



# CUSTOMIZING YOUR *resume*

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**ARE YOU INTERESTED** in applying for several positions but scared that you won't stand out? The first thing you must understand is that a generic resume won't cut it. Having a solid and customized resume is key to move on to the next stage of the hiring process. Most job seekers claim they do not have time to put together or update their resume for one job let alone every job they are applying for, but it is vital when thinking about making a job change. Taking extra time crafting a customized resume will pay off in the end.

It takes about 10 seconds for the employer or hiring manager to scan your resume and decide if you are qualified or not, so standing out is a must. Most often, we do not get a chance to speak with the hiring manager before we apply for the position, so it is important to take time analyzing the job description, picking out keywords and building your resume. Finding the right words and phrases to sum up your education, experience and skills is not always simple, but if you keep these things in mind, it doesn't have to be overwhelming!

## UNDERSTANDING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Before you even think about touching your resume, you must first read and understand the job description. Once you read through the job description, read it again, but this time take note of the job title, duties/responsibilities, and requirements. As you do this, pick out

keywords and phrases that stand out. I would recommend highlighting or underlining these keywords or phrases in the job description or even listing them out. Understanding the job description will also help you craft a perfect objective, if you choose to include one in your resume, by aligning your personal career objectives with key points from the job description.

## KEYWORDS AND PHRASES

Once you have picked out the keywords and phrases. Start organizing your education and experience and match them up with the key phrase and use similar language. Having similar language is important because the hiring manager will be able to pick those words and phrases out much easier than generic wording. Make sure you are careful with your word choice, this does not mean copy and pasting the job description in your resume. As you analyze the job description and pick out keywords, you may come across keywords or experience needed that you had left out of the previous version of your resume, so take some time to think through all your experience and its relevance to the current job you are working on.

## BE CONCISE

There is nothing worse than a cluttered resume and that is one of the first things the viewer will notice. Don't be afraid to combine your experiences and skills. For example, if you worked for a company but

held several different positions, instead of listing them individually, list them together or just pick the highest-level position. If you have skills that aren't relevant to the job in which you are applying, feel free to leave them out. This way, the hiring manager is not taking time reading over things that are not important and skipping the skills that are.

## DON'T EXAGGERATE

Even though you are picking out keywords and using similar language, it does not mean your resume should be exaggerated. Make sure your education, experience, and skills give an accurate depiction of your background and don't get too carried away. You might make it to the interview round because of an impressive resume but once you get to the interview, it may be hard to back up what was written on the resume.

## GET CREATIVE

Think outside of the box when writing down your skills and experience. Take extra time to think and evaluate your past experiences. That one undergraduate research project, volunteer opportunity or even part-time job in college might come in handy someday and become relevant to a job you are applying for.

Following these steps when generating a customized resume cannot guarantee you the job, but it will sure put you a step in the right direction and even ahead of other applicants. **AG**