



Pro-Dev Challenge

Professionally Relevant Opportunity
Development ~ Experience ~ Value



RESUME OPTIMIZATION

The Challenge: CRAFT A POWERFUL RESUME THAT STAND OUT.

Stop throwing your resume into the void. Learn how to get past the ATS and make it a magnet for recruiters.

The “Why”

In today's fiercely competitive job market, your resume must first get past Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) – AI software that filters candidates before being seen by human eyes. To get to a human you need a compelling, tailored resume that highlights your qualifications, experience, and skills, ensuring you get through ATS filters and impress potential employers. Tailoring your resume for each job description is no longer optional; it's essential.

The only way around ATS systems is through referrals and networking.

Ready to create your resume? We'll explore a step-by-step process:

1. **Personal Information:** Begin with your name and contact information, followed by a concise Professional Summary highlighting your skills and experience.
2. **Professional Experience:** Articulate your job experience in reverse chronological order using action verbs and quantifiable achievements. Focus on demonstrating your value and how your skills align with the employer's needs.
3. **Skills and Certifications:** Consider a dedicated skills section containing technical skills as well as soft skills. Show them in action by giving examples of how you used them. Include your educational background and any relevant certifications.
4. **Formatting:** Finally, skip the formatting and opt for a straightforward, no frills document in both Word and PDF forms.

Personal Information

Your resume's header is your first opportunity to make a strong impression. Ensure it's clear, concise, and professional. Start with:

- Your full name in a prominent font, making it the focal point.
- Utilize a personal email address; avoid outdated or unprofessional sounding email addresses.
- Providing a reliable phone number and ensure your voicemail is professional.
- Include your customized LinkedIn URL
- Optionally, include your city and state for location context, but omit your full street address for privacy.

Your **professional summary** is the critical first impression on your resume, where recruiters will spend the most time. It should not be a generic overview, but should instead be a **tailored narrative that directly aligns your key skills and accomplishments with the specific job description**. This section is paramount because it acts as a preview: a compelling, customized summary grabs attention and prompts further review, while a generic one risks your resume being bypassed entirely.



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Professional Experience

The professional experience section demonstrates your relevant work history, showcasing the skills and accomplishments that directly qualify you for the targeted role.

- List **most recent experience first** and work backward.
- Highlight relevant, job-specific achievements focused on outcomes. Emphasize the skills and accomplishments that are **most relevant** to the position you're applying for.
- **Quantify your achievements** by including numbers, percentages, and metrics.
- Start bullet points with strong **dynamic action verbs** to describe your accomplishments.
- **Maximize keyword match rate** (aim for 70-80%) between resume and job posting to pass ATS.
- Ensure that your job titles, company names, and dates of employment are **correct and formatted consistently** throughout your resume.

Technical Skills and Soft Skills

A well-organized skills section allows recruiters to quickly assess whether you have the qualifications they are looking for.

- Include both **technical and soft skills** such as software proficiency, data analysis, or programming. Soft skills, like communication, teamwork, and leadership, showcase your ability to work well with others and adapt to different situations.
- **Tailor your skills to the job description:** Review the job posting and highlight the most relevant skills that match the employer's needs.
- Use job-specific keywords **found in the job description** to increase chances of getting through Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to reach HR professionals.

Education, Certifications, Etc.

Beyond your core professional experience, the final sections of your resume provide a holistic view of your qualifications, demonstrating your commitment to continuous learning and professional engagement. Tailor these sections to highlight relevant skills and experiences that complement your career goals.

- **Education:** List degrees, majors, university names, and graduation dates.
- Include GPA if it is high.
- **Certifications:** Specify relevant certifications and issuing organizations.
- **Professional Associations:** List memberships in relevant professional organizations.
- **Volunteer Experience:** Detail relevant volunteer work, emphasizing transferable skills.
- **Awards and Honors:** List any awards or recognition received.



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Formatting and Presentation

To optimize your resume for ATS and maintain a professional appearance, prioritize clean, linear formatting and error-free content. Adhere to the following guidelines for maximum compatibility and impact:

- **Use a clean, readable font** such as Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman at 10-12 point font size. ATS systems will render some fonts as unreadable, so this is essential.
- Maintain **consistent formatting** throughout, using a top-to-bottom, linear layout (no columns).
- **Utilize white space** for improved readability.
- **Proofread** meticulously for accuracy, spelling, and correct any grammatical errors.
- Request a **second review** from another person.
- Save your resume as a PDF unless otherwise specified.

AI Resume Optimization

Leverage AI to refine your resume for maximum impact with both ATS and hiring managers. Consider these AI-powered tools and techniques for optimization:

- **Use tools** like Jobscan or Resumake to match job description keywords, improving ATS pass rates.
- Utilize Grammarly or Hemingway Editor to **refine language**, correcting errors and improving readability.
- Employ Resume.io or Zety for AI-generated, **tailored content** suggestions.
- Create visually appealing, ATS-friendly resumes with Canva or NovoResume.
- Utilize LinkedIn's or Indeed's AI tools to **match your resume** to relevant job opportunities.

Additional Resources

Harvard Business Review. (2023b, December 19). How to write a resume that stands out [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcD3nufvA7Y>

Gallo, A. (2020, December 23). How to Write a Résumé That Stands Out. Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2014/12/how-to-write-a-resume-that-stands-out?tpcc=orgsocial_edit&utm_campaign=hbr&utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin

Share your results from the CRAFT YOUR RESUME challenge with KALA Mentoring!

Tag us on social media @kalamentoring and/or #KALAMentoring

Send an email to kala@kalamentoring.com

