, the series airs weekly on television, and the project gets profiled in dozens of publications as an example of the new wave of production tier jumps, from web to TV to feature film to merchandising... and it's only the beginning.

Now, when I compare these two answers, there's no question where I'm headed, when it comes time to do a little **Resumé Feng Shui**, right? But let's not get ahead of ourselves! Let's just answer the question: *What do YOU tell the buyers about me?*

All of the items on your resumé are telling a story about your past.  
Only some of the items on your resumé tell a story about your future.

This next step in the interview process is to go back and color in the STAR next to each credit that represents how you would like to be cast in the future. It can be because you worked with a great director whose work you continue to admire, perhaps it's a network co-star role you booked and you'd love to attract more network roles, or it's the type of character you played that really resonated with you and you're all about continuing to play roles like that. Whatever the reason, just hit the credits that represent how you'd like to be cast *next* with a colored-in star.

Don't freak out, thinking I'm going to tell you that only the items with colored-in stars next to them get to survive your resumé decluttering process. I wouldn't ask you to strip down that bare unless you're just totally comfortable with that much white space on the page. What I *do* want you to experience is a feeling that you can begin to associate with every credit, going forward. As you amass work, I want you to start asking yourself, "Will this show buyers how to cast me next, when it's a credit on my resumé? Or am I doing this project for some other reason?" (And it's totally fine to do projects because you're not otherwise busy that day, you like the crew and want to do a favor, you'll get to stretch as you play against type, or you just need some money and this schlocky horror film gig pays.) You'll start realizing that there are some projects that never get added to your resumé. That doesn't mean they didn't have value in your life! It just means their purpose was not to show people how to cast you next.

And since you've already had a paradigm shift—that your resumé is not a list of everything you've ever done; it's a recipe for how to cast you next—this process gets really easy, and you start to enjoy yourself more on sets, or when you audition, or even when you submit! Because you'll not feel the stakes are so high and that you desperately need to add to your "list of credits," but instead that you're free, you're an artist having fun, and when the project *also* helps buyers understand how to cast you next, it can come play on your awesome resumé, with all the other badass credits you're so proud to share with the world!

After these worksheet pages, I'll include three single-page resumé templates, in case you're starting from scratch and want to use the guidelines for formatting your shiny new document!

Let's get to the resumé interview process! Ready? Grab your resumé, a pen, and open your mind to a more purposeful representation of your credits.

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CREDIT

What do YOU tell the buyers about me?

Is this how I'd like to be cast?

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CREDIT

What do YOU tell the buyers about me?

Is this how I'd like to be cast?

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# Actor's Name

**union status** (leave blank if nonunion)

Phone Number  
Email Address  
DOB (if under 18, 18 TPY if applicable)  
Height • Weight



[Great use of white space: MINI PHOTO]

## **Film & Television** [GROUP this heading, 'til you have a few of each type to split up]

Title (film)	Billing	Dir., Prod. Co., or Studio
Title (web)	Billing	Prod. Co. and/or Network

[OMIT this entire section if you have no on-camera credits whatsoever]

## **Commercial**

Conflicts available upon request.  
[OMIT this entire section if you have no on-camera credits whatsoever]

## **Theatre**

Title	Role	Director and Venue
Title	Role	Director and Venue
Title	Role	Director and Venue

[include school plays and staged readings, but be ready to kill off the smaller projects as bigger ones get added, which you'll feature as "selected," as a parenthetical notation—see Working Actor Resumé for that example]

## **Training**

Current Coach:	Type of Training (ongoing)
Previous Coach:	Type of Training
Previous Coach:	Type of Training
Previous Coach:	Type of Training
Previous Coach:	Type of Training

[this will be the longest section of your resumé, at first; highlight only the strongest stuff once you have a ton to list]

## **Special Skills**

block of information about your athletic prowess (get specific about level of proficiency), vocal ability (including vocal range and styles of singing), any accents (again, be very specific), types of activities you enjoy—including the fact that you have pageant or modeling or singing or dancing experience—and end with something that's more of a "fun fact" if you'd like a "stupid human trick" or conversation piece in the room—but don't be too cute  
[for young actors, be sure to include work permit, CHSPE, or GED status, as that affects your castability]

**demo reel and additional photos available at [www.actorname.com](http://www.actorname.com)**

# AGENCY LOGO

Agent's Name  
Agent's Phone Number  
Agent's Email Address  
Agent's Website  
Actor's Height • Weight

## Actor's Name union status

### Film (selected)

Title	Billing	Dir., Prod. Co., or Studio
Title	Billing	Dir., Prod. Co., or Studio
Title *	Billing	Dir., Prod. Co., or Studio
Title	Billing	Dir., Prod. Co., or Studio

\* opportunity to brag about film festival award win on this title

### Television (selected)

Title	Billing	Prod. Co. and/or Network
Title	Billing	Prod. Co. and/or Network
Title	Billing	Prod. Co. and/or Network
Title	Billing	Prod. Co. and/or Network

### Commercial

Conflicts available upon request.

