

# RESUME WRITING MADE EASY

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MAKE A RESUME THAT WILL GET YOU HIRED



JAMES CLIFT, VISUALCV CEO

# Introduction

Whether you have recently graduated, been laid off, or are simply window shopping for new opportunities - if you are reading this book you are in a period of transition. An exciting time, but also often a challenging one.

Job hunting can be stressful - you will be rejected (dozens of times), your finances might be strained, and you will need to navigate an increasingly complicated world of employment to find the right job. But despite the stress, you should be excited - this next few months could change your life.

No matter what stage of your career you are at now, investing heavily in this job search can make a bigger impact than you possibly imagine.

Here's why.

Right now, you have two options. You can simply "find a job." Or, you can **invest in a career.**

This is one of those rare opportunities in life where you have a chance to change your career trajectory. A slight change in this trajectory could put you on the right path to getting everything you want from your career.

The right job will put you on the right trajectory.

It will lead to learning new skills and meeting new people. It will open up exciting new options.

If you capitalize on this opportunity to change your trajectory you may never have to search for a job again — you'll be turning down job offers every week.

You are not just finding your next job.

You are finding your next job after that. You might be starting your future company. Meeting your future business partners. Setting up a meeting with your future CEO.

This is a chance to put yourself in the right environment for success.

It is important to take the time to do it right.

An critical asset in your next job search is your resume. It is the first impression to potential employers, and a necessary tool to help you land the interview. My goal for this book is to help you create a resume that will help you land your next dream job - and change your career trajectory.

Yours,

James Clift  
VisualCV CEO

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## CHAPTER 1

# Why do you need a great resume?



Your resume is an critical job search tool.

It is your first impression with employers. It is the difference between an interview for your dream job or the recycle bin.

A great resume makes searching for a job easy, while an ineffective resume will leave you with nothing to show from hundreds of applications. Applying to a job without a great resume is a waste of time and can add months (or even years) to your job search, leaving you frustrated and demotivated.

**You have one chance to make a first impression with an employer, and your resume is usually it.**

This means that whether you apply to a job via applicant tracking system, email your resume directly to an employer, or get the perfect introduction to a hiring manager - your resume will be the document that is studied, shared, and referenced by employers.

Even if you have a great reputation, strong social media presence, and stunning online portfolio - most employers will look first at your resume, and use it throughout the hiring process. You are leaving much to chance if your resume isn't up to par.

The resume is your initial sales pitch - the rest is backup.

## **What is a resume?**

A resume is your professional highlight reel - presented in an easily understood and standardized format.

Your resume needs to outline how you can solve an employers' problems (which is why they're hiring). The goal of your resume is to sell yourself as the best candidate for the position. A good resume accurately summarizes your experiences and skills, and positively relates them to your desired job. Below are the three common resume formats.

<b>Chronological</b>	<b>Functional</b>	<b>Combination</b>
Focuses on work experience in reverse chronological order.	Focuses on skills and experience, and not work history. Used by people with gaps in employment or who are changing careers.	Enables you to highlight the skills and experiences that are relevant, while still showing work history in the format that employers prefer.

Which type of resume is best depends on the situation. For each job application, choose the format that best represents you in the context of the job you're applying for.

The most common format is the chronological resume, which happens to be most preferred by employers.

### **Resume length**

Your resume should be *as long as it needs to be* to show that you're the best fit for the position. Employers will spend limited time reviewing your resume - which is why you need to be concise.

Less is more. Write concise accomplishment statements. Eliminate fluff and jargon. Only say what is necessary. Sell yourself.

As a rule of thumb, if you have less than 10 years of work experience your resume should fit 1-2 pages. If you have more experience (or the job requires more unique skills) a 2-3 page resume could be a better portrayal of yourself.

One option is to create a 1-page resume for the specific application, and then create a more robust "online resume" with a tool like VisualCV.

### **What a resume is not:**

- An exhaustive list of every single position and duty you've held
- A personal document that includes information about your spouse, children, or hobbies
- About you - it's about how you can help the employer.
- A guarantee of employment - it is an important step in the job seeking process.



## CHAPTER 2

# The employer hiring process



Before you submit a resume, it is important to understand the typical employer hiring process. Outlined below is a typical recruitment funnel.

### **1. The job is posted and the company begins to receive applications.**

On average a job opening will receive upwards of 250 unique applications. Many companies will receive applications via an applicant tracking system. The next most common is via email to a general hiring inbox.

### **2. The initial resume screen**

Employers will then begin the process of whittling down those 250 resumes into a list of viable candidates who will move on to the next stage. Many companies will look both at the cover letter and resume during the resume screen. Some will look only at the resume.

