

ACCOMPLISHMENTS STYLE RESUMES

In today's competitive job market, it's important that your resume be the very best representation of your skills, experiences, and capabilities. Creating an Accomplishment-focused resume will give specific evidence to the reader that you go above and beyond typical job responsibilities.

By shifting the focus of your resume from generic bullet points to concrete and individualized accomplishments, the reader will be given a much better sense of who you are and what you have to offer.

Most employers and hiring managers have a general idea of what the main responsibilities of various job titles entail. Instead of using up valuable space on your resume with information that the reader most likely already knows, try creating Accomplishments or Key Contributions sub-sections under each position.

Responsibility-focused job description:

Sunrise Assisted Living Facility, Summit, NJ

May 2006-June 2010

Business Manager

- Responsible for the daily operations of facility's administrative office
- Oversaw the management of health benefits for all employees
- Wrote grants and served on various committees, including the activities committee

Accomplishments-focused job description:

Sunrise Assisted Living Facility, Summit, NJ

May 2006-June 2010

Business Manager

Managed finance and administration of retirement community with a \$22 million budget and 550 residents.

Accomplishments:

- Saved \$200,000 in costs for the 2008-2009 fiscal year by implementing new employee benefits plan
- Created and managed bid process for transportation and food service contracts, saving the facility \$50,000
- Successfully secured a \$1 million grant for technology improvements
- Increased productivity by 15% in office with implementation of new computer software and training

** Keep track of your accomplishments on a Word document, your phone, notebook, etc. This will help as you update your resume with tangible accomplishments that will grab the reader's attention.

There is a brainstorming worksheet at the end of this handout to help generate ideas about your work accomplishments and contributions.

Responsibilities vs. Accomplishments

As mentioned previously, most employers have a general understanding of the responsibilities associated with different job titles. Therefore, you will want your experiences to stand out by answering the question:

Why was it important that YOU held this position?

Take a look at the difference between explaining a job duty vs. a personal accomplishment:

RESPONSIBILITY	ACCOMPLISHMENT
Responsible for sales in Western region	Increased sales six-fold in Western region of over 50 clients
As HR manager, was responsible for saving money on corporate benefits	Researched long-term disability insurance and found package that saved company 10% over previous plan

Avoid vague or overused phrases on your resume. Employers and hiring managers want FACTS (concrete evidence), that you are worth interviewing and hiring:

BEFORE	AFTER
Completed team project ahead of schedule and under budget.	As part of management development team, successfully completed performance appraisal ahead of schedule and \$25,000 under budget.
Assumed manager duties	Supervised a staff of 7 employees and increased morale and productivity with monthly professional development initiatives
Input customer orders into database	Input 40 customer orders on daily basis, consistently exceeding the average by 60%.

If you are having trouble brainstorming accomplishments, try thinking of difficult situations you encountered at your current or past job(s):

- What was the problem?
- How did you solve it?
- What specific steps did you take to make the situation better?
- What were the results of your hard work?

Problem I faced	Actions steps I took	Results
Poor data processing caused delays over 120 days	Established and managed new data processing center. Evaluated processing system. Moved office to new location.	Turn-around time decreased from 120 to 45 days.
Unable to track customers' sales and contracts	Investigated and purchased PLEASE software. Created new database and report structure. Trained personnel in use of software.	Able to produce reports on customer sales histories in under 10 minutes.

Accomplishments Worksheet

Now it's your turn to brainstorm accomplishments from your own personal experiences. Many job-seekers have difficulty pinpointing their accomplishments, so this worksheet is designed to help get you thinking.

Not all of the questions below will pertain to your experiences and career fields. Respond to as many of the questions as you can for each career experience (for current students or new graduates, remember that experience also entails internships, volunteer work, campus involvement, etc.)

Try to list accomplishments that are specific and measurable:

- Quantify whenever possible. (Examples: Increased sales by 50 percent over the previous year; Supervised staff of 25; Served a customer base of 150, the largest on firm's customer-service team.)
- Use superlatives and "firsts." Use words such as "first," "only," "best," "most," and "highest."
- Consider the "so-what factor." For every accomplishment you list, ask yourself, "so what?" Does the item you've listed truly characterize your abilities and your potential for contributing to your next employer's success?
- Make sure each accomplishment is relevant to the type of job you seek.

YOUR CURRENT OR MOST RECENT JOB

1. In this job, what special things did you do to set yourself apart? How did you do the job better than anyone else did or than anyone else could have done?
2. What did you do to make this job your own? How did you take the initiative? How did you go above and beyond what was asked of you in your job description?
3. What special things did you do to impress your boss so that you might be promoted?
4. And were you promoted? Rapid and/or frequent promotions can be especially noteworthy.
5. How has the organization benefited from your performance? How did you/will you leave this employer better off than before you worked there?
6. List any awards you won, such as Employee of the Month, President's Club?
7. What are you most proud of in this job?

8. Check your annual performance reviews for this job. Provide below any glowing or even complimentary quotes from your reviews. Did you consistently receive high ratings?

9. Have you received any complimentary memos or letters from employers or customers? Provide quotes from these letters that support your accomplishments.

10. What tangible evidence do you have of accomplishments -- publications you've produced, products you've developed, software applications you've written?

11. How did you contribute to this employer's profitability, such as through sales increase percentages? How have you helped your employer to make money?

12. How did you contribute to operational efficiency in this job? How did you help this employer or a part of the organization to save money, save time, or make work easier?

13. How did you contribute to productivity, such as through successfully motivating your team?

14. How did you build relationships or image with internal and/or external constituencies? How did you attract new customers or retain existing ones?

15. How did you expand the business?

16. How did you help the organization fulfill its mission statement?

17. How did you solve one or more specific problems in this job? What were the problems or challenges that you or the organization faced? What did you do to overcome the problems?