

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sarah Michelle

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Welcome to *Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner*, a show for new NPs and students that want to pass their board exam the first time and make that transition from RN to NP as seamless as possible. I'm your host Sarah Michelle. Now, let's dive into today's episode.

Hey friends, today we have a very exciting guest here with us that I'm sure many of you have heard of before, Amanda with the Résumé Rx. I actually just recently recorded a podcast episode with Amanda all about the exams and test anxiety. And so she is here today on my show to be our résumé expert and tell you guys all about the ins and outs of résumés. What you're doing right, what you could improve upon, tips to level up, etc.

And, you know, we've discussed interview tips and contract negotiations in episodes, but this episode will be all about getting yourself in the best position you can as you're applying for jobs. And actually, almost every question I'm going to be asking today came from either my new NP or my NP student communities on Facebook for what they felt like their biggest pain points were when it came to résumés.

Sarah: So Amanda, I'm so excited to have you. Can you just start off by giving us a little introduction to you and kind of your nursing journey leading up to this point?

Amanda: Sure. Thank you so much for having me. So my name is Amanda Guarniere, and I am a nurse practitioner. I have been since 2011. I'm a dual certified adult and women's health NP. And I got my start in a few different positions and eventually settled into my kind of clinical sweet spot, which is emergency and hospital medicine. So that's what I have done clinically for about the past six years or so.

And I'm also the founder of The Résumé Rx which is an online educational business that really helps nurses and nurse practitioners find, land, and love their dream jobs. And the way that we do that is by teaching résumé strategy, job search strategy, interview prep, basically all that career related

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

professional development stuff that you probably didn't learn in nursing or NP school.

So that is where I come in and really try to make the process a little bit less daunting and help you figure out how to navigate it. So that's the ins and outs of my business really.

Sarah: Yeah, that is definitely never a topic taught in school, or it's very like briefly mentioned like, "Oh, like you know, when you graduate this is what you'll get to." But there's not a lot of guidance given there. So how did you kind of get into the résumé business?

Amanda: Yeah, so I never really realized that other people struggled with résumés and cover letters. It was kind of like something that came naturally to me. And even though it wasn't really gone over in school, it never really hit me that other people might struggle with it.

Until one day a few years ago when I was in one of the Facebook groups for NPs just kind of scrolling and reading and someone was asking for advice about their résumé, specifically about their layout and how to write a certain aspect of it. And so I commented and offered some help and offered a screenshot of my résumé. And I got some really positive feedback, you know, very gracious people who thanked me for sharing that.

And I didn't really think much of it until I just kept seeing those same posts over and over for the next week or so. You know, once you start thinking about something you can, like, see it over and over. So that's what happened to me. And I realized that this was really something that people struggled with. And it was something that I was good at, that I could help with.

So that's what really sparked this idea of, maybe I could turn this into a business, maybe other people would pay me to help them with this problem. So that's really how it started. I started off writing résumés for other people, just doing custom résumés.

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

And as I was doing that, and creating some nice fun designs I thought, well, maybe there are people who would want to just do this themselves. And I'll turn my designs into templates. That way, people who don't want to pay to have their résumé done for them can just download the template that has prompts and they can kind of do it themselves.

So that's how the résumé templates were born. And those two things are really the two offers that kicked off my business, hence The Résumé Rx being my business name. And you know, my offerings and the things I teach about have since evolved beyond just the résumé but those are really the things that got it all started.

Sarah: It's funny that you say it just kind of happened on Facebook, like you saw a post and you're like, "Oh, well I could help." Because same thing kind of happened with my business as well. I was seeing these posts and I was like, "You know, here's this chart I made about this topic, I used it on my board exam."

And then it was like 17 people on Facebook, because you know how those nurse practitioner student groups are, like, "It was so helpful, like thank you so much." And I was like, maybe I should just like put together a little PowerPoint. Like maybe I should put together a review, kind of see what happens. And then to watch this evolution from, "Here's a chart." To, "Okay, well, here's all these courses." It's a really fun evolution.

