

Guide to Landing the Job

THE RUNDOWN:

Your resume is quite possibly the most important document you will ever own. Depending on its quality, it will lead you to great opportunities and money, or to nothing but dead ends. Please take the time to ensure the **content** of your resume is as good as the design! And if you've been on the hunt for too long without any leads, you might want to consider hiring a certified professional resume writer.

If you haven't had to create a resume in a few years, you're lucky! However, you need to know that the landscape has changed. Long gone are the days when you would list every single responsibility you had in each job, put in a nice objective statement saying what kind of job you were looking for, and send it off to every job posting you came across. Nope - it's a bit more complicated than that.

And today, **networking** is absolutely essential to your job search - some studies show that only about 15% of employees are actually hired through job postings! Those with an inside referral are put on the top of the list. For that reason, we'll cover networking first.

USING LINKEDIN TO NETWORK

These days, most jobs, especially those higher up the chain, are filled internally or through referrals. This means you should spend at least half of your time networking and trying to get referred to jobs, in addition to applying to job postings.

How do you do this if you don't know anyone connected to the companies you want to work for? Well, there's a wonderful network of 400 million people and counting that you can use to your advantage - LinkedIn! Here's how:

- ✓ First, spruce up your LinkedIn profile! Insert some industry-specific keywords into your headline and summary statement ([this article](#) does a great job explaining how to do this) so you have the potential to be found by companies, and include some information from your resume. You can use a more personal tone here and tell a story, instead of just listing your accomplishments. This way, your profile can be a great supplement to your resume, instead of being an exact replica.
- ✓ Make sure your profile is public (in Settings) and you have something listed as a *current* job so you can be found via search.
- ✓ Look through your connections to see if any work at companies you'd be a good fit for. It's much easier to contact someone you already know to strike up a conversation about a potential job. [Here are some great templates](#) to use as a guide for making contact with both people you know and don't know.
- ✓ If you're not a regular user of LinkedIn, start by looking through the People You May Know section and start connecting.
- ✓ Join groups in your target profession/industry. Start adding to the conversation to make connections.
- ✓ Take the jobs you want to apply to, and find the companies on LinkedIn. Follow them.
- ✓ Find that company's employees that may be in charge of your target position, and contact them. You can send a Connect request and type in a personal note, or send them InMail. Don't be too pushy, and find a way to demonstrate what you're good at. [This is a great example](#) of how to contact a lead on LinkedIn (and so is [this](#)).
- ✓ Unless you have LinkedIn Premium, you may not be able to contact everyone you would like to. There is a free Premium trial on the LinkedIn site, or just bite the bullet and sign up for a month or two (be sure to remember to cancel when you no longer need it)! A new job just might be worth the monthly fee.

GIVE YOUR RESUME SOME PUNCH

According to the National Resume Writers' Association, as high as 98% of candidates prepare their resumes incorrectly, because they do not:

- Target their resumes to the positions they seek by matching their qualifications with the position requirements or necessary skills from the job postings. Most people simply include a broad list of their entire employment background including many duties that aren't even relevant to the job they're seeking.
- Make all achievements stand out by using Challenge - Action - Result statements (see Page 3), which showcase your value as an employer. Companies don't care about your previous duties so much as they want to know how you can be an asset to them, and save/make money, save time, or solve/prevent problems.
- Invite the reader to actually want to read the resume! Utilize a nice design that's properly spaced out, easy to read, and error-free.

So, if you want to beat the competition, your resume must:

- ✓ Be tailored to the specific job you're applying for.
- ✓ Demonstrate the value you would bring to the company.
- ✓ Be visually appealing and error-free.

Now let's get started! First, you need to:

*** Tailor your resume to the position you're applying for.**

The job posting will tell you exactly what the prospective employer is looking for in an ideal candidate, so you need to create a resume that matches the target job's requirements, skills, and responsibilities (without fibbing of course!). If not, your resume may never be pulled as a potential candidate for the job, by a human or any Applicant Tracking System (ATS). This means that you really have to focus on the employer's needs. Remember, they're looking to fill a specific position, with specific duties, skills, and requirements and probably have hundreds of applicants to choose from. Not including essential keywords might leave your resume unseen.

