

Get the Job



Tailor Your Resume

Here it is! The perfect job opening. Your key skills match what the company is seeking.

Your background is perfectly aligned with the required qualifications. You are confident of your ability to step in and make an immediate impact.

To make sure your resume helps launch you into the interview and eventually the hiring phase, you must first tailor it to evoke the same type of enthusiasm from the hiring manager. This requires a combination of common sense and strategic action.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

When hiring managers read your resume, they want to feel your enthusiasm for their job opportunity. They likely put in hours of work crafting and broadcasting their job announcement, not to mention the time they will be putting into reviewing applications.

One way you can stand out is by making it apparent that you researched the opening and the company's background. This is key, especially if you are applying for a company with a particular product or service niche.

Research the company's mission statement and key projects they have completed. Align this information

with your own experiences and passions to convey why you are the perfect fit for the job.

CUSTOMIZING YOUR CONTENT

Many companies use applicant tracking systems to filter through the initial round of incoming applications. This helps create a strong "keeper" pile for hiring managers. To make sure your resume makes it through these systems, it's important to use the right keywords.

You should always include a section that functions as an "Areas of Expertise" or "Key Proficiencies." This is where you can load up your resume with 10 to 15 targeted keywords that help your resume perform better in applicant systems.

Don't forget about your professional experience. It's important to hit on some of these same keywords when detailing your career background.

Why is this so vital? Because once a hiring manager gets her hands on your resume, you want your experience section to back up your claims of expertise.



Hiring Trends in Nursing

Professionals in the healthcare industry have noticed a shift in focus over the past decade or so, one that is centered on optimizing the patient experience.

Many hospitals and healthcare centers have enacted policies that mimic those traditionally found in the hospitality sector.

Patients are catered to with state-of-the-art facilities and responsive care plans that measure their overall satisfaction with their stay, physician, nurses and even food quality. These trends have impacted what healthcare organizations are looking for in their nursing staff.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A NURSE

Here are some of the main personal characteristics that hiring managers are looking for in their next nursing professional:

- Compassionate approach with great attention to detail;
- Solid critical thinking skills and ability to think quickly in stressful situations;
- Strong interest in science and math;
- Flexible learning style and adaptable to change in the rapidly evolving healthcare industry; and
- Ability to collaborate with others and work long shifts.

HOW TO BECOME A NURSE

If you're looking to become a nurse, the first step is figuring out what type of nursing professional you'd like to be. All states require nurses to complete some kind of formal degree through an accredited nursing school, while some professional certifications allow you to become more specialized.

Some of these certifications and credentials are acknowledged by organiza-



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tions such as the American Nurses Association and National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Service. Do some research to find out where your passions for nursing can align with the right job and environment.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF NURSES

As the industry has evolved, so too has the way we identify and classify

nursing professionals. Different nurses specialize in different areas that can include ambulatory care, pediatrics, informatics, school nursing and mental health.

Here are some of the most common qualifications required for various levels of nursing:

- Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) and Vocational Nursing (LVN) certifications;

- Registered Nursing Board Certification (RN-BC);
- Clinical Nursing Specialist Board Certification (CNS-BC); and
- Nurse Practitioner Board Certifications (NP-BC).

If you are considering a career in nursing, be sure to talk with your college's nursing program about the degree and designation that fits best with your personal and career goals.

Ask Questions

There are only so many ways to answer the same old questions that seem to always come up in the interview process. Why should we hire you? What is your greatest strength? Your greatest weakness?

The fact is, your experience will tell your story for you. It's how you answer the questions that hiring managers are paying the most attention to. Are you nervous in interview settings? Are you boastful or braggadocios about your career achievements? These characteristics usually don't bode well for a candidate in an interview.

One of the best ways to make a memorable impression on your potential employers is by flipping the script and asking a few questions yourself. Doing so shows hiring managers that you researched the company, have a genuine interest in its mission and are analytical in your thinking.

HOW TO FRAME YOUR QUESTIONS

We'll get to the type of questions you should ask a little further in this article. First though, here are a few ways to frame your questions to make the biggest impact. Start your questions with these statements:

- In researching a few articles on your company ...
 - Your website has details on (insert project X) ...
 - One particular part of your job description really caught my attention ...
- Kicking off your questions with these types of introducto-



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ry statements shows hiring managers that you took the time to look into the company and its key initiatives. This is a great way to earn some extra points from hiring managers, especially when the time comes for their team to discuss

how the interviews went.

QUESTIONS TO ASK AND WHEN TO ASK THEM

The timing of your questions can be just as important as what you ask. Try to let the hiring managers control the flow

of the first third of the interview, but don't wait until the "Do you have any questions for us" prompt that generally comes near the end of the interview.

Once a tone is set for the interview, feel free to throw in a

few questions of your own. If there is a natural transition into a question you would like to ask, jump in. This is a great way of turning the traditional, stale interview into a more collaborative process. Hiring managers will appreciate this, too.

Cover Letter Mistakes

The cover letter: Is it important any more? Do hiring managers even take the time to read through it? How can you make your cover letter stand out from a crowd?

There are so many questions involving the cover letter that many people looking for a job simply send out the same one for multiple positions. While this meets the requirement for most job listings, it's not the ideal way to differentiate yourself and your background.

The truth is that cover letters are still very important pieces of your job search strategy. Hiring managers look to the cover letter for a more personal look into your career story. Why are you passionate about what you do? What has led you to looking to your next role?

