



RESUME SKILLS





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RESUME SKILLS

How to Tailor Your Resume

We've all been there before: sitting at a desk spending hours upon hours reviewing and tailoring your resume to showcase your skills and experience, be less than two pages in length, and ensure that each resume you send out highlights the necessary skills for the position you are applying for. Part of it makes you want to curl up in the fetal position and pull all of your hair out, and part of you wonders why it has to be so hard to get a job in the field that you love.

So what can you do to make the process less agonizing?

Well, first things first. When you write your resume out the first time, make sure that it's saved! There's nothing worse than having to start from scratch because you can't figure out what you did with your old resume.

Chances are most of you have an outdated or recent copy of your resume kicking around somewhere.

Go get it.



Revamping your Resume

Now that you've returned with your resume, you need to digitize it (if you haven't already). Is it on the computer? Is it easy to edit? Great. Why don't you grab a snack? You might be here a while.

Resume Formats

Your resume can take a few different formats, but they generally all contain a large header with your name and contact info in bold at the top of the page. For example:

Jane H. Jobseeker

1234 Main Street
Miami, FL, 12345
(305)555-5555

janejobseeker@gmail.com
www.janejobseeker.com

It doesn't really matter what side of the page you put this information on, just make sure that it's easy to read and stands out.

A small note here for email addresses: if you're on a job hunt and your email address is cutie_baby_shortie1234@hotmail.com, you might want to consider getting a new one. Services like Gmail and Outlook are generally free to use. Using your first and last name in an email address, like Jane H. Jobseeker has done above, is fairly standard. If you want to be taken seriously, you should have a serious email address.



The Headline

Here is a tidbit of information you may not already know: the resume “objective” is out. The headline is in! All hail the headline!

So, just what is a headline?

A headline is the part of the resume that sums up your best and most enhanced skills for any position and uses them to describe you as a job seeker. That might sound confusing, but it really isn't. It does, however, take a fair bit of work to make a headline come together.

Let's say you're applying to a marketing position with Big Bucks Bank. Read over the job description and see what key information you can take away from it. You want to use this key information to emphasize your skill sets within your headline.

For example, your headline could read: “A creative and organized marketer who crafts exceptional marketing campaigns through researching, planning, and implementing the best tactics in order to satisfy the company's marketing objectives.”

Notice the format goes a little something like this:

A descriptive phrase about you as a job seeker + the things you are good at + the outcome of whatever it is that you're good at.

This format demonstrates success. It's one thing to be “a creative and organized marketer who crafts exceptional marketing campaigns through researching, planning, and implementing the best tactics”; but what does that actually mean? What are you capable of doing for the company? In this case, it would be “satisfying the company's marketing objectives.”

Now, let's compare our headline to an objective with similar intent: “Objective: to obtain full-time employment as a lead marketer with Big Bucks Bank.” Which one sounds more actionable and exciting? Which one instills more confidence in the applicant's abilities?

The headline does!



Personal Profile

By now, you should have a nifty-looking header with all of your relevant contact information, and a stellar headline that emphasizes that yes, you CAN get this job done, and you can kick butt at it. But what's next?

I'll tell you what, if you haven't already figured it out by the sub-heading above: YOUR PERSONAL PROFILE!

Now, I'm not talking about the fact that you're a pro yo-yoer, or that you hold the world record for the largest bubble blown with chewing gum (although that's pretty impressive), or that you like long walks on the beach and candlelit dinners and enjoy a glass of red wine every now and then or that sometimes, you just can't stop this feelin'.

What you need here are skills that are tangible and relevant to the position you are applying for. You've got to explicitly state what you're good at, in no uncertain terms. Recall that this is the only thing the employer has thus far to set you apart from anyone else in the running for this position.

However, this isn't the time for you to just regurgitate buzzwords and jargon that may or may not relate to the position. Let's keep the example of Big Bucks Bank in mind.