To help identify essential skills and requirements:

1. Print out or insert your target job posting into a Word document.
2. Identify and highlight any target job titles, skills, requirements, responsibilities, duties, keywords, etc. If you have a few similar jobs you're interested in, collect all of the listings and identify any skills, keywords, requirements, etc. that are *common* to all listings.
3. Identify any problems to solve. Think about the daily duties of the position and what problems you will need to identify/prevent/solve on a daily basis.
4. Identify how you can help the company in terms of money saved, money earned, or time saved on a daily basis.

Now, demonstrate that you have these skills by describing your achievements relating to them in your Experience. Also make sure you insert some of these essential keywords, skills or traits into your Skills section!

*** Demonstrate the value you would bring to the company.**

Businesses exist to make money, and therefore money is of high value. The very position you're applying to most likely exists to help an employer maintain and increase profitability.

You will need to show how you can add value to the company by:

- making money for the company
- saving money for the company
- increasing productivity or efficiency (providing the opportunity to make money in the time saved)
- identifying, preventing, and/or solving problems

What's the benefit of hiring you? What can you do for them? How can you further their goals?

Now, this concept isn't so cut and dry for some jobs, but every company, organization, or field values SOMETHING.

For example, what if you're a teacher? Think of what a school administration or a district values: an increase in test scores, an increase in grade point average, reduction in absenteeism, increasing the grade level of one or a few at-risk students, securing a grant, etc.

Want to work for a non-profit? They still value money, although it's not as cut and dry. Your value may lie in the expertise you can bring to the table, how you can further the organization's goals, how effectively you can assist in raising money through your marketing skills, creating and maintaining excellent relationships with sponsors, being efficient and increasing productivity, etc.

Once you determine the value you would bring to the company, describe the ways you've demonstrated this in previous jobs or experiences, and be sure to explain HOW you accomplished it.

Here are some questions to help you recall important accomplishments at work that may have added value:

- When did you go above and beyond your job description to do much more than earn your pay that day? What did you do?
- What work concept/technique/skill do you know SO WELL that you often teach to others?
- What have you done that you're most proud of?
- What have you created/reorganized/designed that's been incredibly helpful?
- What praise have you received from your bosses or colleagues?
- What are your key strengths and how do you use them at work?
- Your boss always counts on YOU to do that one thing you're great at. What is that one thing?

Now that you know what the company values and how you've created value in the past, you need to phrase your sentences/bullets in an effective way.

- * The best way to do this is with **C.A.R. (Challenge - Action - Result)** statements. Use this format for as many of your resume bullets as possible to show your value to prospective employers.

Challenge: What were you trying to accomplish? What was the problem you faced, or issue you tried to solve?

Action: What did you do to overcome this issue or accomplish/exceed the goal?

Result: The outcome or result of your actions.

Example:

Challenge: A below grade level or at-risk student

Action: Created an individualized learning plan

Result: Increase in grade from C- to B+

"Tutored a sixth grade student in pre-algebra utilizing an individualized learning plan to raise his grade from C- to B+ over the course of the school year."

Example:

Challenge: Bored, unmotivated or uninspired employees

Action: Created and organized outings

Result: Increase in morale which can lead to an increase in productivity

"Organized company outings, dinners and retreats, resulting in 30% increase in employee satisfaction and morale."

- * **Quantify your accomplishments with numbers.**

Your C.A.R. sentences are much more powerful when you quantify your accomplishments with numbers. It's more effective to *quantify* your achievements in order to *show* what you've done, instead of just stating it! Your reader is looking for proof that you are as great as you say you are, and quantifying your achievements is the best way to show it.

If you don't have numbers on hand, you can estimate them: as long as you have solid reasons to back up your calculations.

Even if you can't figure out any numbers to quantify your accomplishments, you can still find ways to quantify your experience.