Amanda: Yeah, definitely. And I think it's just that we may not realize that we have these talents that we can help other people with, you know, even beyond just our talents as healthcare providers. So that's funny that you had a similar experience.

Sarah: Yeah, Facebook is a Kickstarter for a lot of businesses. Especially in Covid times too. Covid is like a whole new layer to online business.

Amanda: Yes, for sure.

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

Sarah: Now, I do think the ultimate question that I see on my pages over and over and over is résumé versus a CV. So can you just kind of walk us through the difference and when you need which of those items?

Amanda: Totally. So this is a really common question. And part of the reason why it's such a common question is because a lot of people use these terms interchangeably. So you may see a post that's asking for a CV, when in fact, what they really want is a résumé or vice versa. So a lot of people get confused not only about what they each are, but what people are actually asking for when they request these documents from you.

So the main difference is that a traditional résumé is a one-to-two-page document that is really geared towards clinical positions. It's usually something that you would personalize depending on the position you're applying to. And it's really acceptable to just use the past 10 years or so, of work experience. So this is really more of a clinical work focused document.

Traditionally, a CV is multiple pages. It includes things like your research, publications, faculty, your academic appointments, presentations, symposia, those types of things. You can kind of think of it like a personal or a professional bibliography. These CVs are traditionally used when you're applying for faculty roles, research positions, you know, leadership or board positions, that type of thing.

And the truth is, the majority of nurse practitioners applying for clinical jobs actually only need to present what I defined as a résumé, that first one-to-two-page document. But since it's so common for physicians to just have one document, which is a CV, for example, that's why a lot of recruiters, a lot of office managers, or a lot of job postings will request a CV because from a terminology standpoint that's usually what they're asking for of physicians.

So it's a little bit confusing. A lot of nurse practitioners can maintain both types of documents, especially if you have that professional bibliography.

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

But for the most part, for the most NPs who are applying for clinical jobs, I say to focus on presenting a résumé, even if they're asking for a CV.

Sarah: So basically, you can have both lined up and kind of ready to go in case you need it. But most of the time, you're just going to need the résumé?

Amanda: Yes.

Sarah: And how soon do you feel like students should have that résumé ready to go? Do you think they should be working on it in school once they graduate? Like what's the most appropriate timeline there?

Amanda: So I really recommend that you have something put together within about six months of graduation. Not because you're going to actively be job searching at that point. But because you may start to find some potential opportunities at that point.

For example, you may be in a clinical rotation that you really enjoy. And you want to maybe plant some seeds to let them know that you would love to work there after graduation. Or you may be at a networking event or some sort of professional gathering or connecting some way with places that you could potentially be working.

So having that résumé, at least the framework or the starter version of your résumé put together is really smart to have within about six months of graduation. And as you get closer to graduation, you will be modifying that, right? You'll update your clinical rotations on your résumé. And as you start specifically applying to positions, then you will kind of make a duplicate copy, personalize it a little bit depending on the role you're applying to.

Sarah: Yeah, I most definitely love the idea of seed planting because that was actually how I lined up a job. I was at a clinical rotation I loved and so whenever I got closer to the end of that rotation I kind of told them all along the way like, "Hey, I feel like this is a place I could work." On my last day I'm like, "Well, here's my résumé, you know, I graduate on X, Y, Z I would

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

love to kind of follow up with you.” And I definitely think it helped me kind of secure that first job.

Amanda: Oh, for sure. I mean, clinical rotations are essentially, really, really long working interviews. Or you can approach them as such, especially if it's a place where you really enjoy being a student.

Sarah: And always too, think of clinical rotations like networking opportunities, just all the time. Even if you're not going to work at that particular facility, maybe even a nurse practitioner you're doing clinicals with knows someone on the other facility and doing things along those lines, too. So it's almost like a continual interview.

Amanda: For sure.

Sarah: Now, what are some things in your opinion that can really make a résumé stand out? Like are there things that students should absolutely be included in their résumés?

Amanda: Yes, so there are definitely things that students can do to stand out. And the first thing is to make sure that you're including information about your clinical rotations.

