

## Targeted Resumes

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Whether you're about to graduate, looking at changing jobs, seeking a co-op or internship, or gearing up for a summer or part-time job, one of the job search strategies you should consider adding to your job-hunting arsenal is how to prepare a targeted resume. When you first hear the phrase, you may think of "targeting" employers in which you're interested and to whom you plan on sending resumes. Although that's part of the targeted job search package, that's not what is generally meant by a targeted resume.

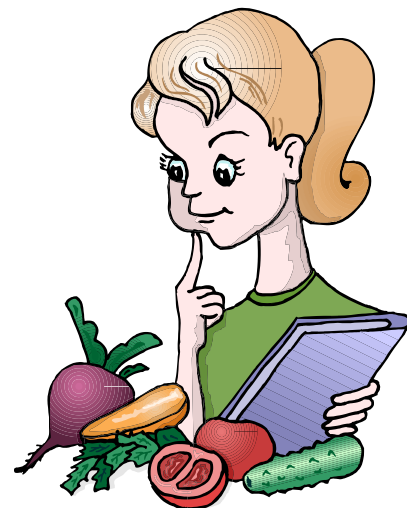
Let's start with a simpler explanation for a targeted resume. In short, a targeted resume is a resume tailored for a specific type of job or employer. One example of preparing a targeted resume is when you want to apply for an advertised position after reading a general job description from an online job bank or from the newspaper classified section. Usually the first step in these cases is to determine what background, training and skills the employer is seeking. You read the description or ad carefully, making notes about important requirements the employer has, and then you review or write your resume with those specific requirements, skills and training in mind. Your job is to highlight as effectively as possible all parts of your background and training that relate to the skills and training required for the job.



Often however, it's just not that easy. You may not know what types of jobs that you're most interested in, what types of jobs are available, or even what types of jobs for which you're most qualified. You may also be tempted to take the first job that sounds promising or that pays what you believe is a reasonable wage. With some homework and careful preparation however, you can increase your chances of success and job satisfaction considerably.

It may sound simple and obvious, but really, the first step in the job search is to determine the type(s) of job(s) in which you're most interested and for which you're most qualified. Though eventually you'll be preparing a "targeted" resume, as part of the first step in the process, it may be helpful to prepare a draft of your resume that includes all of your qualifications, training, personal attributes and skills that you feel will make you a valuable employee at this point in your life. This resume becomes your "template." You will add to it and it will change, grow and take on new attributes just as you change, grow and increase your skills. Seldom will this be the resume you actually send to employers however.

A good analogy for your resume "template" is the food line in a cafeteria. Just like all of the food that is available to you in the cafeteria, all of your skills, abilities, background and training are available to you and reflected in your resume template. However, just like the cafeteria food line where you don't need or want to sample all of the food, in your targeted resume you choose and reflect only those skills and abilities that are the best fit for the particular type(s) of job(s) you're pursuing.



The resume you send to each employer is a carefully constructed one that reflects only those skills, abilities, personal attributes and training from your resume "template" that you believe will be necessary in the job for which you are applying. Viewed another way, the employer knows what skills they're looking for. They don't want to see the whole menu or your whole life's story. They want to know if you have the skills necessary for the job they have available.

Okay. Now you should have a little better understanding of what is meant when someone tells you that you should prepare a targeted resume. Sounds easy, right? Sometimes, it is. Especially if you have a complete job description in front of you and there is a good and obvious match between what the employer wants and your background and training. Now, what if you're "prospecting" for a job with a company that hasn't advertised an opening? What if you don't really know what type of job you

want? What if you're posting your resume online where hundreds or even thousands of prospective employers may view it? How do you prepare a "targeted" resume that will grab the attention of the types of employers for whom you want to work, or that will help you get the types of jobs in which you're most interested?

Pretend you have a class assignment or that your job requires you to do research to find out about and prepare a report on jobs that are the most interesting to you. Your teacher or supervisor says you should include in your report

a) personal and technical qualifications the jobs seem to require b) the training that is preferred most often c) the geographic location where most of the jobs seem to be d) what salary range is offered e) what types of companies, businesses or agencies offer the types of jobs in which you're interested f) typical job titles g) application requirements and, h) any other skills, abilities, keywords and phrases used, or background typically required or requested.



Now, where do you go to find out about jobs? It used to be the "want ads" in the local newspaper. Employers still list jobs in the classified section of newspapers, but they also list jobs online in national, regional and local job banks, with professional associations and in professional trade journals and newsletters, as well as on professional association or trade related listservs. Many of the newspapers, magazines, journals, and newsletters used in the past to post jobs are available to you online. If you're not Internet savvy, it's time to work on those skills, because more and more employers are listing their job needs using the Net and the resources available to them in the computer age.

In addition to the above resources, many colleges, universities and chambers of commerce sponsor job fairs. To prepare your targeted resume for job fair employers, check with the sponsors to see if they have information on the companies who will be

attending, and information on what types of positions for which the companies are recruiting.

The Career Services Center at Western Kentucky University (WKU) provides two listings of online resources to help their students and alumni research and learn about actual job openings and companies that are hiring. Some of these same online resources can also be used to post your resume for employers to see. The first is an annotated listing that has live links to resources and is called [Career Resources on the World Wide Web](#). The [second resource](#) is a listing of links to online job sites, company information, professional associations, newspapers and other useful resources for conducting a job search and preparing your credentials. This listing requires Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is a [free download](#) from Adobe if you don't already have this reader on your personal computer.



If you're a current student or alumnus of a university, you may find that your college career center can provide you with assistance in researching or finding potential jobs. For instance, the Career Services Center at Western has a job listing service and an online resume posting service to help their students and alumni research employers, find jobs and get their credentials out to employers. The job listing can be found at <http://www.wku.edu/CareerServ> under the section entitled 'links to employers and jobs.' The [online resume service](#) is available to WKU students and alumni registered with the Center. If you aren't already registered with WKU Career Services, you may complete an online application at [www.wku.edu/CareerServ](http://www.wku.edu/CareerServ) by clicking on the "Career Services online registration" link at the top of the page.

Using the variety of resources available to you online or in hard copy, it is important for you to develop a profile of the type of job(s) and employer(s) in which you're most interested. Answer the questions posed in the class/research assignment outlined in the example provided above. Armed with a list of the skills the employers want, the keywords and phrases used in job descriptions and the job titles most often

used to describe the jobs, review your resume “template” and start pulling examples from it where you exhibited or developed skills and abilities that you have that are also found on the list you completed for your “research” on jobs that sound interesting. Whenever possible, use terminology, keywords and phrases in your “targeted” resume that are similar to those found in the job descriptions you favor.

The information you uncover about jobs in which you’re interested helps you determine what aspects of your background and training to emphasize over others in your “targeted” resume. Your research may even remind you of experience, training or skills that you forgot to include in your resume “template.” The research you do and the information you gather about jobs of interest will help you take the “template” of your resume that includes all information about you and target it specifically for the types of jobs you hope to get. The “bottom line” is to try and find out what employers are looking for and then prove to them in your resume that you have the “right stuff.” A resume “targeted” for the types of jobs in which you might be interested helps you find the right employers and the right jobs even when you don’t know what jobs are available – or – even when you do!

To find out more about resume formats and how to prepare cover letters or conduct a job search, visit the Career Services Center web site section entitled “[Job Search Overview](#)” or if you’re a current student or alumni, come into the Center located on Western’s main campus in DUC 230-A. Counselors will be happy to make an appointment and sit down with you to review your resume and provide feedback regarding ways to “target” your resume and get the type of job you want!



<http://www.wku.edu/CareerServ>

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