According to a study by *The Ladders*, recruiters will spend on average 6 seconds during the initial resume screen to make the yes/no decision on whether your resume qualifies. This is why the first impression matters.

In larger companies, your resume will be screened by automated software that will eliminate your resume if it deems it not a good fit for the job. In smaller companies a hiring manager might also perform the initial resume screen.

The initial resume screen will typically cut the resumes down from 250 to 25.

### **3. The hiring manager chooses their top candidates**

Of those 25 top applications, a hiring manager will then follow a similar process to screen out her top candidates. Typically they will spend more time on these resumes, and also do additional background research (Googling the candidates) to find out who seems like the best fit.

Between 6-10 people will be chosen to move on to the next step.

### **4. The phone screen**

The top candidates will then be interviewed on the phone. A phone interview typically lasts between 15 and 20 minutes, and sometimes upwards of an hour. Some companies have multiple stages of phone interviews.

After the phone screen (and sometimes before), an employer might ask you to perform a test that simulates what you will be doing on the job. This is becoming increasingly common.

Tasks will vary depending on the job, but will be relevant to the opening.

For example, as a business analyst you may be asked to draw conclusions from a spreadsheet of data. As a programmer, you might be asked to build a small project that showcases your skills. As a writer, you might be asked to submit a writing sample.

Employers may also ask for these work samples to be included in your application.

## 5. In-person interviews

Typically 4-6 candidates will be invited to an in-person interview (again, this depends highly on the company and position).

*One person will be hired.*

It sounds daunting. Of 250 applications, only 1 person gets hired. How do you become that one person?

### **Bonus: What is an applicant tracking system?**

An applicant tracking system (ATS), is software that organizations use to manage their recruitment process. Vendors include Taleo, The Resumator, Smart Recruiters, and many more.

Most applicant tracking software uses a process called resume parsing, which extracts your resume data into a format readable by the software. Resume parsing pulls your contact information, work history, and skills from the resume.

When a recruiter is searching within their applicant tracking system for a candidate, those that best fit the keywords of the job description will show up first in the search results based on the parsed resume data. This is why optimizing your resume for each application is important.

## CHAPTER 3

# What employers look for



*No one is keeping you from your dream job. In fact, the people hiring for your dream job are sitting around wondering where the fuck they can find some good applicants.*

*- Ryan Holiday, Author of "The Obstacle is the Way"*

I love this quote, because it is absolutely true. Even though the odds are stacked against you from a numbers perspective, employers are struggling to find the right talent. In fact, it is the number one concern of 80% of Fortune 500 CEO's.

Employers want to hire great people. You just need to prove that you're a great person in your job application. Here's what you need to show.

### **Passion for the job**

This is an often overlooked step in the application process. Many people simply submit a generic cover letter and resume for a position, and then wonder why they didn't get an interview.

It takes time and effort to create a good job application. A customized resume and cover letter is a must to show employers you care.

### **The required skills and experience.**

This can be conveyed in your resume and cover letter, and is usually decided on during the initial resume screen.

In 2012, The Ladders conducted a study to discover how much time recruiters spent reviewing resumes. The study's "gaze tracking"

technology showed that recruiters spent almost 80% of their resume review time on the following data points:

- Name
- Current title/company and start/end dates
- Previous title/company and start/end dates
- Education

Beyond these six data points, recruiters did little more than scan for keywords to match the open position, which amounted to a very cursory “pattern matching” activity.

Because decisions were based mostly on the six pieces of data listed above, an individual resume’s detail and explanatory copy became filler and had little to no impact on the initial decision making.

In fact, the study’s eye tracking technology shows that recruiters spent about 6 seconds on their initial “fit/no fit” decision.

### **Cultural fit**

Besides passion, experience, and skills - companies want to hire people that suit their culture.

This is where your cover letter is most important. Extensively research the company and write a cover letter follow their tone and outlines why you are a great fit for the job. You can extend this by utilizing social media to show how your personality (if it suits the organization).

## **Red flags**

Red flags are errors or omissions in your resume that will get you immediately eliminated from the application pool. Because employers get so many applications, red flags typically will eliminate your resume from the application pool. Don't miss out on a dream job with sloppy editing of your resume.

The most obvious red flags are

- Spelling or grammatical errors
- Not following directions
- Not including contact information
- An unreadable resume format
- An unprofessional email address
- Unprofessional photos or statements on social media

The key takeaway here is that you need to put in the extra effort when applying for the job. And if you are going to put in the extra effort, you might as well apply for the right job.