You don't necessarily have to include bullet points or a ton of detail, but you at least want to say the rotations that you did, the hours that you did them, and kind of the topic or the clinical setting. Because if you don't have NP experience you want to leverage and highlight your NP clinical experience, which is still considered hands-on training.

The other thing is personalizing your résumé to the position that you're applying to. This shows that you didn't just make one résumé and apply to hundreds of places, but that you are really strongly considering this one position. And the places where you want to personalize it would be in that summary section and or the cover letter. You want to kind of call out the name of the role and the location and try to mention a little bit about why you see yourself as a good fit.

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

The other thing that is really going to help you stand out, especially as a new graduate, is finding a way to discuss your soft skills, right? Like you won't necessarily have a lot of NP experience as a new graduate. But you likely have a lot of soft skills that can transfer to the role that you're going to be in.

So these are typically more emotional intelligence type skills. For example, you know, empathy, teamwork, collaboration, those types of things. Things that you are strong at. You should be identifying and showcasing those things so that they can get kind of the full story of who you are as a person as well as a prospective NP.

Sarah: I really love that you mentioned personalizing your résumé, because I think that's something super easy for students to overlook. But it can really mean a lot to that employer who's looking through tons and tons of résumés and kind of affirm to them, "Okay, whoever this is, they really want this job."

Amanda: Well, totally. And I mean we've all been the recipient of a mass text or a mass Facebook message. And you just know that this wasn't written directly to you, they just copied it and pasted it to you and 500 other people. Like we know how that feels and that's how it feels to hiring managers and employers to read kind of a generic, not personalized version of a résumé and or a cover letter.

Sarah: And the better you can make these employers feel, the more likely you are to be interviewed. And I know everybody is desperately out there looking for an interview right now, at least in my new NP group.

Amanda: Yeah, it's easier to showcase yourself in an interview than it is on paper, right? So really the point of the résumé, and maybe I should lead with this at the beginning, but the point of the résumé isn't to get you the job, it's to get you the interview. And then it's the point of the interview to get you the job.

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

Sarah: Yeah, basically the résumé is just that ticket in the door. So then you can come in and really showcase yourself and really kind of show your worth to whoever that employer is.

Amanda: Totally.

Sarah: Now what are some of the top résumé mistakes that you see students out there making?

Amanda: So definitely the first thing we already mentioned, not personalizing your document. Another thing that may or may not be obvious is having errors or not proofreading your résumé and cover letter. You know, if you are not great with spelling or grammar, that is okay. But what's not okay is not being able to pay attention to detail.

And while I don't think you need to be a phenomenal speller to be a phenomenal NP, you do need to have attention to detail. And it may seem like a small detail to have, but it's kind of a really big difference in the eyes of a hiring manager. So if you can proofread it yourself, great. If not ask a friend to take a look over it.

You know the other thing that's a mistake that I see is when people in their bullet points underneath their jobs regurgitate the nursing process or other things that I should assume about the role. If I'm reading your résumé, I want to kind of read and know about you as a person. Not necessarily read that you assessed patients and administered medications and reevaluated interventions.

Those are things that I am going to assume you know how to do, because you're a registered nurse. So scratch those things. And instead include more context about your role, highlight any leadership or committee things that you were a part of, as well as any achievements or accomplishments.

And the last mistake that I'll mention is assuming that the résumé is the only part of the job search process to focus on. So I know that's not really a mistake on the résumé itself, but I see a lot of people get really caught up

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

in the perfectionism of the résumé that they forget to do all the other activities that actually have more of an impact on you landing that job, like networking and kind of exploring job opportunities, and really having a solid job search strategy.

So definitely don't assume that the résumé is the only thing that you need to spend your time on.

Sarah: Yeah, the résumé is just a piece of the job search process. And really, I'm super glad you brought up that point because I see the same things in my groups. Like people are so hyper focused on the résumé they kind of think of it like their golden ticket, but I'm like, there's so many other things that you could be doing along this process too.

Amanda: For sure.

Sarah: And I like that you mentioned proofreading because I was actually part of a hiring team once and their rule was they didn't hire anyone with a typo. Like that was their thing. They said if you had a typo like you didn't have the attention to detail that the job required. And so you never even like got processed for an interview.