- For example, you can quantify the number of customers you assist daily:
"Assisted an average of 40 customers per day in finding or selecting items and provided recommendations that generated \$8k in additional revenue."
- Or even the size of your company or the aspect of the job you're in charge of:
"Oversaw the efficient use of advertising budgets ranging from \$10,000 – \$25,000."
"Analyzed incoming data from various clients and customers, writing 1,500 word reports twice a week for the CEO."
- Or the number of people you've worked with, trained, or helped:
"Managed four employees in an executive office, maintaining an atmosphere of exactness, efficiency and attention to detail."

* Add some action verbs. Replace the tired "Responsible for" with a strong action verb that packs some extra punch!

**You RE-VAMPED
or IMPROVED
something**

Accelerated
Achieved
Advanced
Amplified
Boosted
Capitalized
Centralized
Clarified
Converted
Customized
Enhanced
Expanded
Expedited
Furthered
Gained
Generated
Improved
Influenced
Integrated
Maximized
Merged
Modified
Overhauled
Redesigned
Refined
Refocused
Rehabilitated
Remodeled
Reorganized
Replaced
Restructured
Revamped
Revitalized
Simplified
Standardized
Streamlined
Strengthened
Updated
Upgraded

**You BROUGHT in
resources**

Acquired
Forged
Navigated
Negotiated
Partnered
Secured

You CREATED

Administered
Built
Charted
Created
Designed
Developed
Devised
Engineered
Established
Formalized
Formed
Formulated
Founded
Fostered
Generated
Implemented
Incorporated
Initiated
Instituted
Introduced
Launched
Pioneered
Produced
Spearheaded

**You RESEARCHED or
EVALUATED**

Analyzed
Appraised
Assembled
Assessed
Audited
Calculated
Determined
Discovered
Examined
Explored
Forecasted
Gauged
Identified
Interpreted
Investigated
Mapped
Measured
Qualified
Quantified
Ranked
Scored
Sought
Studied
Surveyed
Tested
Tracked

**You LED or
MANAGED**

Administered
Aligned
Chaired
Conducted
Controlled
Coordinated
Commanded
Communicated
Cultivated
Directed
Guided
Educated
Enabled
Encouraged
Engaged
Enforced
Executed
Facilitated
Fostered
Guided
Headed
Hired
Imparted
Inspired
Instructed
Managed
Mentored
Mobilized
Monitored
Motivated
Operated
Orchestrated
Organized
Oversaw
Pioneered
Planned
Produced
Programmed
Recruited
Regulated
Scrutinized
Shaped
Spearheaded
Steered
Supervised
Systematized
Taught
Trained
Unified

**You WROTE or
COMMUNICATED**

Advised
Advocated
Authored
Briefed
Campaigned
Composed
Conveyed
Convinced
Corresponded
Counseled
Critiqued
Defined
Directed
Documented
Edited
Encouraged
Evaluated
Illustrated
Lobbied
Persuaded
Promoted
Publicized
Reviewed
Suggested
Supported

**You ACHIEVED
(An award, a goal)**

Accomplished
Attained
Awarded
Completed
Demonstrated
Earned
Exceeded
Outperformed
Reached
Showcased
Succeeded
Surpassed
Targeted

**You SUPPORTED
teams or customers**

Advised
Advocated
Arbitrated
Coached
Consulted
Counseled
Educated
Encouraged
Fielded
Guided
Informed
Instructed
Promoted
Resolved
Sponsored

**You OVERSAW or
REGULATED**

Authorized
Blocked
Delegated
Dispatched
Enforced
Ensured
Inspected
Itemized
Monitored
Screened
Scrutinized
Verified

**You SAVED time/
money**

Concentrated
Conserved
Consolidated
Decreased
Deducted
Diagnosed
Lessened
Preserved
Reconciled
Reduced
Yielded

Now that you know what you need to do to create a resume that stands out, use these checklists as guidance on what to include or avoid in each section of your resume and cover letter.