### Theatre (selected)

Title	Role	Director and Venue
Title *	Role	Director and Venue
Title	Role	Director and Venue
Title	Role	Director and Venue

\* opportunity to mention major stage awards this play (or you) won

### Training

Current Coach:	Type of Training (ongoing)
Previous Coach:	Type of Training
Previous Coach:	Type of Training
College or University:	Degree Earned (if industry-related) and Specialization

opportunity to mention memberships in organizations that show the level of your commitment to craft

### Special Skills

block of information about your athletic prowess (get specific about level of proficiency), vocal ability (including vocal range and styles of singing), any accents (again, be very specific), types of activities directly related to your castability—remember to showcase your primary type with things that support our understanding of you, and end with something that's more of a "fun fact" if you'd like a "stupid human trick" or conversation piece in the room—but don't be too cute

This area is sometimes used for additional representation contact information—a manager or print agent, perhaps—and/or the actor's direct contact information—website, cell phone number, email address (*something*, in case primary agent is unreachable).

This is a GREAT place to include the text: **demo reel and additional photos available at [www.actorname.com](http://www.actorname.com)**



Agent's Name  
Agent's Phone Number

## Actor's Name

### Film

Title	Director and/or Studio
Title	Director and/or Studio
Title	Director and/or Studio
Title	Director and/or Studio
Title	Director and/or Studio
Title	Director and/or Studio

[some agencies omit the second column; defer to your agency's template, at this level]

### Television: Series

Title	Network
Title	Network
Title	Network
Title	Network
Title	Network

[some agencies omit the second column; defer to your agency's template, at this level]

### Television: Guest Appearances

Title	Network
Title	Network
Title	Network
Title	Network

[some agencies omit the second column; defer to your agency's template, at this level]

### Theatre: Broadway

Title	Venue
Title	Venue

[some agencies omit the second column; defer to your agency's template, at this level]

### Theatre: Regional

Title	Venue
Title	Venue
Title	Venue

[some agencies omit the second column; defer to your agency's template, at this level]

[footer of agency letterhead OR name/contact information of the actor's manager, publicist, or attorney]



Okay, so those templates were presented in this order: Starter Resumé, Working Actor Resumé, and Name Actor Resumé, and you'll transition from one to the next, as you navigate from tier to tier. Yay, you! Keep in mind that even the adjustment to a leaner, higher-tier resumé *format* can cause the buyers to perceive you as a higher-tier actor! And I don't need to point out how very confident and white-space-heavy the name actor template is, do I? Interesting.

Be sure to save a copy of your resumé as yourname.pdf (yes, as a PDF—use the "print to PDF" function in your word processing software; yes, with your name as the file name, not something generic like resume.pdf), so it is descriptive even as it lives on someone else's computer. Should you ever need to email a link to your resumé, or the file as an attachment, to multiple recipients at once, please—for the love of all that is holy—use BCC to protect the email addresses of the folks to whom you are blasting the email. Oh, and really, think it over before doing anything resembling a mass email blast. It's so *not* the ninja way, to sling spaghetti at the wall and hope something sticks. :) Target, target, target!

Have fun with this process! And take another lap around and do this again and again, as you may find yourself falling back into old patterns, following along with what you see others doing, and you'll need to be reminded of these ninja strategies for your next tier jump. Don't worry that you're "not enough" when others have crowded resúmes and that old way of thinking tries to creep back in. Those folks are hoarding credits just like your grandpa kept too many old newspapers. Clear the clutter. Remove sentimentality from the items on your resumé and think like a buyer, assessing risk. Trust the power of the most powerful credits on your resumé. Simplify. Live on-brand. Lurk then lead. You'll know *for sure* that it's a better, stronger resumé when casting directors who didn't "get" you before start calling you in. **Resumé Feng Shui** at work! Believe it.

Please submit your questions for our follow-up MP3 this week, so we can get you covered before the end of this month's interactive module! Email: [ninjaassistant@cricketfeet.com](mailto:ninjaassistant@cricketfeet.com) and use the subject line: Resumé Feng Shui Question, so we can easily track it and get you in the queue to help out with your questions, before we head into next month's awesome interactive module in *SMFA Essentials*. Yippee!

Enjoy your journey to the next tier, y'all. **Resumé Feng Shui** is one of many **SMFA Essentials** and we're so excited to share these tools with you. Let us hear how it's going, as you embrace the badassery!

We are ridiculously lucky to have a life in which we get to live our dreams, every day. Being blissed out, confident, and absolutely capable of achieving your every goal along the way is totally do-able. Unless you're SURE it's impossible, folks, every little dream you hear whispering to you is absolutely, totally attainable. The *Self-Management for Actors* principles **work**. Ninja badassery abounds. **Bonnie Gillespie is living her dreams by helping others figure out how to live theirs.** She casts SAG-AFTRA indie feature films and series such as the zombie smash hit *BITE ME*, which made the leap from web to TV with **Lionsgate** in 2012. Bonnie is founder and producer of Hollywood Happy Hour, Somebody's Basement, and Get A-Listed. Her weekly column, **The Actors Voice**, runs at Actors Access and her podcast, **The Work**, is available on iTunes. Her books include *Casting Qs: A Collection of Casting Director Interviews*, *Acting Qs: Conversations with Working Actors*, and *Self-Management for Actors: Getting Down to (Show) Business*, which has been named one of **The Top Ten Best Books on Acting Ever Written** and featured at the Tom Cruise actor resource blog. Bonnie regularly facilitates seminars based on this top-selling book and has traveled internationally—to demystify the casting process and the business side of pursuing an artistic career—as a guest instructor at colleges, universities, actors' unions, and private acting studios. Bonnie has been interviewed on *Good Morning America*, *BBC Breakfast*, UTV-Ireland, CBC Radio One, BBC Radio 5, E! Online, and in the *LA Times*. To hop on Bonnie's mailing list, please visit [BonnieGillespie.com](http://BonnieGillespie.com).



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