## CHAPTER 4

# Finding the right job



In order to write a perfect resume, you need to have the perfect job to apply to. While this isn't a comprehensive career planning book, the following exercises will help you discover what jobs to apply for.

Follow this one rule, and your job search will become much easier.

*Only apply for jobs that excite you.*

It's simple — if you're not excited about a job opportunity, you will not be willing to go the extra mile to get the job. If you do not go the extra mile - it will be difficult to get the job.

The market for excellent jobs is too competitive to follow the traditional application process. This isn't a bad thing, because 99% of people do the exact same thing — which means you just need to be slightly better to stand out.

The following exercises will help you find jobs you will be excited to apply to. Grab a fresh sheet of paper or open up a new document, and complete the following exercises:

**List companies whose products you love.**

If you already love a company's' product, you'll be a step ahead of the competition for the job. You won't have to fake the passion in a job interview and will have lots to talk about. Write down any products you use and love. These could be apps, physical products, food, drink, and even furniture.

## **List companies you think you'd like to work for.**

Beyond products you love, targeting companies you respect is a good starting point for finding exciting job applications. These could be companies you admire, companies that are building cool products, or companies with a great reputation.

## **List people you admire**

Make a list of people you know who have awesome jobs that you'd like to have one day. Write down the companies they work for.

Once you have a list of companies, visit their websites directly and look for job opportunities that could be a good fit.

List all the available positions that you qualify for in a spreadsheet that looks like this:

Job title	Link to job ad	Company name	Contact name/title	Contact info

Visit [this link](#) for a usable version of the spreadsheet.

## **Expanding your company search**

If you do not find relevant opportunities using the previous method, you will need to expand your search. Find similar companies to target by distilling each currently listed company down into a few sentences. For

example if you listed Google as a company you'd like to work for, you could write down the following qualities.

- Innovative products
- High salaries
- Remote work
- Growing steadily, but past the huge initial growth stage
- Established

Similar companies in this category could be Facebook, Amazon, or LinkedIn. For each of your top companies, write down 5 similar ones.

Visit these company's career pages, and look for intriguing job postings.

### **Search unique sources for job opportunities**

If you still can't find great opportunities on similar company's websites — it is time to start looking at job boards. Keep in mind all the qualities you wrote down, and visit the following websites.

#### *Not-quite job boards*

*The Muse*: A visual company directory that gives an inside look into a company's work environment and offices.

*Glassdoor*: A website where employees and interviewees review employers.

*AngelList*: Jobs with startups and technology firms.

*Online Communities*: Sites like HackerNews, Nomadlist,

GrowthHackers, or any other industry specific websites that are relevant to your occupation.

### *Niche job boards*

Niche job boards in your industry are less competitive and feature more specialized positions than general job boards. For every industry, there is a job board. The most effective boards are those sponsored by industry associations — such as the National Society of Professional Engineers.

A Google search will help you find relevant job boards in your field of expertise.

### *General job boards*

SimplyHired and Indeed are the largest resources for open opportunities. They are valuable for searching all of a companies' jobs, or specific job titles or categories.

View our comprehensive list of job boards and employment resources at [VisualCV.com/www/resources](http://VisualCV.com/www/resources).

Add every job that looks promising to your spreadsheet. Now it is time to apply.

# Preparing the application



Once you have list of jobs on your spreadsheet, choose 5 jobs to apply for. Why just 5 jobs?

To be successful in a job search you need to be a heat-seeking missile, not a grenade. A focused approach provides the best chance for success.

To guarantee you'll get the interview, you need to strategically position yourself for the job, make targeted contact with the right people, and submit a high quality application.

This all takes effort — which means you really need to want the job. Researching the company before you apply

You know what job you want. Now stop thinking about yourself. The reason employers are posting a job is because they have problems that need solving. You need to solve those problems.

Ask this question for each job:

***Who does the company want to hire?***

The company has their ideal candidate in mind. You need to become that person. Pick a job that you really want, and complete the following 3 exercises to figure out exactly what a company is looking for.

## **Exercise 1: Study the job description**

The job description will tell you at minimum the skills and experience necessary for the job. Dig deeper, and look for what they are really looking for. Decide what problems the company is trying to solve.

The organization isn't really looking for "email marketing experience," but for someone who can increase customer engagement and revenue.

Currently I'm hiring for a resume writer and support role — the job description says I want people with SaaS customer service experience. But really I want someone who can make my customers really happy while saving me from hours of answering emails per day.

Write down the #1 problem the company wants to solve by posting this job.

