

Using Keywords in Résumés

Technology has taken over the way employers search for candidates. The use of computerized job search engines, triggered by keywords in a résumé, is now the preferred method employers use for finding potential candidates to fill job openings. By using keywords throughout your resume, your chances of being chosen as a candidate in a job search will increase significantly.

In our previous newsletter, we discussed the importance of a Career Management File or CMF. To review, as you begin the resume updating process, we suggest making a habit of compiling information that highlights the positive contributions you've made within your organization.

- Examples of work you have produced or projects you have been involved in, developed or implemented.
- Samples of any presentation materials you have developed.
- Performance evaluations and job descriptions

Something also to consider as you begin updating your résumé, (which we suggest you do at least two times a year), is using keywords. Every resume should contain keywords that signal to employers that you have the skills, talents, and experience to match their job search requirements.

Keywords are critical for today's résumés. Over 80% of all résumés are entered into databases that search for keywords when job opportunities arise. It is important to discuss what keywords are, where to find them, and how and where to use them. When keywords are used effectively your "hit" ratio, or the number of times your résumé is selected for a job search when using databases to search for potential job candidates, will double!

In computerized job searches, keywords refer to those words that describe your title, knowledge base, and skill sets. There are many places to find keywords:

- Your industry's professional associations - newsletters, e-zines, conferences
- Formal job descriptions for your desired or current position
- Career websites such as monster.com, hotjobs.com, careerbuilder.com

Some tips for using keywords in your résumé:

1. Find at least three online postings that contain detailed descriptions of your target positions. Analyze and highlight these postings to create your own keyword list.
2. Weave these keywords into your résumé. Fortify these words by following them up with an accomplishment. For example, you can reinforce the keyword "customer service" by stating: **Customer Service-boosted customer satisfaction scores from 82% to 94%.**
3. In your résumé objective or summary, include the keyword for your desired position along with variations of this position by using other keywords. For example the job title "Customer Service Manager" can also be called "Client Services Manager," "Account Manager," or "Customer Relationship Manager."
4. Avoid the temptation to "plant" keywords that are not part of your experience in the hope that your résumé will be found in an electronic search.
5. For resumes pasted into email messages or e-forms where space is not an issue, include a separate keyword section.
6. If you are submitting a Microsoft Word document to employers, include keywords in the File, Properties, Summary, and Keywords area to reinforce your keywords.

With fewer minds and more computers choosing candidates, using keywords throughout your résumé can significantly increase your chances of being chosen to interview for a job.

For more information on updating your résumé, please contact your Career & Life Coach Jamie Novick at jnovick@careersolution.biz

Best regards,

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P.S. - The Next Step Career Solutions website has had a makeover!

Please visit us at www.careersolution.biz to see our new look.

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