

This sly resume trick will land you an interview — even if you've never had a "real" job

By Christy Rakoczy | Feb. 14, 2017 (mic.com)

You've heard the advice before: Writing a great resume is the key to landing a job interview. This advice is all well and good, but what if the only job you ever had was a crappy internship?

Or worse: What if you've never held a professional position at all?

Your resume could end up looking like this:

Jamie Jobseeker
123 Hire Me Way
New York, NY 66502

Job Objective: Get Me Hired

Professional Experience

2016 - Present: Intern, Company That Didn't Hire Me, New York, NY

- Filed a lot of papers
- Got some people coffee
- Browsed the internet a lot

Birth - 2016: Unemployed, Living With My Parents, Boring Suburb, Please Don't Make Me Go Back

- Emptied dishwasher
- Made my bed (sometimes)

Education:

BA, Changed My Major Twice, 2016
University I'll Be Paying Until I'm 40, New York, NY

The "chronological" resume

Womp womp. Amazingly enough, that is probably not going to get you on the shortlist of top candidates.

So, what do you do?

Ditch the basic resume.

If you don't have a lot of relevant job experience, a standard reverse-chronological resume listing your work experience from most to least recent doesn't do you any favors.

People use chronological resumes to show a steady history of employment and career development. If you've got neither, you need a different approach.

Create a skills-based resume instead.

Many young people without a lot of job experience are better off with a skills-based resume that highlights all they can do. The skills-based resume isn't just a list of jobs; it's a demonstration of your talents.

The biggest advantage of a skills-based resume is that you can include skills you gained outside the traditional workforce, from extracurricular activities at school to volunteer work. When you add all that up, your otherwise skimpy resume gets some meat on its bones.

Also called a functional resume, a skills-based resume can work well for people who have stayed in the same position for a long period of time — or anyone who has been out of the workforce for a while.

"Switching to a skills-based resume from a traditional resume format can help job seekers better highlight experiences and de-emphasize job gaps," Maryanne Perrin, co-founder of Balancing Professionals, told the Wall Street Journal.

Here's a sample skills-based resume.

To create a skills-based resume, organize your experience around different types of skills, such as project management, customer service or leadership. Make each skill a heading and include a few examples for each, even if they came from the same position.

"Pick three to four broad skill sets that specifically relate to the job description, and that you can back up with specific accomplishments or experiences," the Muse recommended.

Here's a sample:

Jamie Jobseeker
123 Hire Me Way
New York, NY 66502

Job Objective: Get Me Hired

Skills and Experience

Customer Service Skills

- Served over 150 customers daily in busy fast-food restaurant.
- Prioritized customer needs to enhance customer satisfaction.
- Responded to customer problems and complaints.
- Provided customer service and support to more than 50 first-year students while serving as a resident advisor from 2014 to 2016.

Organizational and Time Management Skills

- Served as coordinator of 6-week sorority recruitment period from 2014 to 2016. Successfully recruited 13 new members to campus chapter of national sorority.
- Organized 24 recruitment events annually through successful collaboration with university administrators and entertainers.
- Double-majored in math and history, achieving consistently good marks while maintaining more than a full course load.

Technical Skills

- Proficient in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel.
- Successfully produced more than 30 academic PowerPoint presentations which earned consistently high marks.

Team Work

- Accustomed to working on teams to facilitate the successful completion of academic projects.
- Served as team coordinator for 8-person team organizing sorority recruitment events from 2014 to 2016.

A sample "skills-based" resume

How to get started on one of your own.

Making your own skills-based resume is simple. If you're applying for a particular job, start by listing the skills the job ad lists; those are your skills categories. Next, think about past experience that demonstrates proficiency with each skill, and include those examples under the appropriate heading.

For example, if you're applying for a job, and the posting lists experience training others as a desired qualification, make that a category. Then give examples, like perhaps how you served as a tutor for 4 years.

If you're not tailoring your resume to a particular position, think instead about what most employers are looking for in your field so you can create your different skill categories to focus on. Here's a template to get you started:

Jamie Jobseeker
123 Hire Me Way
New York, NY 66502

Job Objective: Get Me Hired

Skills and Experience

Skill #1 that a job ad mentions

- Here's an example of how I've just happened to exhibit this exact ability you are looking for.
- Here's another specific example showing how good I am at this skill. See how awesome I am!

Skill #2 that most employers look for in my field

- Look at yet another specific example of how I've developed this in-demand talent
- See, this is definitely why you should hire me now.

Here is one pro-tip for a winning resume.

Always be as specific as possible.

Include details under each "skill" category showing how your past work experience, academic experience and professional experience have allowed you to develop each in-demand skill: Don't just say you "worked" — use active terms like "led," "analyzed," and "presented" and then give even more detail.

By taking this approach, your resume can look really impressive, even if you've got no "real" professional experience at all.