## **Exercise 2: Extensively research the company**

Your biggest advantage is information, and almost everything you need to know about a company can be found online. Write down answers to the following questions:

- What does the company do?
- Why do they exist?
- Who are the key people at the company?
- What are those people like?
- What recent milestones has the company surpassed?
- What is their culture like?



- What kind of people do they typically hire?
- How am I connected to the company?
- Do I know anyone who works there?

Now that you have the information — let's turn it into a story.

## **Exercise 3: Describe their ideal hire**

Write a paragraph that describes the exact person this company wants to hire. Include the following:

- The problems the company wants to solve
- The skills and experience they're looking for
- The personality of the ideal candidate
- This is the person you need to become in order to get the job.

### **Example ideal hire description:**

*A company that builds time tracking software for government organizations is struggling with acquiring new customers — they're growing slowly via word of mouth, but want to start using content marketing and search engine optimization to increase their client base. They have been around for 10 years and have a strong sales team, but have no experience with these new user acquisition methods.*

*Their ideal candidate is someone like Britney. She's a creative marketer who graduated with a marketing degree from UCLA in 2011. She worked for three years in the digital agency world in LA, learning content marketing, SEO, and SEM.*

*Skills include Photoshop, indesign, and basic HTML. She's written blog posts that have been published in popular publications like Mashable and the Huffington Post, and saved Fortune 500 companies over 50% on their Facebook Ad spend by optimizing for more targeted user demographics.*

*Britney pays attention to the details and is a responsible (sometimes too serious) worker — but also has a lot of creative ideas and loves to contribute to overall business strategy.*

It might seem over-the-top, but trust me — this exercise is worth it. You are creating a “customer persona” which will be your blueprint for the remainder of the job application.

## **Exercise 3: Becoming their ideal hire**

You know who this company's ideal hire is, now you need to **position yourself as that person**. Positioning is how you create a distinct impression in a customer's mind. This impression happens instantly.

Your first impression is the difference between a new career or your resume being shredded. You never get a second chance to make a first impression, so do not communicate with your target employer until you are ready. Here are the two things you need to make the best first impression. Create both of them for your selected job posting.

## 1. A completely original cover letter

This is where all your research comes in handy. You must write an original cover letter that shows you're a skilled communicator who is passionate about the company.

Adapt your generic cover letter completely to fit the companies' needs and style. Here are 2 cover letters that got people hired at *Crew* from Mikael Cho's article. Notice how the tone and the vibe matches the company.

### *Sample Introductory email*

**From:** Luke Chesser <[luke.chesser@me.com](mailto:luke.chesser@me.com)>  
**Date:** 23 October, 2012 1:22:35 AM EDT  
**To:** [hi@oomf.com](mailto:hi@oomf.com)  
**Subject:** I could be your fifth!

Hey Oomf,

I'm Luke. I'm a twenty-two-year-old designer and engineer in my last semester of engineering at McGill. I saw [your blog post saying you were looking for a developer](#), and while I'm good on the front-end of sites, I **more consider myself a designer** (I love Javascript, CSS, and anything UX, UI, user-anything). I thought I'd wait until I saw a job posting about needing a designer, but then you went and said Montreal's sunny, and I figured if you could call Montreal sunny, then maybe you could also call me a developer. That said, I do think we could make some pretty cool stuff together.

I'm really into user-experience. You name it, I've read it, thought about it, and practiced it. I'm fluent in HTML, CSS, and Javascript - and the accompanying technologies like GIT, Node, a bit of Angular, some noSQL, jQuery, geolocation, responsive-design, etc etc. I'm also pretty handy with a camera, Final Cut Pro, Motion, Illustrator, even customer service. I'm also the fastest coffee-runner you'll ever see, and I know the locations and staff of every Subway within a 3-mile radius.

I currently work full-time at McGill Athletics as their graphic designer and photographer, while taking my last two courses at McGill, but I'm looking for something related to web development, ideally, a startup, ideally, a place like Oomf.

I don't want to take up much more of your time, tomorrow's a big day in [San Jose](#) and I'm sure you're busy, so if you're interested, [I made a quick introduction/about me page for you](#) to look at whenever you have time.

If not, thanks for your time and keep me in mind if a position ever needs filled or you need a hand. Pretty sure I live just down the street from you guys.

Thanks,

Luke  
[luke.chesser@me.com](mailto:luke.chesser@me.com)  
[imluke.me](http://imluke.me)

## *Short and sweet cover letter introduction*

Le 4 sept. 2014 à 14:31, Thomas Lefebvre <[thomas.lefebvre@watma.be](mailto:thomas.lefebvre@watma.be)> a écrit :

Hello Luke,

I'm Thomas. I tweeted you yesterday about a web dev job at Crew. You told me to send you an email, so here is my portfolio and my resume.

