

Competitive Edge: Unleash the Power of Executive Bios



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BIO – Tim Windhof

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Tim Windhof is an executive résumé writer, international career coach and Forbes Coaches Council member who specializes in international executive career advancement.

Tim has lived, studied, and worked in Australia, New Zealand, Germany, and the U.S. He utilizes his cross-cultural knowledge to work with international résumé and coaching clients from around the globe.

Tim is a Nationally Certified Résumé Writer, Certified Résumé Development Coach, Certified Professional Résumé Writer, and Certified Professional Career Coach.

He holds a law degree from the University of Cologne; a Master of Laws with First Class Honors, from the University of Canterbury, and a Master Certificate in Human Resources Management from Villanova University.

What is an Executive Biography?

Definition: An executive biography is a short narrative and high-level overview of your career, core values, and accomplishments.

NOTE: Typically limited to one page in length.

The Differences Between your Resume & Bio

Executive Resume

- Typically 2 to 3 pages
- Purpose: Job applications
- Corporate performance focused

Executive Bio

- Typically 1 page or even shorter
- Purpose: many, e.g., networking tool, “elevator speech”
- More holistic presentation

Do I Need a Bio?

- It depends on how you conduct your search campaign and what exactly you target.
- **Full disclosure:** It is certainly possible to land a new executive opportunity without an executive bio.
- **However:** Some executive recruiters or board opportunities will specifically require a bio.



NOTE: The bio may not be a “must have” document comparable to an executive resume but there are application scenarios where they may be requested.

Some Situations Where a Bio is Useful

- ✓ Making new connections and following-up on introductions
- ✓ For speaking engagements & presentations
- ✓ Freelance Advisory/Consulting boards (e.g. Advisory Cloud)
- ✓ Company or personal websites
- ✓ Author page of published books
- ✓ Corporate board applications
- ✓ Attachment to LinkedIn messages
- ✓ Personal Branding websites (e.g., <https://about.me/>)

4 Reasons to Have an Executive Bio

1.
Appropriateness

2. Flexibility

3. Influencer

4. Style

-
1. Potentially more appropriate than sending resume.
 2. A bio provides you with more flexibility.
 3. Industry leaders & influencers utilize bios.
 4. Style and personality.

Appropriateness

Flexibility

Influencer

Style

1. More Appropriate than Sending Resume

1. When simply building your network vs. actively looking for a new opportunity.
2. Save your business partners and contacts time.
3. Provides you the chance to keep emails short.

Appropriateness

Flexibility

Influencer

Style

2. The Bio Provides you with Flexibility

1. The structure of a traditional resume is formal and rather rigid.
2. Resume structure will reveal gaps, position hopping, sabbaticals.
3. Career dents might be hard to conceal.

Appropriateness

Flexibility

Influencer

Style

3. Influencers Use Bios

1. Influencers and VIP's use biographies.
2. It can demonstrate that you have outgrown the resume stage of your career (e.g. Elon Musk, Mark Cuban).
3. Point here: bios are used to demonstrate and communicate extreme value and seniority.

1. Appropriateness

2. Flexibility

3. Influencer

4. Style

4. Style and Personality

1. Chance to communicate your unique style and personality.
2. Chance to laser focus in on the soft skills and leadership attributes that you want to be known for.
3. Chance to highlight a certain business motto or life philosophy that permeates everything you do.

What we have seen so far:

1. We have defined and clarified what an executive bio is.
2. We have seen possibilities of what you can do with an executive bio and why you should have one.

What we will look at next:

Elements of an executive bio, possible content and examples.

What makes a great executive bio?

Great Bio

- Short and concise
- Reinforces your personal brand
- Provides the reader with essential and high-level information

Lackluster Bio

- Lengthy and wordy
- Dangles and is not in-line with your supporting documents
- Reads like a discursive essay

Common Elements of an Executive Bio

- ✓ Intro and quick overview of who you are and what you stand for
- ✓ Career path and/or calling
- ✓ Current or most recent job and scope
- ✓ Highlight previous achievements and roles
- ✓ Education, leadership training, & certification
- ✓ Private life & hobbies

Bio Intro & Overview

- ✓ Start with 1 to 2 sentences that sum up your career and what you stand for.
- ✓ Include a reference to industry, geographic regions, and your leadership style.

Example:

“James Alkmer is a general manager and international business growth executive with 20 years of experience in the automotive and Tier 1 supplier industry across the North America and Asia Pacific regions.