Amanda: Yeah, I'm not surprised to hear that.

Sarah: Yeah, so if any of the students out there are like, "Well, you know, I'm good at grammar." I'm like, "I'm decent at grammar, it's definitely worth even just having somebody else, even if it's not professionally, look over it and kind of give you some feedback that way too."

Now, what do you feel like are some of the perks to getting your résumé professionally done versus kind of, you know, DIY doing it on your own?

Amanda: This is a great question, and it totally depends on the person. So I'm of a firm belief that with the right tools almost anyone can be successful at doing their résumé on their own. And it can be a very empowering process, actually, to be able to articulate yourself on paper.

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

And personally, like I mentioned, at the top of the episode, I used to write résumés for others. But I also have templates as well as a tutorial course that kind of walks through my whole process. And those people who have gone through those services have been so successful and basically write their résumés better than I could for them, because they know themselves better.

That's why I no longer offer custom résumé services anymore. If you're the type of person who you really couldn't be bothered, or you don't have the time, or you're just happy to pay someone else to do it, then that's totally fine. But if you want to try to write your résumé on your own, then chances are I really feel that with the right tools you can certainly be successful.

Sarah: Or if you're like me and you're just like so frustrated with the job hunt process. I was like, "I need extra hands, I need extra help." And I was so glad, actually, that I got my résumé professionally done. Because I had been applying for, ironically, it wasn't even a nurse practitioner job. It was a teaching job at the time. And I applied for the same job three times, never could make it through to an interview.

I got my résumé done and then all of a sudden, I had an interview two weeks after that. And it was like my dream job. I was ecstatic. So I was so grateful to have that opportunity to have someone else, you know, kind of look at it, give me their thoughts, give me their feedback, etc.

Amanda: Yeah, for sure. I think whenever you can lean on an expert to help you through the process it is certainly helpful. Especially if, like you said, you've been going through the process with your own and you haven't been successful. That's definitely a clue that it might be time to call in a professional.

Sarah: Yeah. And on top of, you know, getting my résumé done I also got the guidance of, you know, maybe you should follow up in this way. And so those external pieces of the résumé process also kind of helped me along getting that job offer too.

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

Amanda: Yes, 100%. Following up is so important and not many people remember to do it.

Sarah: And then my last question here because I always like to throw in extra questions at the end. And I've seen you chat a little bit on Instagram about nurse practitioner students out there saying, you know, this job market is so over saturated like, I'll never find it job. How would you respond to that?

Amanda: Well, let me step on my soapbox first.

Sarah: Love it.

Amanda: So okay, I personally think that there are definitely areas of the country where the job market for NPs, it's competitive, right? Certain metro areas for example. But the claim that our entire profession is over saturated just isn't true. It's not supported by the data, specifically the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

What we see right now happening is something called an experience gap, which is really different than over saturation. What an experience gap is, it's that there are more junior NPs, so less experienced NPs, where there are more complex positions that prefer more experienced NPs. So that is part of the reason why this message of over saturation is perpetuating. That's kind of the first issue.

The second issue, and this is something you have much more control over, is that I see day in and day out nurse practitioners relying on online job boards for their job search. Like their whole job search strategy is to scroll on indeed.com, find jobs that look good, or that they appear qualified for, and click the apply button. Okay?

And that's what so many people are doing and as a result the competition for those particular roles is fierce. Like those roles get hundreds of applicants. And that's not the only way to look for and find a job. But if that's all you're doing, if all you're doing is applying for jobs that have hundreds

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

and hundreds of applicants, then yeah, of course, you're going to start to believe that the market is over saturated.

So I really want to challenge you, if you're in this belief of the market being over saturated, to challenge your belief and do things differently. And instead focus on other ways of finding a job, okay?

Focus on trying to find a job that isn't posted online. Because, you know, a shocking statistic is that 75% of jobs are actually filled by referral or word of mouth. And a large portion of those job vacancies never make it to an online job posting. So, you know, I see people complaining about this, but then they're not willing to do anything different.