Long story short, I'm a 24 years old belgian web developer and I recently moved to Quebec.  
I have almost two years of web experience and solid knowledge in PHP, HTML5, CSS (SASS), JS, jQuery. I'm also completely familiar with Wordpress, Git, Illustrator and Photoshop.

I currently live in Quebec city and I totally understand that remote work might not be the best solution to suit you. However, I'm persistent and when I found out that Unsplash was made in Montreal I wanted to give it a try. I'm actively looking for a great and talented team to join.

Best regards,  
Thomas

—

Thomas Lefebvre @ThomLbvr  
web designer / developer  
///  
[\(418\) 571-3133](tel:(418)571-3133) | [tlbvr.com](http://tlbvr.com)

## **2. A custom resume**

Most people send the same generic resume to every employer. This is a huge miss. Every employer has different needs that you need to fill.

You need to think like a marketer — send the recruiter to a custom landing page targeted to meeting their needs. More details on customizing your resume can be found in the next section.

### **3. Bonus: Beef up your online brand**

Here are some additional things you can do to increase your marketplace value.

*LinkedIn.* Update your LinkedIn with relevant work experience, your summary, and your brand. Add at least 50 people to your network.

*Twitter.* Write a good description of yourself, follow influencers in the industry, and share relevant content using a tool like Buffer or Hootsuite.

*An online portfolio.* Once you get past the initial resume screen, it's important to have a place to display your relevant work experiences. Work samples are the best predictor of job success, and employers love to see past projects you've impacted.

According to our data, recruiters spend 3 minutes and 55 seconds on average viewing an online portfolio. Which means that if you can get them to your online resume — your chances increase exponentially.

Don't forget - along with your resume you can create an awesome portfolio on [VisualCV.com](http://VisualCV.com).

Now that you're ready to apply to the job - it's time to write the perfect resume.

## CHAPTER 6

# Writing your resume



Now that you have the job in mind, it's time to write your resume.

### **Creating a master resume**

Initially, start by writing a “master resume.” This will be a working document that you can then customize for each specific job application. Having a master resume means you won't have to start from scratch every time, and it makes the entire process much easier.

### **Gathering the content**

It's essential to have all your career information handy before starting to write your resume. Grab a notebook or open up a new document, and write down the following. Don't worry about being perfect here - just write down everything that comes to mind.

- All the expert knowledge you have.
- Your greatest accomplishments.
- All your skills.
- Your greatest strengths.
- What you love doing.
- What you do in your spare time.
- Your employment history, including the year and job title
- Everything you did at each job
- Details on any formal or informal education

You will use this content to begin crafting your master resume.

# Getting started

Once you have your career profile information, it's time to get started on your master resume. You could start from scratch with Microsoft Word, but the best way to get started is with a resume template found online.

VisualCV.com (Full disclosure, I am the CEO) has a variety of effective resume templates. You could also google search for "Microsoft Word Resume Templates," as well as buy a design off Themeforest.com to manipulate in Photoshop.

The goal of VisualCV is to make creating, managing, and tracking your resume much easier. Once you create your master resume, you can easily create a copy to customize for a job application. That being said, do your research on other options as well. Don't try to create your own resume template - it's not worth the time.

## Formatting

Your resume format depends on the context. This is where extensive company research pays off - be aware of the company culture before applying. Your resume for a bank will look different than your resume for a marketing agency.

For traditional applications, it is usually better to err on the side of caution - use a more toned down design for the first application. You can then create a web based version of your resume that shows more personality.



# Resume Sections



The following section will outline the key components of a resume, and provide examples of best practices for each.

*Standard resume fields:*

- Header
- Summary/introduction
- Work Experience
- Education
- Skills

Depending on the position, you might also consider including the following sections:

- Past Projects
- Publications
- Certifications

## **Contact info**

This section typically includes the following:

Your full name

Your email address and phone number

Your city and state

This section also can include a link to your LinkedIn profile, an online resume or portfolio, or any other URL's that are relevant to the position.

## **Hyperlinks**

While the resume is typically a shorter document, you can back it up by adding relevant links to it. The most standard links to add to a resume are a link to a personal website, online portfolio, and LinkedIn profile.

For certain jobs adding links to a blog, a Twitter handle, or industry specific websites such as Github for programmers is also relevant.

The key with adding links is to only link to websites that represent you well and that you keep updated. It's better to provide less information than low quality information.

The best place to add hyperlinks in your resume is in the contact information section.

