



# Who Cares Where You Went to High School?

## *The art of making your bio much less boring*

By Dana Kader Robb

If you've ever been nominated for an award, accepted a board position, served as a speaker, sent a press release, or attempted any one of a number of publicity endeavors, you've probably been asked for a copy of your bio. Entirely too many people respond to that request with one of two responses. They either say "oh, I'll just fax you my resume" or they throw together a list of the whens and wheres – when they went to school and where they worked.

Since prospective clients may judge you by your bio, it needs to be a good read. Tell them something about what makes you tick. Instead of just filling in the dates and details, marketing expert B.L. Ochman suggests that you try writing your bio in paragraph format and answering some of these questions:

- Has your life had one big turning point?
- What do you do for fun?
- What goal would you go for if guaranteed not to fail?
- Do you usually push yourself to the limit or are you laid back?
- What do people find out about you only after knowing you for a long time?
- What do you do really well that might surprise people?
- What part of your life has been the happiest?

- What's most important in a friend?
- If you could be a kid again for just one day, how would you spend the time?
- What gives you the biggest charge from life – the most satisfaction?
- If you could make a wish for any person except you, who would get it, and what would you wish?

Ochman also says, "Let's say you are an accountant but used to be a Broadway dancer (mine was!). Perhaps you could include a photo of yourself dancing with a laptop computer in hand. Learning about your past makes you more than just another number cruncher."

She adds, "Answer these questions not intending to use every word, but to gather enough interesting, humanizing facts to make your reader relate. It's hard for people to talk about themselves. Questions like these make it easier. They'll make your writing less stiff and formal and therefore more readable."

Ochman also notes, "When you write the bio, don't refer to yourself by your first name. Follow journalistic style and use your last name. Instead of 'Susan says...' say 'Smith says...'"



*For more of B.L. Ochman's marketing tips, visit her Web site at [www.whatsnextonline.com](http://www.whatsnextonline.com).*