



## RESUME #1

### Professional Summary

***Accomplished, Elite Professional with a focus on participation and growth. Former collegiate and professional player, who enjoys challenging kids to achieve their potential. Experienced with over 20 years of teaching all player levels, running events, coaching winning teams, and managing pros, large budgets and pro shops.***

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## SELLING THE DREAM

Mark McMahon, USPTA Master Professional

Last year, I read over 500 resumes of tennis professionals. The resumes belonged to professionals of every age, and experience level. Most were intent on being hired into the role of a Director of Tennis or Director of Racquet Sports and were in the process of applying for a job. Some belonged to professionals who intended to apply for a job soon. Most of the resumes included an opening paragraph of some type, similar in type to the one above, where the professional summarized their professional experience and written in the third person.

When your resume is received by a Club Manager, a Search Firm, a Search Committee Chair, or Human Resources Director, it is usually attached to an email, or uploaded to a website, along with the requisite cover letter. Your cover letter should not be a repeat of your resume; however, both are designed to accomplish one objective which is, *get you an invitation to interview.*

A first interview is usually done over the phone, sometimes by video, and possibly even through a questionnaire where you will be asked to respond to a bank of questions related to the job. While an interview of any type demands a set of skills different from those needed to present yourself via a resume or cover letter, all require one consistent strategy to succeed – ***your ability to create a vision.*** Add to this, it's my experience that if the candidate does not grab the attention of the reader within 15 – 20 seconds, the other accompanying document (resume or cover letter depending on which is read first) may never even be read.

***Successful applicants quickly create a vision of how the program will look and serve the members' needs and expectations with the applicant as the new Director.***

Consider for a moment the following Professional Summary which is written in a different style, and with a different focus.

## RESUME #2

### Professional Summary

***Demonstrable success creating an environment that promotes fun and camaraderie, together with providing and facilitating opportunities for members to learn new skills, compete, and socialize together. Singularly focused on member happiness by exceeding expectations, achieving business objectives, and with the support of an exceptional team of assistant professionals and staff, offering a comprehensive, member-focused racquets program.***



**The title of this article is *Selling the Dream*. Which of two previous Professional Summaries creates a more vibrant vision of how life at this club could be with the professional as the Director? Which summary begins to introduce personality and attitude to what essentially are words on a computer screen? Which professional summary creates, and begins to sell, *The Dream*?**

The sole purpose of your resume and cover letter is to secure your invitation to interview. There are two primary reactions that these documents should target in the reader – **Confidence** (that you could do the job well), and **Curiosity** (with the reader wondering; *How does he/she do that?* The answer of course is available through a personal interview. Success!

Many considerations go into the decision of deciding who to interview for any job. This can include the career-phase of the candidate, different types of career experiences, the degree of relative-experience, professional and personal reputation, previous clubs worked, and the candidate's public profile on social media. Your resume and cover letter however is your first chance to begin to sell the dream of you running the program, and a critical part of success within this first round of the selection process.

The title of this article was inspired by the title of an article I recently read that was written by personal branding and communication expert Bruce Turkel. In his article titled: *Selling The Dream 1965 and Today*, Bruce walks his reader back to Miami Beach in 1965 where his father built the first residential condominium in the United States. Among the many lessons shared with Bruce by his father was that he always wanted to sell his condo apartments as early as possible in the project's lifespan.

Bruce figured the reason was to get as much money as quickly as possible but his Dad said it was because he always preferred to *sell the dream*. As his dad explained it, his best opportunity to sell an apartment for the highest price was to walk his potential buyer through a construction site and show them where they'd live, how close they'd be to shopping, tennis courts, and the beach. He'd show them where they'd park and where their grandchildren would sleep when they stayed over.

But once the apartment was complete, the conversations would become more prosaic. One couple wanted gold shag carpeting. The next buyer hated gold. One couple wanted a tile kitchen. The next wanted butcher block. Some people insisted on bathtubs. Other people only wanted showers because they couldn't step over the bathtub rim.

So, what's an easier sell? Painting the picture of where the new buyers are going to tuck in their adorable grandchildren? Or debating the value proposition of Corian versus Formica countertops? When put in those simple terms, the advantages of selling the dream become clear. In his article, Bruce Turkel maintains the belief that people are more likely to find affinity with *The Dream*.

Getting hired for a particular job requires the successful navigation of many different phases of the hiring process. To connect to the example of Bruce's Dad selling his condos, there will be a phase in the hiring process where the Manager or Search Committee's preferences for "gold carpeting, tile kitchens and a shower over a bathtub" will become more relevant and it is at this the time when your authentic, real experiences and skills must come to the fore. At this stage of the hiring process the successful candidate, through story-telling about past experiences, must demonstrate an ability to deliver "*shag carpeting*" in many different colors, and both "*tile and butcher-block*" in the kitchen – if that is what the role requires. This stage of the process is called the personal interview and is when a selection is being made from among a small number of final candidates. Ultimately, at this stage of the interview process,



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it is most often very small differences between the candidates and the personal preferences of those making the selection that drive a final decision. During the earliest phase of the process, however – when submitting a resume and cover letter, take a page out of Bruce’s Dad’s playbook and provide a vision of you as the Director. To secure that interview, it’s my experience that you must first *Sell the Dream*.

**Mark McMahon** is a USPTA Master Professional, Past Division President, and has been recognized as USPTA National Professional of the Year. He founded McMahon Careers in 2008 and today, the firm assists private clubs in hiring the right professional as their Director of Racquet Sports.

Mark’s passion is **Career Coaching** where he helps professionals assess their career path, establish goals, and then identify and develop the skills needed to achieve success.

In 2020 McMahon launched the **Certified Racquet Sports Executive Program**, a 10-month long executive program designed to help professionals lead and direct programs more effectively, more professionally, and more confidently. In its first three years, the CRSE designation has been awarded to (85) professionals from across the United States. Information: <https://mcmahoncareers.com/>