## **Summary**

There is still a (very minor) debate on whether to include an “objective” on your resume, but I will settle it here. **DO NOT INCLUDE AN OBJECTIVE ON YOUR RESUME.**

Employers know your objective is to get the job. Instead of an objective, you have two options.

- Write a summary or introduction that highlights your most valuable accomplishments and skills.
- Do not include a summary or introduction.

## **Writing a summary**

If you do decide to write an introduction, write it after the header. It serves the following purposes:

- Highlights the most valuable aspects of your resume
- Intrigues the employer, and encourages them to read more
- Positions your resume in the correct job category

## **Introduction Examples**

*Bad example:* Experienced professional seeking employment in the financial services sector.

*Good example:* Experienced financial planner who has consistently generated above market returns for clients. Thrives in a team-oriented and high pressure environment.

*Bad example:* Passionate marketing manager and creative problem solver who loves to work with great people.

*Good example:* Results-driven marketing professional with over 10 years experience working with blue-chip clients including Nestle, Google, and Intel.

Remember, the introduction is not a necessary element. If you're going to use it, do so wisely. No introduction is better than a poor one.

# Work Experience

The most valuable section of your resume is the work experience section. It is usually the most important factor in getting a job. Highly relevant experience in a field is the first thing employers look for. Even for entry level jobs employers want to see relevant experience.

## Ordering your Work Experience

Most commonly work experience is displayed in *reverse chronological order*, with your most recent job first. If you do have a highly relevant position, there is no rule against re-ordering your work history to put the most relevant job first.

Each work history entry should include:

- Employer Name
- Dates of Employment
- Job Titles
- Job Descriptions
- Accomplishments

The most crucial rule for this section is to write accomplishments, not history. Your job title and regular duties don't matter - what matters is your most impressive achievements in those positions. Ensure your accomplishments are compelling. Accomplishments are best written in bullet-point format, underneath each job title held.

## **Example Accomplishment statements**

*Bad example:* Promoted to senior account manager with full responsibility for the company's #1 client.

*Good example:* Promoted to senior account manager to manage #1 client, growing the business from \$3 million to \$6 million in 2 years.

*Bad example:* Completed all projects under time and under budget.

*Good example:* Averaged 7% under budget while completing 100% of projects on schedule

*Bad example:* Managed a portfolio for blue-chip clients that generated high returns.

*Good example:* Responsible for \$5 million in assets for high net worth clients that generated a return of over 12% in 2013.

*Bad example:* Kept customers happy.

*Good example:* Increased referral rates by 15% and maintained a customer satisfaction rate of over 95%.

## **Writing effective accomplishment statements**

The following section is a series of questions designed to help you quantify your performance in a position to write better accomplishment statements. Spend an hour answering these questions in relation to each job you've held. This will give you "ammunition" to work with when writing your resume.

### *Questions to quantify performance*

- Did you make money for the company?
- Did you increase market share?
- Did you improve your ranking in comparison to other departments, branches, or competitors?
- Did you suggest any ways to cut costs in your team, department, unit, branch, or company?
- Did you regularly meet all your deadlines?
- Did you improve the efficiency of your job, team, or department?
- How did your performance compare to prior years?
- How did you rank against the competition?
- How did you rank against industry averages?
- What were your performance goals? Did you meet them? Exceed them?
- How did you contribute to the bottom line?
- Questions to reveal success factors:
  - What are you most proud of?
  - What did supervisors compliment you for?
  - What do your performance evaluations say?
  - What are you known for?
  - What do you do that others can't or don't do?
  - What would "fall apart" or "slide downhill" if you weren't at your job for a week?
  - What do you have "bragging rights" about?
  - Where you the first, best or most effective in any particular function or organization?
- Questions to create strong introductory statements

- What is the most important thing I accomplished in that job?
- What was I initially hired to do? Did I do it?
- What major challenge was I presented with? Or what major challenge did my company or industry face, and how did I surmount that challenge?
- What happened to my company or department as a result of my effort in that job?

### **Pro tips for writing accomplishments**

- ✓ Focus on performance and results.
- ✓ Use specific examples with real numbers.
- ✓ Use Power words (not passive ones).

### *Action words to use:*

The majority of your resume writing time should be spent writing compelling accomplishment statements. These are helpful verbs to use when writing your accomplishment statements. Always start your accomplishments with a verb.

