

Tailoring Your Resume, Cover Letter and Interview

Performing a targeted job or internship search is important. Employers are specific about what they require and those needs are expressed through the job description. It is up to you to identify those things most important to an employer and tailor your resume, cover letter and interview answers to their needs.

EXAMINING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

- It clearly tells you what the employer wants.
- Pay close attention to the **requirements** of the job, that will determine what is most important to the employer. Some employers include a requirements section clearly outlining what they want in the order of importance.
- The first things mentioned usually carry more weight.
- If an employer does not include a requirement section look for key words like *required, necessary, must have, prefer and a plus.*
- If the job description does not contain a lot of information do not give up, research the company to discover more about the type of applicant they might attract their attention.

RESUME

Pick 2-3 things an employer has indicated they require.

- Review your resume and determine where those skills are located on your resume.
- Try to rearrange your resume to move those skills as close to the top of your resume as possible.
 - You can do this by shifting subsections, rearranging bullets points and creating a subsection to reflect the job you want to highlight.

Modify the language of your resume to reflect the language in the job description.

- At organizations where they get a large number of resumes, employers scan resumes and electronically look for key words when sorting through resumes.
- Review your resume and look for words and phrases that can be modified to mimic those in the job description.

Example

Qualifications: Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal. Good working knowledge of MS Office products; Word and Excel. Superior organizational skills. Upbeat, outgoing and friendly attitude.

Original Resume Description:

GALLERY EXPERIENCE:

Tremont Gallery

Gallery Assistant

- ❖ Designed floor plans, handled catering arrangements and developed key marketing strategies.
- ❖ Maintained insurance database and answered inquiries.

Boston, MA

June 2006-January 2008

Tailored Resume Description:

GALLERY EXPERIENCE:

Tremont Gallery

Boston, MA

Gallery Assistant

June 2006-January 2008

- ❖ Used organizational skills to design floor plans, handle catering arrangements and develop key marketing strategies.
- ❖ Maintained insurance database, utilizing knowledge of MS Office products and written communication skills.
- ❖ Answered database inquiries, employing verbal communication skills.

COVER LETTER

In the cover letter you will use the requirements to determine what you will include in your skill paragraph. Pick several and detail where you learned them, how you developed them or perfected them.

Example:

You'll find me a person with both written and verbal communication skills, advanced understanding of Microsoft Office programs, and the positive attitude and organizational skills needed to excel in your company. Working for the Tremont Gallery, I was in charge of maintaining the organizations insurance database, which required clear and concise communication with co-workers and a strong working knowledge of Microsoft Excel. My organizational skills were further developed and refined handling large catering events, and developing essential marketing strategies for the company. The skills gained from this job have given me the ability to work effectively with colleagues, vendors and customers always with a positive attitude.

THE INTERVIEW:

1) Please explain a situation where you were under a lot of pressure and how you handled it.

The situation that immediately comes to mind was when I was working at the Tremont Gallery. As part of my duties, I was put in charge of handling large catering events. Normally, the events cater to around 50 people, but this time it was for 100, and I had only a week to prepare. This was a very important event for management, and they were very stressed. Since I only had a week notice, the regular company from which we normally order our food was unable to fill the whole order. Because of this, I had to order from multiple providers, make sure food prices fit into our budget, and coordinate delivery times. At the same time I still had to fulfill my other duty of data entry. In the end, everything went very smoothly, and both management and clientele were pleased. This experience helped teach me how to keep calm under pressure and manage multiple projects which resulted in a successful event.

2) Can you describe a situation where you had a conflict with a coworker, and the steps you took to resolve it?

One recent conflict that comes to mind happened recently with a supervisor. The conflict was caused by miscommunication. My supervisor asked me to do some work on our database, but did so as she was rushing to a meeting. As I tried to complete the task, I realized I had insufficient information to do so. Rather than trying to guess at what she wanted, I decided to ask for clarification. By doing so, we both saved valuable time and increased the quality of the end product. I believe clear communication is a key to a smoothly functioning work environment.