

Tailoring Your Resume

Drawbacks of a General Resume

It's an unfortunate truth, but in the job application process, it's not necessarily about having a good resume but about having the right resume. With more and more job seekers applying for positions, employers have turned towards needing specific indicators that show applicants meet certain criteria.

Where once a general resume listing your work history and showing your career path was used for all jobs, now resumes need to be tailored towards each role or at least the field you're applying in in order to attract attention and impress employers. It can be the difference between, "That's great," and "I want to learn more about them" for a hiring manager.

Why You Should Tailor Your Resume

1. Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)

ATS is a type of software used by employers during the hiring process to filter out candidates. It scans resumes, searching for keywords relevant to the role the applicant applied for.

If ATS fails to find those keywords, it will assume the applicant is unqualified or a poor match for the position and remove them from the applicant pool. If your resume is not crafted with this in mind, your application could be rejected before a hiring manager even sees it.

Fortunately, the tool to help you best pass ATS is the job description of the role you're applying for. The essential keywords and skills are listed there and you can utilize this language to tailor your resume.

2. Speaking to Employer's Needs

Every job is different - for example, a sales role at one company may require a different combination of skills than that same position at a different company and/or different industry would.

When a hiring manager posts a job description, they are listing what they are most ideally looking for, in their own specific language. By pulling out those details and highlighting them in your resume, you will show that you are an impressive candidate, that you know what kind of person they are looking to hire, and that you are exactly that person.

How to Tailor Your Resume For Each Job Description

1. Create a “Master” Resume

Tailoring your resume doesn't mean writing a brand new resume for each job you apply for. It's about adjusting and choosing the right parts of your career to highlight and what should stay in the background in this application.

The easiest way to do this is to create a “master” resume. This is your fully polished resume that includes all of your career experience, skills, and achievements writing as a baseline to pull from. You may also think of this as a CV, cataloging all of your work and academic experience.

When you're ready to start applying for jobs, you can use the job description to determine what parts of this document to include, change, highlight, omit, or retool. This work will help you streamline the application process and make the tailoring steps painless.

2. Carefully Read the Job Description

If you want to successfully integrate the job description into your resume, you'll want to read it thoroughly and spend some time with it. Job descriptions are carefully designed

by hiring managers to specifically outline what the role will entail and what skills are needed.

As a job seeker, it's important to realize that employers are telling you what they are hoping to see in candidates. If you have those qualities, it's imperative that you show it. Look for the phrases and keywords that you can organically incorporate into your resume.

Here is an example from [Resume Genius](#) that shows which keywords and skills you would want to include in your resume from an example job description:

Key Qualifications

Experience **developing communication strategies** within a media, publishing, PR or advertising agency environment

Extensive experience supporting **corporate retail communication**

Possess excellent **writing skills** that can deliver clear messages that motivate behavior change while meeting business goals

Great **storytelling** for both tactical and operational content, vision, and purpose

Exceptional **communication and interpersonal skills** and ability to **develop strong working relationships**

Strong **project management capability** with strong **attention to detail**

3. Alter Your Professional Summary

Your professional summary is an optional section at the top of your resume that introduces who you are and highlights some of your key accomplishments. It's one of the most flexible parts of your resume and can allow you to highlight the parts of your story that are most relevant to the role you're applying for.

For example, if you're a marketing professional who is fluent in both English and Hmong, your bilingual talent would usually be mentioned in the skills section. If the role you're applying for specifically is looking for someone fluent in English and Hmong, you

can include that in your professional resume to ensure the hiring manager sees it right away.

4. Narrow Down Your Skills

It's natural to want to showcase all the skills you've gained over your career. Though it may feel counterintuitive, listing all of your skills can actually be a detractor.

Remember: The hiring manager has told you what they are looking for most. Adding every skill will downplay what the employer is looking for and most wants to see. Omit the leftover skills - they're absolutely valuable, just don't need to be shown here.

5. Emphasize Relevant Experience and Achievements

Much like skills, listing every job you've had can result in the relevant experiences getting lost. Tailor your work and professional experience to focus on the aspects most closely related to the job description. Each job you've had likely has a number of different facets - focus on the ones that are most closely related to the position you're applying for.

Additional Resources

[Jobscan: ATS Formatting Mistakes](#)

[Jobscan: 8 Things to know about ATS](#)

Source:

[Top Resume: How to customize your resume for each opportunity](#)