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| • Designed    | • Boosted    |
| • Developed   | • Delivered  |
| • Launched    | • Lifted     |
| • Spearheaded | • Merged     |
| • Reduced     | • Modified   |
| • Yielded     | • Remodeled  |
| • Accelerated | • Replaced   |
| • Amplified   | • Supervised |



- Trained
- Projected
- Assessed
- Promoted
- Oversaw
- Improved
- Adapted
- Trained
- Directed
- Managed
- Solved
- Initiated
- Controlled
- Coordinated
- Executed
- Produced
- Built
- Grew

## Education

The education section contains some or all of the following:

- Name of School
- Degree Earned
- Major Course(s) of Study
- Academic Distinctions
- Extracurricular and Leadership Activities
- Training and Certification
- Additional Professional Development

### **Keys for the education section:**

The more senior your career, the fewer education details to include.

For younger professionals, add in distinguishing information such as achievements or leadership roles. Don't let your education shadow your experience, and never inflate your credentials.

## **Skills**

Include a listing of your skills on your resume, that includes your level of competency of each skill. Skills are extremely important to match with the job description - don't use jargon unless it is also in the job description and employers will understand it.

The skills section is a good place to include keywords to better match the job description - of course if you do have the skills.

## **References**

On a print-only resume (or PDF used for a traditional application), there is no need to include references on your resume. Employers will ask for them.

The phrase "references available upon request" is also redundant. Use that space for something more impactful. On a web based resume or portfolio, it is perfectly fine to include references.

## **Your first resume**

Once you've completed your first master resume that includes all the previous sections, you're almost ready to apply for a job. But not quite. This master resume serves the following purposes:

- It can be easily updated for a specific job application
- It can be updated with any future employment
- Hosted online at a website like VisualCV.com to improve your web presence and share with colleagues
- It can be uploaded to industry specific resume databases
- It can be used for any general career purpose (ie. applying for an award)

Your master resume should NOT be used for a job application.

It is essential you customize your resume for each application.

## CHAPTER 7

# Customizing your resume



For each job application, it is essential you customize it to fit the position and company.

**Passing the 6 second test.** Recruiters initially spend ~6 seconds reviewing your resume. Much of this review is pattern matching the resume to the job description. If they see familiar job titles, words, and skills - your resume will pass the test.

**Applicant tracking systems.** Over 90% of employers use applicant tracking systems to manage their recruiting process - these systems automatically parse the data from your resume and extract it into a searchable format. Employers will run a keyword search for the position opening, and typically only look at the top results from that search.

If you're using VisualCV - creating a custom resume version is easy.

### **Customizing your resume**

Follow these steps for each job application to make customizing your resume efficient and effective.

- Study the job description thoroughly and separate the top keywords
  - The Job title
  - The job category
  - The job requirements
  - Any necessary certifications or qualifications
  - The desired skills list
- Update your resume summary to match the job category
- Update any job titles (if relevant) to meet that category

- Update any skills that you do have that are on the job description
- Update work experience accomplishments to match the job description using specific keywords

Always remember to NEVER LIE on your resume. It is acceptable however to use more relevant words - as long as they are true.

## **Category and Keyword matching**

There are many benefits to customizing your resume for the job application. In today's world - it should not even be a question.

### **Where does your resume go once it is submitted?**

Into an applicant tracking system - software that 90% of employers use to manage their recruiting process. These systems “parse” your resume - extracting the data into a machine readable format. Your parsed data is then searchable by recruiters, who typically search via keyword.

Applicant tracking systems will also automatically sort candidates based on how well their resume matches the job description. Being on top of the list depends on how well the resume matches the job description.

### **Category matching**

When hiring, companies are looking to fill a specific role. Generalists need not apply. It is important that your resume matches the category the company is looking to fill.

*General categories:* sales, marketing, management, technology, and communications.

*Specific categories:* Inside sales prospecting, email marketing optimization, front-end web development, and public relations.

The best way to match this category is to include this category in your resume “summary.” If applicable, you can also tweak specific job titles (Ie. from Communications Co-ordinator to Public Relations Co-ordinator), and duties to relate better to the category.

Always be honest - but it is not necessary to use internal job titles at your previous company for a job application.

## **Keywords**

Once you have matched the category, you can begin to further customize your resume to match the job description.

Change words in specific work experience entries to match words found in the job description. Don’t just blindly copy all the words, but add words that are used more than once or seem like the main goal of the job posting.

First class keywords: The job title, the headline description, the required skills list, the “top priority” skills list, industry associations, necessary certifications, and any words used multiple times.

Also ensure that it is obvious you have met the minimum requirements.

### **Why it's important**

These customizations are key both to man and machine. While applicant tracking systems definitely automate this process - recruiters also deploy a form of “pattern matching” when screening resumes. In a quick resume screen, they will look to see how well you match up with the job description. If your job titles and skills match, it's an easy “yes.”

## **Submitting your resume**

Before you submit an application, complete the following checklist.

