

Career Development Center

THE ART OF TARGETING A RESUME

DEFINITION

A **targeted resume** highlights the key words, skills, abilities, education and work experience as they are applicable to a specific job.

When applying to jobs, it is important that you target each resume to the position that you are applying for so that the employer is able to quickly see that you match the exact qualifications they are seeking. The easiest way to target each of your resumes is to **reflect the language, skills, and qualifications** the employer is seeking in the job description/posting:

- Read through the posting thoroughly.
- Highlight the key words and phrases in the job description/posting and use those same key words and phrases in your resume (**these are typically listed as “required” and “desired qualifications” or “job requirements” or “essential job duties”**).
- Find out the keywords that are hot in your career field/position.
- Using the job posting’s language and key industry terms, build the required and desired qualifications you possess into your resume, when describing duties in the experience section.

ADVICE ON LANGUAGE

Resumes must be skills-based and clearly target your objectives and the needs of employers. The goal of your resume is to show the employer that you match the exact skills and qualifications that they are seeking. To highlight your skills and qualifications, use action words, transferrable skills, tasks, and outcomes.

Action words are verbs that make statements stand out and can give the employer a picture of you performing a task.

Transferrable skills are skills that are not limited to a specific academic discipline, area of knowledge, job, or task; these are useful in any work situation (e.g. customer service, task oriented, organized, etc.).

Tasks are specific duties one performs at job (e.g. answering phones, updating databases, etc.).

Outcomes are results, achievements or both (e.g. 90 percent employee retention, saved company \$10,000, etc.).

Combining action words with any of the other concepts above provides the employer with a vivid mental picture of you performing specific functions. When writing duties performed for each of your jobs, consider the following:

- Achievements are the strongest examples of proof that you can do the job.
- If there are no specific achievements, use numbers.
- If there are no numbers, describe the duties performed.

Examples:

Original Description - Good

- Organized an event which helped to raise money for local non-profits
- Cleaned and maintained rooms in a facility
- Provided excellent customer service by answering all incoming calls

Revised Description – Better

- Organized event which helped raise \$500,000 for non-profits focused on environmental issues in Western MA
- Meticulously cleaned and maintained rooms in a facility for 30 clients
- Provided excellent customer service while answering all incoming calls for office of 15 staff members

REMEMBER! Use of achievements and numbers strengthen statements.