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**RESUME ADVICE: Consumer Products**

**INTRODUCTION**

The following document is designed to help you edit your CPG-focused resume. The advice comes from an analysis of CPG job descriptions, the experience of the MBACM office, Wharton alumni working at CPG firms, and CPG company recruiters.

**Marketing/Brand Management Roles**

While it is always advisable to highlight relevant industry and functional experience, a large percentage of students applying for marketing/brand management positions in CPG are career switchers. Employers will not expect a student to have a huge amount of experience in brand management, but your previous employment as well as the quality of your industry/company research and networking, will offer an index of your ambition and your passion for the industry. In addition to industry passion, recruiters look for leadership, analytical skills, results-orientation, and evidence of strong collaboration and teamwork. All of this should be demonstrated throughout your resume.

One common mistake among bankers and consultants looking to make a career switch is to over-emphasize their analytical and strategic thinking skills. These skills are important, but look for ways to emphasize softer skills such as leadership, communication, persuasion, teamwork, etc.

You should highlight the following in your resume:

Leadership: Brand managers are required to show leadership. After all, you’re the hub of the wheel, the central point connecting outward to each department. It’s a job that calls for strong people- and project-management skills. Having the ability to take the lead and rally others towards a common goal is key.

Analytical Skills: Brand management requires analyzing and planning for the brand’s business performance. CPG recruiters look for an ability to understand and interpret data and figures (be it on consumers or financials, quantitative or qualitative), draw conclusions, and make a sound recommendation. Being comfortable with ambiguous or incomplete data is also valued.

Collaboration and Teamwork: Brand management is a job that requires multitasking and collaboration with all types of people and departments. If you effectively worked on teams before and you were in previous leadership roles, it is likely that you will continue to grow these attributes. Include evidence whenever possible of managing teams or persuading others, particularly senior leadership.

Communication Skills: In brand management, you’ll be communicating with different departments throughout the day—from finance to R&D to sales. As the person who keeps all of the parts of a project in motion, you’ll need to be able to articulate goals, needs, and ideas to a wide range of people.

Creativity: You may not have been in a “creative field,” but if you can prove that you are capable of “out-of-the-box” thinking, then your chances at a marketing career are improved. CPG companies today are faced with a rapidly changing consumer and competitive landscape, and “intrapreneurial” thinking is increasingly valued to unlock new opportunities and drive business success.

Also relevant would be any involvement you’ve had with creating or developing a new product or service for a particular audience, customer or client.

Results: Focus on results! If you led a cross-functional team through a budgetary process, quantify your results (e.g., “I saved the firm $25,000”). This shows that you can succeed when given a task, and that you are action oriented.

**Other Tips**

* Scatter marketing terminology throughout your resume regardless of your background; this will make you look like a marketer even if you were a banker. Consider buzz words such as:
* strategic direction
* market analysis and segmentation
* product strategy and positioning
* customer needs or insights
* competitor analysis
* value proposition or product offering
* innovative solution
* cross-functional teams
* portfolio management
* communications platform
* targeted messaging strategies
* sales or revenue forecasting
* P & L management (relevant for brand management roles)
* Illustrate your love for consumer behavior. Maybe you majored in psychology or cultural anthropology at your undergrad university. Maybe you were in manufacturing, but your favorite part of the job was understanding how to make things easier for consumers to use. Maybe you were a banker, but really enjoyed understanding why people invested the way they did. Whatever angle you take, make sure consumer understanding is clearly demonstrated in your resume.
* If you have exhibited relevant skill sets (e.g. analysis, leadership, teamwork) across multiple clients or projects, consider structuring your resume to highlight 2-3 core skills instead of job titles, and then providing specific examples of how you applied these skills. This approach works for consultants and investment bankers, as well as for those who have held multiple job titles but with similar job responsibilities.

*Company Name Location*Job Title 1 Dates

Job Title 2 Dates

*Strategic Thinking and Analytical Skills*

* Example 1
* Example 2

*Research and Customer Insights*

* Example 1
* Example 2

*Leadership and Teamwork*

* Example 1
* Example 2
* Integrity is important across all industries, but it’s key in brand management. Be honest about your skills, work experience, and past job responsibilities. Play to your strengths, but don’t exaggerate anything on your resume.

**Finance Roles**

While much of the above applies equally to corporate finance, there is less of a need for industry-specific emphasis. However, the best finance managers, particularly in the CPG industry, get excited about products and product strategies. They are able to demonstrate broader business acumen and don’t see themselves as “number-crunchers.”

Key buzz words to consider include:

* business process improvement
* risk management
* value added analysis
* financial projections
* financial statements
* expense analysis
* portfolio management
* cross functional team leadership
* financial and strategic planning
* P & L management (also good for brand management roles)
* operating and working capital
* budget management
* mergers and acquisitions
* cash flow management
* business valuations

**Strategy Roles**

Corporate strategy roles require a blend of finance and marketing acumen, so most of the above still applies. Firms often seek candidates with prior consulting or investment banking backgrounds for internal strategy roles; however candidates of other backgrounds can certainly catch a recruiter’s eye with a well-crafted resume that effectively highlights the desired skill sets.

Key buzz words to consider include:

* growth strategy
* mergers and acquisitions
* corporate development
* financial and strategic planning
* portfolio management
* financial modeling
* financial and strategic planning
* business valuations
* cross-functional partnership
* core capabilities/competencies
* risks and opportunities assesssment

We recommend reviewing the Consulting resume guide on the MBACM website for additional tips.