- ✓ Directions are followed correctly
- ✓ Resume is customized for the position
- ✓ Resume has appropriate career category and keywords
- ✓ Resume is free of errors and “red-flags”
- ✓ Cover letter is customized for the job



## CHAPTER 8

# Resume Examples



Enough with the instructions James, let's see what a good resume looks like! I know, I know. The challenge with including resume samples in this book is that there are countless industries and experience levels.

I've included one in this book, but if you'd like to view thousands of resumes samples visit [VisualCV.com/resume-samples](http://VisualCV.com/resume-samples).

## **Jeff Moore, MBA**

Street Address | City, ST 00000 | sales.leader@yahoo.com | 555-555-5555

### **Vice President of Sales**



#### **Healthcare – Operations – Marketing – Business Development – Turnaround Specialist**

**Pivotal Sales Executive** offering over 20 years of experience in implementing successful sales strategies and motivating highly galvanized teams to produce significant bottom-line results. Distinguished background in recruiting and developing "A Players" to drive revenue across multiple sales organizations. Adept at designing and executing effective sales strategies to optimize market opportunities. Exemplary communicator with the passion and drive needed to cultivate and foster professional and profitable relationships while maintaining trust.

#### **Recommendation**

*"Jeff is highly knowledgeable and talented in the medical device industry. He is extremely innovative as well as a great leader, which is needed to thrive in this industry."*

*– Former Colleague at Paca Medical*

### **Professional Experience**

**PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY, City, ST**

**0000 – 0000**

#### ***Vice President of Sales***

Formulated and executed sales strategies to drive sales of aesthetic products throughout North America for this firm with over \$175M in annual revenue. Called on physicians comprised of dermatologists, plastic surgeons, OB GYNs and other non-core physicians that deliver aesthetic treatments to their patients. Oversaw all aspects of field sales, inside sales, sales training, meetings and conventions. Led a team of 5 Sales Directors, monitoring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), recruiting and training staff, and managing team performance to achieve sales objectives on Valeant aesthetic products.

- Increased Q1 and Q2 quarter over quarter sales by 22% and 23.5% respectively.
- Designed all sales compensation programs to drive sales of key products.

- Analyzed data and competitive intelligence to determine and execute new go-to market approach.
- Implemented new sales strategy to recapture lost clients and grow sales of core customers.
- Redefined sales profile and implemented new sales training program, positively impacting performance.

**TRINITY MEDICAL, City, ST**

**0000 – 0000**

***Regional Sales Director***

Designed and implemented sales plans and growth strategies to increase cardiac device sales in the Southeast Region. Collaborated with all product and sales divisions to build winning business programs, generating increased revenue.

- Upgraded the sales team and implemented a new culture of winning.
- Finished at #2 in the region for the year in 2012.
- Increased YOY sales by \$4.8M on a base of \$31M in sales (2012).
- Developed 3 President Award Winners.

## **Professional Experience**

**(Continued)**

**PACA MEDICAL, City, ST**

**0000 – 0000**

***National Sales Manager, East***

Reporting directly to the VP of Sales, established and built the initial sales team to prepare the organization for IPO. Recruited and developed a team of top performers to call on interventional cardiologists and expand the organization's sales in the Eastern United States.

- Delivered YOY sales growth of 18% vs. organic market growth at 1% annually
- Ranked #1 position for Region of the Year in 2009 and 2010.
- Spearheaded strategies to generate growth through MD development initiatives.
- Facilitated marketing teams in driving patient volume to structural physicians.

## **Education and Training**

**Master in Business Administration (MBA), Marketing & Finance**

City State University, City, ST

**Bachelor of Arts, Accounting & Finance**

City State University, City, ST

**Executive Development Program**

City State University, City, ST

## **Technology**

Microsoft Office Suite: Word, Excel, Access, Outlook, PowerPoint  
Salesforce.com

See the full database of examples at [VisualCV.com/resume-samples](http://VisualCV.com/resume-samples)

## CHAPTER 9

# Closing thoughts



Your resume (like your career) is a continual work in-progress.

Throughout your career you will be constantly updating it with new projects and accomplishments.

Here's a life tip for you - don't think of your resume as a static document. It is reflection of your accomplishments in your career that you must continually improve.

The way you do anything is the way you do everything, and you should constantly be striving for excellence in your work.

The people you meet, the work you do, the reputation you build - all of that is essential to great career.

Now go create a resume that reflects how great you really are, and never stop working towards improving it.

## ONE MORE THING

Enjoyed this guide?

If so, a quick [Tweet](#) or [Facebook share](#) would be much appreciated!