Finding out these kinds of things in your cover letter can help a hiring manager find out more about you, "the person" instead of just "the candidate," and can help them come up with more detailed interview questions.

OVERUSE OF 'I'

While it is virtually impossible to completely eradicate the word "I" from your resume, cover letters are better received if you make it less about you and more about the company you are targeting. Much like during the interview process, if you can show a hiring manager that you actually did some research on the company's missions, values and projects, you can give yourself a leg up on the competition.

Focus your cover letter on how your key skills and background can benefit the company instead of creating a look-at-me document. Be sure to integrate many of the keywords you see in their job announcement. Customize every document you send out for maximum impact.

SHOW SOME PERSONALITY

Hiring managers are looking for a spark from their candidates, especially if they are sifting through hundreds of cover letters for one opening. The way you can make yourself stand out is by finding the balance between personal and professional.

Give insights into what drives you to do the work you do. Were you inspired from a young age? How do others describe you as a leader, mentor and collaborator? Hiring managers want to know what kind of personality they are getting when they hire you and how you can improve the overall culture of their company.



Network for Better Jobs

In today's competitive job market, it's not enough to simply send out your resume and wait for companies to get back to you. You have to get out there!

Your community is likely teeming with networking opportunities in the form of associations, job workshops, alumni groups and even the local gym.

The best ways to make connections for potential job opportunities is by simply extending your hand and introducing yourself to people in the appropriate settings.

As the old saying goes, it's not what you know but who you know.

BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Even when you are not actively looking for jobs, networking is a great way to build relationships that could benefit you in the future. Meeting new people can unlock doors to that next career or volunteering opportunity.

Professional associations or trade groups are great for widening your network of connections. Some business networking groups or chambers of commerce even host networking dinners to help connect professionals.

Many of these types of events are industry-specific, which can help you build connections with targeted populations.



BENEFITS OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS

Today's focus on technology has made it easier to network with fellow professionals online rather than face to face. This is convenient and should

be a critical piece of your job-seeking approach, but there is no replacement for interacting with connections in person.

Through conversations over lunch or coffee, you can find

out if someone has access to opportunities that may interest you. Additionally, you may be able to help out someone else with a job opportunity, connection or advice.

There is no limit to the bene-

fits of personal networking, especially if you make the effort to get involved on a regular basis. It takes some extra effort on your part, but is worth it if it leads to more quality job leads for you in your search.

Passive Candidates

Talk to any hiring manager at a major company and they will tell you that finding the right professionals for their open job position is a lengthy, arduous process.

If they had the choice, they'd love to fill their next role with a passive candidate — someone who is already happily established and proven within another company.

These types of prospective hires are generally not flooding the market with their resume and cover letter, and are instead focused on helping their current companies hit operational goals.

WHY PASSIVE CANDIDATES?

The biggest reason employers are attracted to passive candidates is they are employed. When hiring someone who is unemployed, it can be a challenge to find a straightforward explanation about whether they were fired or laid off, or quit. The process requires extensive checking of references and a willingness to take a gamble on someone with a less-than-ideal work history.

Recruiters who are contracted by companies to find the best professionals can secure passive candidates through tools like LinkedIn or even stacks of resumes from past hiring cycles. They can then send out an introductory email to gauge the candidates' interest. This process is a much simpler one that requires less time and energy on their part.



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WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

This trend in passive hiring should be a cue for you to always keep your resume, cover letter and LinkedIn pro-

file refined and up to date. That's because once you engage with a recruiter about a job opportunity, the first things they ask for will be your career materials.

Locate the various versions of your resume today and put them all in one place. Also compile other key documents that can include your college transcripts, certifications and

any personality test results. It's best to have all of these in PDF form, as well, to make sure the documents hold their formatting across all computer programs.

Hiring a Resume Writer

You've stared into the seemingly blank abyss of your resume for days, weeks or even months. The words are starting to run together and you're frustrated that your resume simply isn't selling your full potential.

It may be time to hire an expert.

Depending on where you live, there are likely professional resume writers or companies that can create customized documents for your career search. Your local university or junior college likely also offers the service if you are a student or alum. There are some things you should look for before hiring a professional to take on your resume project.

LOOK FOR THE CPRW DESIGNATION

Writers who hold the Certified Professional Resume Writer designation have gone through an extensive testing program to make sure they understand the current trends in hiring, personal branding, document formatting and technical writing.

The process has various parts, one of which is writing a full resume and cover letter for a fictitious client — one who has a complex and detailed work history. CPRW candidates must mine through this information and follow strict formatting and style guidelines before actually mailing the documents into the Professional Association of Resume Writers and Career Coaches for review.

LOOK FOR TESTIMONIALS

The proof is in the pudding for resume writers. Can they show you a list of satisfied clients from your particular industry. Is their LinkedIn page filled with positive endorsements and recommendations from happy clients?

Ask any individual or writing firm for at least five positive testimonials and be aware of any that include a lot of generalities that the writer may have created himself. Testimonials should be detailed and include information on specific ways the writer helped position his clients for success.

LOOK FOR UPFRONT PRICING

Pricing is key when you're considering a few different writing options. The first step is figuring out how much money you are allocating to this portion of your job search. Like a new suit, haircut or tie, your resume is a critical part of how you present yourself to potential employers.

If you're researching resume writers, be sure to ask about their rates before getting started. Find out how they collect payments, and be wary of services that do not offer money-back guarantees if you are unsatisfied with the final product.

