



How to Write a Targeted Résumé in Six Steps

A targeted résumé highlights the experience, skills, and accomplishments most relevant to a particular job. It helps employers see how your qualifications connect to the work they need done.

Targeting is an approach you can apply to a chronological, functional, or combination résumé. You adjust the emphasis and supporting examples for each application while keeping your background accurate.

Step 1: Study the Job Announcement

Read the posting carefully before revising your résumé. Identify the main responsibilities, required qualifications, preferred experience, and tools or technical skills mentioned.

Make a short list of the employer's priorities, then match each one with evidence from your background. That evidence might come from employment, volunteer work, education, or projects.

For example:

- **The employer needs project coordination:** You have managed schedules, tracked deadlines, and organized team assignments.
- **The employer needs customer support:** You have resolved complaints and explained products or services.
- **The employer needs reporting skills:** You have maintained spreadsheets and prepared regular performance reports.

Distinguish direct experience from transferable skills. If you do not meet a requirement, avoid implying that you do.

Keeping a master résumé with your full experience and accomplishments makes this process easier. You can select the most relevant material for each application. [CareerOneStop's targeting guide](#) recommends analyzing the posting and researching the employer before tailoring your résumé.

Step 2: Add a Clear, Relevant Headline

Keep your name and contact information at the top. Beneath them, an optional headline can quickly identify your professional focus.

Choose wording that reflects both the position and your actual qualifications. For a web development role, an appropriate example might be:

Web Developer | Accessible Websites and E-commerce

For someone changing careers, a skills-focused headline may be more accurate:

Customer Service | Team Training | Administrative Coordination

Keep it brief and specific. Avoid inflated titles or claims such as “perfect candidate.” A headline should help the reader understand your fit without overstating your experience.

Step 3: Write a Focused Professional Summary

If a summary adds useful context, place it beneath your headline. Use two or three concise sentences to explain the strengths you bring to the role.

For example:

Web developer with experience building responsive websites and supporting digital marketing campaigns. Skilled in improving site usability, maintaining online storefronts, and collaborating with content teams.

Replace broad language such as “leading-edge solutions” with concrete skills and relevant experience. Include a verified accomplishment if it strengthens the summary.

You do not need a separate tagline and summary if they repeat the same information. [CareerOneStop's guidance on the top portion of a résumé](#) explains how a headline and summary can introduce relevant qualifications.

Step 4: Prioritize Relevant Experience

Review the descriptions under each position. Move the most relevant bullet points higher within that role, and shorten details that contribute little to this application.

Keep job titles, employers, and employment dates accurate. When using a chronological format, retain reverse chronological order even as you adjust the emphasis within each job.

Use the terminology from the posting where it genuinely describes your experience. For example, if the employer requests “inventory management” and you performed that work, use that phrase naturally in a supporting bullet.

Avoid copying whole passages from the announcement or repeating keywords without context. There is no fixed six-line limit for a job description; give each position enough space to show its relevant responsibilities and results clearly.

Step 5: Select Accomplishments That Support Your Fit

Choose accomplishments that demonstrate the capabilities the employer needs. Describe what you did and what changed as a result.

For example, instead of:

Responsible for updating the company website.

Write:

Reorganized product pages and simplified navigation to help customers find key information.

When reliable measurements are available, make the result more specific:

Reorganized product pages and simplified navigation, reducing support inquiries about product information by 18% over six months.

These examples illustrate the approach; use only your own verified experience and results.

Useful evidence can include time saved, errors reduced, projects completed, service improvements, or increased sales. Not every accomplishment needs a number. A clear description of a meaningful contribution is more useful than an unsupported statistic.

Be precise about your role in team achievements. Use “contributed to,” “coordinated,” or “led” according to what you actually did.

Step 6: Tailor Your Cover Letter

When a cover letter is requested or accepted, use it to explain your interest in the position and expand on one or two relevant examples from your résumé.

Identify the role, connect your experience to the employer's needs, and explain why the opportunity interests you. A career change or transferable skill may deserve a little more context here.

Keep the letter's contact information and visual style consistent with your résumé. Repeating the résumé's headline or summary is optional; the letter should add useful detail.

Avoid simply declaring yourself an outstanding match. Give the reader evidence that supports that conclusion.

Check the Complete Application

Before submitting, confirm that your résumé and cover letter name the correct employer and position. Check dates, contact details, spelling, and links.

Use a readable layout with clear section headings, and follow the employer's file and submission instructions. Save a copy of the job posting and the documents you submitted so you can refer to them when preparing for an interview.

A targeted résumé cannot guarantee an interview, but it can make your qualifications easier to recognize. The strongest version gives employers a clear, accurate explanation of why your experience matters for this particular job.