

Career Aid

Guide to Creating Achievement Statements for Resumes

When writing a resume, many jobseekers tend to simply state what their duties and responsibilities were at their previous jobs, but tend to forget one important factor:

How are they of value to a potential employer?

True, the employer wants to know what you've done, but he or she is even more concerned with whether you can achieve results. Make your resume achievement-oriented in order to spark the employer's interest right away. By writing about your experience in terms of achievements, not job descriptions, you convey three things:

1. You have the necessary experience or skills.
2. You're effective at this work or at using these skills.
3. You take pride in and enjoy your work.

Your accomplishment statements will also instigate interesting discussion about your strengths during the interview. Here are some questions and examples to help you think of relevant achievements for your resume:

What projects are you proud of that support your job objective?

- Spearheaded a successful one-on-one reading program for a fourth grade special education student.

What are some quantifiable results that point out your ability?

- Initiated Georgia State's "Gimme Shelter" program, involving the coordination of 80 people to sleep outdoors in cardboard boxes, which raised over \$10,000 for the homeless as well as increasing awareness of this important social issue.

When have you demonstrated S. I. R. (Situation, Input, Result)? In other words, what was the Situation or problem you faced, what was your Input to remedy it, and what was the positive Result?

- Reduced theft 47% by instituting "Shoppers' Spy," a tight yet discreet security program.

When did you positively affect the organization, your boss, your coworkers, your clients?

- Enhanced staff morale through a six-month incentive program that prompted a major increase in sales.
- What awards, commendations, publications, etc. have you achieved that relate to your job objective? Awarded "Top Salesperson" at "Red's Shoe Barn" for three consecutive years.

How is success measured in your field? How do you measure up?

- Selected by the NIH to represent the United States at the International AIDS Conference in Brazil.
- Are you good at using the skills required for this job? When have you demonstrated that to be true?
- Used advanced CAD tools to create a totally new look in video game modeling.

What activities, paid and unpaid, have you done that used skills you'll be using at your new job?

- Offered academic success counseling and advisement to 40 students at "Make It Happen," a volunteer program at Anytown High School.

When did someone "sit up and take notice" of how skilled you are?

- Initially hired as part of work-study program in college Admissions office and was offered salaried position within one year based on demonstrated communication and recruitment skills.

Use of Action Verbs

Writing an effective achievement statement on your resume also requires the use of action verbs to describe skills, jobs and accomplishments. An action verb expresses achievements or something a person does in a concise, persuasive manner. Since concise writing is easier for readers to understand, it is more reader-centered. Because reader-centered writing is generally more persuasive, action verbs are more convincing than non-action verbs. Here is an some example:

- “Was the boss of a team of six service employees”.

Using action verbs:

- “Supervised a team of six service employees

The job description using a non-action verb is less concise. It contains ten words, and it focuses action on a form of the verb “to be” (was). The job description using an action verb is more concise. It contains seven words, and it focuses action on an action verb (supervised). Because concise writing is easier for readers to understand, the job description using an action verb is more powerful and is more persuasive.

Using action verbs in resumes allows you to highlight the tasks you can do. Word choice is critical in order to describe what you have done and to persuade potential employers to give you an interview. In order to make a striking first impression, use action verbs as the “first” word of each bullet point to emphasize job descriptions in your resume.

Here are some examples:

- Accelerated introduction of a new technology, which increased productivity by 15%
- Organized consumer databases to efficiently track product orders
- Supervised a team of six service employees

Each of the previous examples started off with an action verb. For a list of action verbs and examples of concise and persuasive sentences, job descriptions and/or list of skills and accomplishments, please come by your Career Services Office.