And if you're not willing to try and put in some sort of effort and be a little bit uncomfortable with the process, then no, you're not going to find it easy to get a job. So I guess, you know, the question is how badly do you want to start your career in this profession? And are you willing to put in a little bit of effort and learn about the process and use it in your favor?

Sarah: I'm over here like jumping up and down. Obviously, people at home can't see me, but. Number one, I love that you spoke to our logical brains and noted that that idea isn't even supported by the data and the research.

And number two, anyone out there listening who's kind of in this thought process right now, please, please, please challenge that thought, don't get lost in it. There are plenty of ways out there to find a job. And just like you said too, you know, being uncomfortable in the job search process is a totally normal thing. It means you're doing it right.

Amanda: 100%. And, you know, I get it, it's really tough to go through the novice to expert model as a nurse, right? And to be a nurse with seniority and credibility, and maybe even already be an expert in your nursing field. And to then be knocked down to the bottom of that ladder and be a novice again, and to feel, you know, the weight of competing against others who have experience. Like that is as uncomfortable as it gets.

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

But that's what you decided to do when you decided to become a nurse practitioner. You know, you decided to evolve into a new profession, essentially. And we all have to start somewhere. And it's uncomfortable but it's worth it and you are capable of going through this process and finding a position. But a lot of times our minds will keep us in a different place.

So I really, you know, challenge you to try to examine your thoughts and try to figure out what is actually truth and what is a thought that you can maybe change which would affect and improve your results.

Sarah: And, you know, just because you think something, just because you have this negative self-talk, just like you said, it never means it's the actual truth. And so kind of boiling down, you know, where's that coming from in my brain and what can I do to change that? It sounds so simple. But it can make the biggest impact, not only on the job search process, but your entire life as a whole.

Amanda: Yes, totally. I think, you know, once I learned about the fact that, you know, there are circumstances which we cannot change, circumstances are objective facts. And then there are thoughts and beliefs, which is what we feel and think in response to those circumstances. We can change that part.

We can't change the circumstance, but we can change how we think and change what we believe. And that can have such a tremendous impact on your results. If you believe something differently, you'll have a different outcome 100%.

Sarah: I love it. I feel like I'm talking to my business coach, right now. She has to work me through this process every week about my thoughts versus, you know, beliefs and what's actually truth out there. So I am feeling it.

Amanda: Yeah, I mean, and this is emotional intelligence. This is what comes as we mature emotionally and with life experience, and it's uncomfortable, and no one's ever a master of this. But it's part of mindfulness too, is recognizing our thoughts and deciding when to change

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

them, or push them away, or focus on something different. It may sound soft, or it may sound kind of woo woo or whatever, but this is part of the key to, you know, not just success, but contentment and happiness. And, I mean, I could talk forever about that.

Sarah: I feel that too but, you know, it kind of boils down to your evolution as you transition out of nurse-to-nurse practitioner and kind of what that looks like moving forward too.

Amanda: Yeah, definitely. And like I said, it's really a testament to this new layer of maturity, of emotional maturity that comes with this role in this profession. That is uncomfortable but it's new and exciting, and it just adds more dimension to you.

Sarah: Well, Amanda, thank you so, so much for coming on my show. I so appreciate it. How can my students or the listeners get into contact with you?

Amanda: Yes, you can find me on the internet. I'm most active on Instagram. So I'd love if you come follow me at The Résumé Rx. And you can also find me online theresumerx.com. And I am also starting a new membership community exclusively for NPs and NP students and you can get more information on that at theNPsociety.com.

Sarah: All right, thank you so much. All that will be in the show notes for you guys, and I'll talk to you next week.

As an extra bonus, friends, if you're looking for support, no matter what phase of your nurse practitioner journey that you're currently in, I have communities available for both students and new nurse practitioners. In these communities we work to uplift one another and grow this profession together every single day. Links to join will be included for you in the show notes.

Ep #15: Find, Land, and Love Your Dream Job with Amanda from The Résumé Rx

Thanks for listening to Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner. If you want more information about the different types of support we offer to students and new NPs visit stressfreenp.com. See you next week.