KEEP IN MIND:

- ✓ You need to include the most impressive and targeted information on page 1 (especially the top two-thirds) of your resume.
 - ✓ Don't include a photo unless the job posting/nature of the job requires it (modeling, acting, fashion, etc.). Your photo can be found on LinkedIn if anyone really wants to see it.
 - ✓ When your resume is complete, upload/send it as a PDF file! With PDF, the layout is fixed and will appear exactly as you send it, which can't always be said of Microsoft Word or Mac Pages documents.
 - ✓ Headings should be relatively common resume terms so they will be picked up by Applicant Tracking Systems (Experience, Skills, Education, Certifications, Profile or Summary, etc.).
- * Your resume needs to be visually appealing and error-free.
- ✓ Use an appropriate template design for your profession.
 - ✓ Make sure you have consistency in spacing and balanced white space.
 - ✓ Your resume needs to be error-free! Proofread it a few times. Have someone else proofread it. This is important!
 - ✓ Do not limit the length of your resume based on any "rules." **The length of your resume is less important than its relevance to the target job.** You need to sell yourself as best you can, while ensuring your resume has good page design and spacing. This might mean making your resume two well spaced out pages instead of one difficult to read page in size 6 text.

SECTION BY SECTION GUIDELINES

CONTACT INFORMATION

- ✓ Be sure to include phone number, email, and city/state. Your complete address is not necessary.
- ✓ Make sure your email address is professional; if not, make another just for this purpose.
- ✓ If you include LinkedIn, be sure to shorten your profile URL! You can do this where you edit your profile.
- ✓ Don't include any social media that's not professional or related to the job. Just don't.
- ✓ If you're on the job hunt, just clean up *all* your social media accounts, or make them private. Companies will check up on you.

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

- ✓ This area is no longer called an Objective Statement, and you are not going to write an Objective Statement, because companies do not care what *your* objectives are. Do *not* write what you are looking for in a job, like this:
"Technician seeking a position with XYZ Company to further my skills and interest in Pharmacy."
- ✓ Instead, you need to sell yourself and convince the reader that you would be an asset to their company and they need you:
"Technician with six years of experience in a 500+ prescription per day, long term care pharmacy. Proven ability to increase efficiency and reduce errors with creative new ideas and processes. Extensive knowledge of specialty pharmacy practices, rules and regulations."

This is great, because: You gave a general overview of your experience and skills, mentioned how you can solve a big pharmacy problem (efficiency/speed and reducing errors), and displayed what you know (which can help the company with another pharmacy problem: regulations).
- ✓ The point is, the reader (prospective employer) comes first. This is where you want to show why you'll be an asset to the organization and what you can do for *them*. This paragraph needs to entice the reader to continue reading and find out more.
- ✓ You can also give a broad summary of your career, or mention any amazing accomplishments that reside on later resume pages to entice the reader to make it past page one.
- ✓ You want to present your best self here, so find your greatest accomplishments and assets and show yourself off!
- ✓ You can also call this section "Summary" or "Executive Summary."

EDUCATION

- ✓ For new graduates, put this section at the top. If you've been out of college for a while, your Experience and Skills sections will be more important, so put this section further down the page. The exception is for professions where academic qualifications dominate: medicine, law, etc.
- ✓ Your degrees should be listed from highest to lowest level.
- ✓ If you graduated college, don't include high school.

You need to include:

- The full name of your degree (or expected degree)
 - Your concentration
 - The college/university name
 - The town and state
 - The year you graduated (or expect to): omit this if it was over 10-15 years ago
 - Your GPA, but only if it's above 3.0
 - Any impressive awards or honors you received
- ✓ If you went to college but did not graduate, list any related coursework and omit the degree name and date.

