

FREE EXCERPT · BREAK INTO TECH FINANCE

Resume Strategy That Gets Interviews

Chapter 4 of 11 — the complete system for writing bullets that make hiring managers at Google, Netflix, and Stripe stop scanning and start reading.

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A weak resume does not always look weak. Sometimes it looks polished, competent, and full of respectable words. It still fails because it does not create a strong opinion fast enough.

That is the real job of your resume — not to tell your whole life story, but to make a recruiter or hiring manager think one simple thought within 15 seconds: *This person looks relevant.*

If you fail that test, the rest does not matter.

I have reviewed hundreds of finance resumes. The most common mistake is not bad formatting — it is strong candidates hiding behind weak bullets. They describe what they did without ever explaining why it mattered. The work was real and often impressive. The resume did not show it.

How Recruiters Actually Read Finance Resumes

Most recruiters do not study your resume carefully on the first pass. They scan. They are looking for a fast answer to four questions:

- Does this person's background roughly match the role?
- Is the level believable?
- Do the bullets show impact, not just activity?
- Does this candidate come from an environment that feels credible?

Your resume needs to signal relevance immediately — not eventually. A recruiter scanning a resume for a finance role at Google, Netflix, or Robinhood is not trying to admire your formatting. They are trying to decide whether you are close enough to move forward.

What Your Resume Needs to Signal in 15 Seconds

1. You are in the right lane

Your experience should clearly map to one or two relevant paths: FP&A, strategic finance, business finance, GTM finance, or corporate finance. If your resume reads like a random pile of finance-adjacent work, you create doubt.

2. You have operated at real scale

This does not always mean billion-dollar companies. It means the reader can quickly understand budget size, revenue size, scope of

ownership, complexity of decision-making, and seniority of stakeholders. Scale makes your work legible.

3. You influence decisions

A strong resume does not just show that you built reports or models. It shows that your work affected hiring, spend, pricing, planning, investment, or prioritization.

4. You can partner with the business

Tech finance teams do not want spreadsheet hermits. They want people who can work with operators. Your bullets should show partnership with business leaders — not just finance tasks done in a finance bunker.

The Most Important Rule: Write Bullets Around Business Impact

Most candidates write bullets that describe motion. Strong candidates write bullets that describe value.

- × managed monthly forecast process for operating expenses
- ✓ led monthly opex forecast for a \$180M cost base, identifying spend risks early enough for leadership to reallocate budget and protect full-year margin targets
- × built dashboards for senior leadership

- ✓ built KPI dashboards used in weekly leadership reviews to flag conversion, retention, and hiring trends, improving decision speed across finance and operating teams
- × supported annual planning process
- ✓ coordinated annual planning across five business functions, pressure-testing headcount and investment requests and helping leadership prioritize against growth and margin goals

One version describes work. The other describes why the work mattered.

The Bullet Formula That Always Works

Action + Scope + Business Context + Result — This is the structure behind every strong finance resume bullet. Action: what you did. Scope: how big was the environment. Business context: why the work mattered to the company. Result: what changed. If your bullets cannot answer all four, rewrite them.

Examples in practice:

- Built a quarterly revenue model for a \$400M SaaS business, highlighting pipeline conversion risk that helped sales leadership revise hiring plans

- Partnered with marketing and finance leaders to evaluate acquisition spend across channels, improving budget allocation against CAC and payback targets
- Produced scenario analyses for executive leadership on pricing and margin tradeoffs, informing the final annual operating plan

Before and After Rewrites

- × prepared monthly variance reports and shared findings with management
- ✓ delivered monthly variance analyses for a \$250M expense base, surfacing spending trends and helping functional leaders adjust hiring and vendor plans before quarter-end
- × worked on strategic projects for senior leadership
- ✓ developed scenario analyses for senior leadership on growth, margin, and investment tradeoffs, helping inform annual planning decisions across product and G&A functions
- × analyzed sales performance and built reports
- ✓ analyzed pipeline conversion, quota capacity, and sales productivity trends to support territory planning and improve hiring and coverage decisions

The Mistakes That Kill Interviews

1. **Responsibility-heavy bullets.** If every bullet starts with "responsible for," you are already losing.
2. **No numbers or no scale.** If the reader cannot tell how big the work was, they cannot price your experience.
3. **No business context.** A model is not impressive without knowing what decision it supported.
4. **Generic strategic language.** Words like "strategic," "cross-functional," and "partnered" mean very little without specifics.
5. **Overly internal language.** If your resume was written for your current company only, outside readers will not do the translation.
6. **One resume for every role.** Different finance roles need different emphasis.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A strong resume signals relevance within 15 seconds: right lane, believable level, bullets showing impact not activity, credible environment.
- Use the **Action + Scope + Business Context + Result** formula for every bullet.
- Translate your experience into language that lands at the target company — do not make the hiring manager do the work.

- Your top third matters most. The first 15 seconds of reading should immediately signal level, function, and ownership.

YOUR 3 ACTIONS

1. Rewrite your three weakest resume bullets using the Action + Scope + Business Context + Result formula. For each one, ask: would this bullet sound relevant to a hiring manager at a top-tech company?
2. Read your resume top to bottom and identify anything that sounds like internal jargon. Replace it with language a finance leader at your target company would immediately recognize.
3. Check your top third — the first 15 seconds of reading. If it is not immediately clear what level you are, what function you are targeting, and what you have owned, move your strongest signals there.