Example 1:

- Worked at a bank before for a year
- Works well in a team
- Great independent worker
- Learns fast
- Punctual and respectful

That's a great list of skills, right? Well, yes, but not for a resume that you want to stand out. Take a look at the example below and see how I've mixed things up a bit:

Example 2:

- Experience working within a financial institution resulting in exceptional understanding of the market and daily functions of banks and their associated practices
- Valued by coworkers for being reliable during peak periods to provide support so that projected results are achieved in an efficient and effective way
- Energized by working with people and setting complex goals through utilizing marketing planning skills to the highest capacity

Do you see how in example 2 the skill sets are vastly expanded upon from example 1? There's a pattern to these bullet points, similar to the headline:

ACTION VERB + EXPERIENCE + RESULT

Your personal profile should include more general skills, like those that demonstrate how you are a punctual, reliable, and experienced professional (similar to example 2 above), though these skills should still directly relate to the position you are applying for.

Note: you should always put your strongest and most relevant skills at the top of the list.



Did you hear about the farmer? He was outstanding in his field.

By now, you're thinking this whole document is a lot of effort and you're not even sure of the difference it will make to your career. A resume is a resume, right?

WRONG!

In today's technological world and "global community," a single job posting can see hundreds (even thousands) of applications. Many businesses utilize automated processes for the initial application, so it might not be until the fourth or fifth step that your resume is actually even seen by a human!

If only you were a robot, right?

That's why you've got to stand out. You've got to cross-reference your resume with the job posting and make sure your resume nails as many of the key points in the description as possible. That's what the computer is going to look for in the cases where you're being screened in with technology.

Don't be afraid to brag, but also make sure that you don't exaggerate. Example:

- Coordinated a team of 8 individuals on a marketing team in order to create outstanding campaigns, resulting in an increase in attendance at the yearly fundraiser

Compared to this:

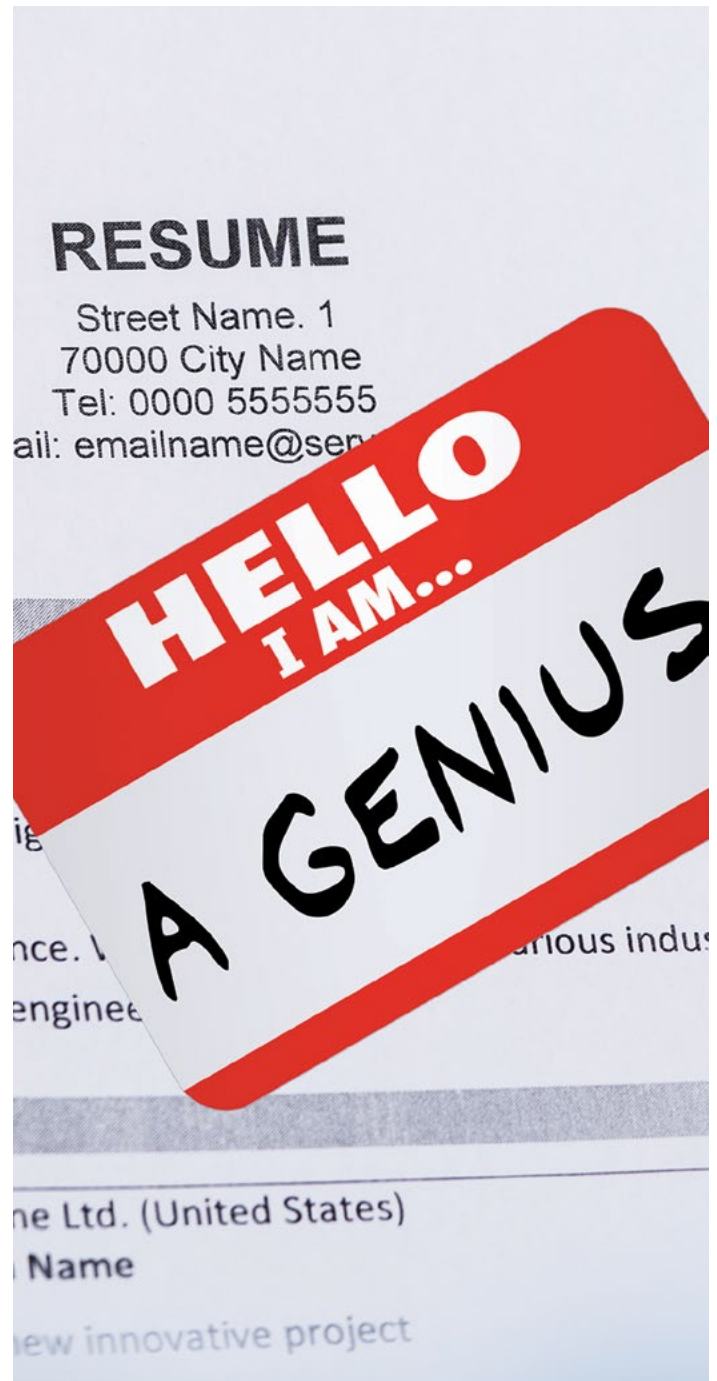
- Flawlessly and perfectly coordinated a team of people (I was the team leader because I'm the best) in order to create the most kick-ass and awe-inspiring events West Virginia has ever seen (that will be talked about for generations to come), resulting in thousands of people's minds being totally blow.