Known for his encouraging attitude and servant leadership approach to knit cross-cultural teams together to functioning units, James enjoys an international reputation for relentlessly driving the integration of newly acquired entities.”

Career Calling & Career Path

- Not necessarily a “must have” element but a good differentiator

Examples:

✓ “After winning the European Union’s “Young Innovator Award” at the tender age of 10, Olivier knew that his future would be in driving emerging technology.”

Or

✓ “Dionne discovered during her clerkship at the Supreme Court of Ohio that she was meant to be on the other side of the bench as a corporate trial lawyer.”

Current or Most Recent Job

- ✓ List 1 to 2 sentences about your current job.
- ✓ Include employer name, title, scope of position, and a few achievements/highlights.

Example:

“Since 2018, Ally Mayner serves as Capital Turner’s South Africa based global CFO and spearheads accounting, finance, legal matters, and IT with a staff of 250+ direct and 40 indirect reports.

Her major achievements since taking over the CFO position have been ...

Former Positions

Depending on your specific career and field, you will follow now with anywhere from between 2 and 5 paragraphs with a short overview of your former positions.

Example:

“Prior to joining Jones Lang Lasalle, Eric held the position of Senior Vice President at Buller Inc. where he oversaw commercial mergers & acquisitions across 23 states.”

NOTE: This part is one where you have a lot of leverage on how much or how little you want to present.

Education, Leadership Training, & Certification

- **List all undergraduate and postgraduate degrees (some executives might only list their MBA – don't!)**
- **Include country references in international application scenarios – particularly if the City or State of your university might not be known overseas**
- **List recent leadership training and certifications to show that you are up to speed**

Volunteering & Society Engagement

What to include?

- **Not-for-profit engagements**
- **Community engagement**
- **Board memberships**
- **Possibly awards**

Where to include?

- ✓ **List after the education section.**
- ✓ **Keep short and precise.**
- ✓ **If possible, in one sentence.**

Hobbies & Family Life

- ✓ Wrap up the bio with a short paragraph about your hobbies and family.
- ✓ This is again optional and not a “must.”
- ✓ It does, however, give your bio a nice personal note.

Example:

To unwind from her busy office life, Sherryl loves spending time with her family in the Rocky Mountains as well as practicing and refining her Tai Chi form.

EXECUTIVE BIOGRAPHY

DN

Dan Neuers

- Seasoned CRE CEO
- East Coast Icon

"I don't like that man. I must get to know him better." Those famous words by Abraham Lincoln are the guiding principle in Dan Neuers' commercial real estate career of almost 3 decades.

Dan firmly believes that you can negotiate and advance any deal if you genuinely take the time to get to know your counterparts.

This approach has enabled Dan to negotiate and close overall transactions of more than \$6.8B throughout his career.

- \$6.8B in deals and transactions closed

Since 2010 Dan orchestrates and leads east-coast based Kahn Enterprises (KE) as the firm's Chief Executive Officer. Under his leadership, KE grew from 12 offices in New York and New Jersey to a leading east-coast entity with 45 offices spanning from Maine to California.

Dan extended the company's offering to include the following: facilities, transaction, and project management; property management; investment management; appraisal and valuation; property leasing; strategic consulting; property sales and development services.

Before taking over the leadership position at KE, Dan served as Chief Executive Officer at Zehner Pow, a nationally recognized boutique investment advisory firm specialized in retail, commercial real estate. In this role, Dan focused on creating new and expanding existing relationships with significant family offices, regional operators, and select institutions nationally.

- Duke University
MBA

Before joining Zehner and Pow, Dan launched his commercial real estate career with Cushman & Wakefield where he rose through the ranks from initial hire as Data Analyst all the way to Senior Vice President.

In his role as SVP, Dan oversaw and empowered the single largest deal for an industrial building on the east coast.

- Tufts University
Bachelor of Science

Dan holds a Master's in Real Estate from Georgetown University and a Bachelor of Science in Data Science from Tuft's School of Engineering.

Dan is a big advocate of sustainable real estate practices and materials and volunteers his time as Board Member of the Clean Ocean Project.

Key Takeaways:

- 1. A bio can set you apart vs. candidates relying on resumes alone.**
- 2. There are various situations in which you will need an executive bio or where an executive bio will be handy.**
- 3. You can utilize and combine different elements and points to create an outstanding bio.**

Any Questions?!