CREDENTIALS/CERTIFICATIONS

- ✓ Be sure to include any credentials or certifications if it's essential to your field.
- ✓ You can also list certifications that you're working on, just add "expected" and the expected date.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- ✓ Your work experience should go in reverse chronological order: from most current to oldest.
- ✓ Demonstrate the value you would bring to the company (see Page 2).
- ✓ Target the position you're seeking: include keywords from the job posting, demonstrate a great fit between your qualifications and the employer's needs (see Page 2).
- ✓ Quantify information wherever possible (See Page 3).
- ✓ Prioritize your bullets: Most impressive and relevant achievements first.
- ✓ Break the writing into shorter sections and bullets - avoid long paragraphs/blocks of text.
- ✓ Be clear, concise - omit wordy phrases or irrelevant information. Get to the point.
- ✓ Current job(s) should be written in present tense, past jobs in past tense.
- ✓ Avoid a passive voice: be assertive and exude confidence.
- ✓ Use Action Verbs and avoid the phrase "Responsible for" (see list of verbs on Page 4).
- ✓ Avoid using personal pronouns in this section (I, Me, My). There are professions where a less formal tone is more generally acceptable (education, the arts, and the caring professions where personality is essential to your job). Some of the most effective resumes I've seen mixed formal tone with a bit of informal, conversational tone.
- ✓ No employment gaps or they are skillfully handled: don't leave any questions, just explain.
- ✓ If you don't have the number of years experience as required by the job posting, you can show that your experience in unrelated jobs gave you similar or transferrable skills which will enable you to succeed in the job you're seeking.
- ✓ If unrelated jobs don't include transferrable skills or achievements, omit them.
- ✓ Be sure to keep your punctuation consistent, especially in terms of periods at the end of your sentences or bullets. Either have periods, or don't - just keep it consistent (if you have all longer, complete sentences, a period is the best bet).
- ✓ Have consistent date formatting: months spelled out or not, or you can excluded the months completely.
- ✓ Spell out numbers from one through ten (five), and use figures for numbers above ten (12). When a number is the first word in a sentence, it should be spelled out.

SKILLS

- ✓ A great skills section includes:
 - transferrable skills that can be utilized for different positions
 - required skills from the job position you seek (check job posting for these)
 - industry-specific keywords
- ✓ Include a separate section for Technical Skills if you have many or if the job requires these types of skills.

OPTIONAL SECTIONS

- ✓ Keep these section titles fairly standard.
 - Professional Development: any extra, relevant classes you've taken to further your education.
 - Volunteer Experience
 - Interests: Try to only include activities, hobbies, or interests that are relative, professional in nature and can contribute to your chances of being hired.
 - Professional Affiliations
 - Achievements/Accomplishments: These can be awards, acknowledgements, or work achievements that you want to highlight or spend more time explaining. If you include this section, just make sure it's not redundant.
 - References: these usually do not need to be provided until further along in the hiring process. However, if you have great references ready or really need to fill up some resume space, feel free to include them. It can add a little security for the hiring manager knowing that you've got a list of people ready to vouch for you.
- ✓ Exclude personal (marital status, children, etc.), political, or religious information unless required.

COVER LETTER

- ✓ Keep within 1 page.
- ✓ Tailor the cover letter to the specific job you're applying for. Don't just use a blanket letter for every job.
- ✓ Add some personality! You can use a more personal tone than the resume.
- ✓ Be assertive and sell yourself.
- ✓ Explain why you would be an asset to the company and how you can help prospective employers reach their goals. Remember, this is about *them*, not *you*.
- ✓ Why do you want to work for this company? What do you admire about them? Feel free to butter them up a bit!
- ✓ First paragraph should entice the reader with benefit-driven sentences, include the position sought and any links you have to the organization/referrals.
- ✓ Middle paragraph should summarize your major achievements, substantiate how you can be an asset to their firm, and sell you as a candidate based on your experience, education, skills and qualifications.
- ✓ Last paragraph should state your call of action and thank the reader.

* These tips have been compiled from top industry leaders, resume writing associations, personal experience, and a ton of googling, research, and reading! I hope this guide has helped you gain a little confidence during this stressful time. If you have any questions whatsoever after reviewing this guide, do not hesitate to contact me at getlanded@gmail.com. I am here to help!

Now go get writing and land that job! Good luck! =)

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