The second one sounds a little embellished, doesn't it? Just a bit?

However, there are some circumstances in which language like this can be an effective way to demonstrate that you mesh with the company culture and philosophy. If you're applying to a business that prides itself on being laid back, casual, and down-to-earth, this type of language is often better than other elevated, jargon-laden text.

The bottom line?

DO YOUR RESEARCH. Know everything you can about the company you are applying to before you apply.





Different Kinds of Resumes

Take a deep breath and pat yourself on the back: you're halfway through this document! Feel good? It should! Why don't you congratulate yourself by pouring a glass of that aforementioned wine... or, you know, some water or whatever. Great job!

There are a few different types of resume formats and layouts that you can use. There are:

- Skills-based resumes
- Chronological resumes, and;
- Reverse chronological resumes

Skills-based resumes are great if you don't have any prior job experience or are drastically switching fields of interest (from a gardener to a computer engineer, for example). While there are key skill sets that are transferable between these two careers, the bulk of the experience is not readily interchangeable. If you elect to use a skills-based resume, make sure that the skills you list always relate back to those within the description of the job you are applying for.

Chronological and reverse-chronological resumes are essentially the same in terms of content (they list prior jobs and relevant experience). However, chronological resumes start with your first job and progress to the most recent, where reverse chronological starts with your most recent and progresses to your least recent.

Prior Job Experience

Most of you will have some kind of prior job experience to list within your resume. Let's recap a few of the things we've already been over:

- Be honest and accurate
- Don't embellish points
- Remember to prove how skills translate from one position to another, either directly or indirectly

So, let's say in your past job you worked at a sandwich shop. Instead of saying this:

- Made some pretty great sandwiches

Let's see what happens if we say this, instead:

- Received excellent commendations from customers by crafting gourmet sandwiches with prime-cut deli meats and fresh vegetables in order to deliver top-notch food service

In the first example, it might be difficult to see how making sandwiches in a sandwich shop has anything to do with working in a bank. In the second example, we can see how it portrays the applicant as able to adhere to company guidelines and policies as well as being motivated to exceed normal expectations of customer service. So, while making sandwiches and working in a bank don't appear to have much in common, we can now see that some of the skills associated with both jobs are transferable.

Don't forget the format we've discussed for crafting your bullet points:

RESULT + ACTION VERB + EXPERIENCE





Example

Let's say you used to do some payroll processing for a previous position.

Your RESULT could be:

“Ensured that employees were compensated accurately, efficiently, and on-time”

Your ACTION VERB could be:

“by monitoring a wide range of data”

And your EXPERIENCE could be:

“for payroll output whilst keeping track of number of hours (regular, weekend, holiday) of employees”

You've got to come up with one of these for each point you want to make about prior job experience. Be careful you don't get too repetitive and remember to only list results that are actually accurate.

NOTE: A bullet should be no longer than two lines.

Design

By now you should have a pretty complete resume listing all your skills, experience, and relevant contact information (including professional-sounding email address!) But you're not done quite yet.

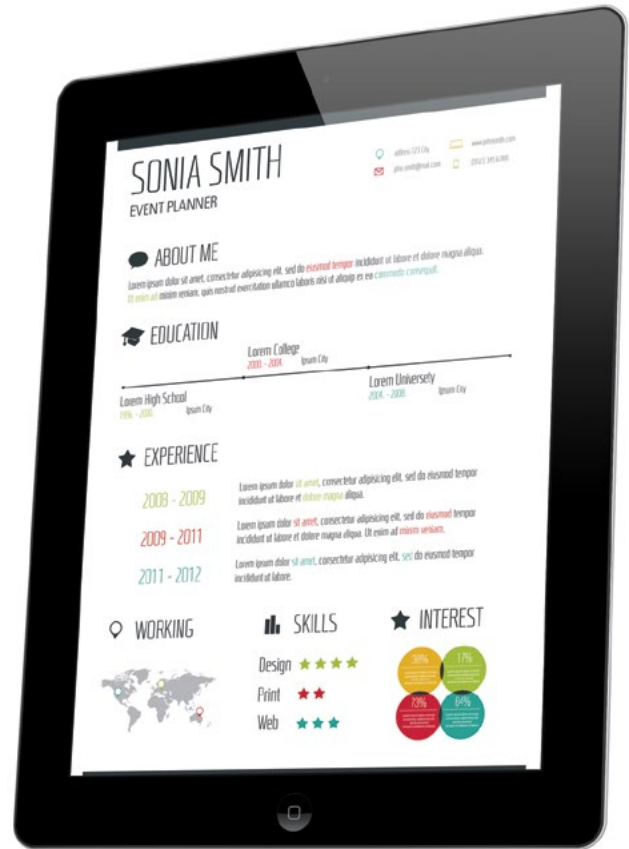
If your font is **Comic Sans** or **Kristen**, you need to change that right away.

Done? Good.

You want your font to be very easy to read and have it stand out on the page (black text on white background is really the best form for a resume). Don't try to get crazy.

A word on design: some people try to get very creative with their resumes. The great thing is that this can work sometimes. The unfortunate thing is that it can also be a horrible and abysmal failure. I would caution against crafting a particularly "out there" resume unless you've got some design experience, and even then I'd be wary.

For example, one man in the US fashioned his resume to look like Google search results when applying for a job with Google. This was a very unique approach and ultimately landed him an interview with the search behemoth. However, if you do choose to take a creative leap with your resume, make sure that you get several objective people to view and critique it once it is finished to check for readability, complications and general design problems. If you have to explain to them what you did or what your theme is, then your resume is far too complicated to send to potential employers. If you do decide to go ahead with your creative design, keep a simple one on file as well for



online applications to companies who input the data from your resume into a database.

No matter whether you try to "get creative" or not, you should always have your resume edited by at least 2 or 3 people who might catch something you would otherwise have missed. Potential employers hate seeing typos or grammatical errors and you're very likely to get tossed into the "no" pile if your resume contains any. Again, have a few people read over your resume to ensure that none of these errors are present.



Now put it all together

I hope the advice and best practices outlined in this paper have helped you tailor an awesome and well-crafted resume. If there's one thing to take away here, it's that simplicity and clarity should trump complexity and ambiguity in any resume.

With any luck, your new targeted resume will help you in getting that all-important interview. Now go out there and find your dream job!

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