



## Career Changers: Guide to Resume Writing

If you are considering a career change, your resume can feel like a barrier to getting an interview. But that doesn't need to be true! Much (if not all) of your experience is transferrable and useful, if presented in the right way. Here are some steps for strategically revamping your resume:

### **STEP 1: What do they want?**

While there are obstacles for any career changer, you can tackle them by re-packaging your experiences and skills on your resume to address the audience's needs. This requires some audience analysis.

***Make a list of what the company is looking for using these three "audience analysis" techniques:***

#### **1. Review the job description:**

This is true for any job seeker, but even more so for a career changer. Write down the obvious things that the company is looking for (qualifications section) but also read between the lines in the job duties and write down things you think they would desire from the person in that role.

#### **2. Review the company website:**

Look at the company's mission statement, values, recent press releases and other job descriptions. What are some common threads you notice? This will help you target your resume and cover letter.

#### **3. Speak to people within the organization:**

Not only will this give you an inside scoop as to what the organization looks for and how to approach your resume, but it will build your professional network!

### **STEP 2: How do you meet those needs?**

A person making a lateral move or seeking a promotion within the same field has an easier time communicating how they meet the recruiter's needs, but that doesn't mean they are a better fit than you! Using the following techniques will help you communicate why you bring a unique skill set and still meet the criteria for the job.

***Use the list you made above to implement the following strategies on your resume:***

#### **1. Transferable skills**

Transferable skills are skills you have acquired during any activity in your life—jobs, classes, projects, hobbies, volunteering, virtually anything—that are transferable and applicable to what you want to do in



your next job. Transferable skills are important for the career changer because many of your qualifications may not be from your work experience but from other facets of your life (volunteer experience, personal accomplishments, education, etc.). Using the job description, pull out various skills that you believe you have and then generate examples of times you have demonstrated these abilities in your life.

## 2. Keywords

Keywords are important because many organizations are now using Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to filter through resumes. An ATS will throw out resumes that do not have enough keywords in common with what they are looking for. This can be the biggest hurdle for career changers because your resume may not naturally contain the right keywords. But you can work with the system and not against it by seeking out these keywords and including them in your resume.

An effective way to come up with keywords is to look at the job description and highlight words – specifically those words that are more technical in nature (specific software, industry-specific knowledge, etc.). Then include them in your resume if you can do so while remaining honest about your experiences and skills. Here is an example of a job description with the keywords highlighted:

### **BUSINESS ANALYST**

#### **Key Responsibilities**

- Identify and work with **stakeholders** to define and document project scope
- **Elicit, analyze and document** clear concise, detailed business requirements
- Partner with Business System Analysts to ensure **traceability of business requirements to technical requirements**
- Ensure technical requirements and design meet and support the business needs
- Work closely with Quality Assurance team for **project testing strategy and plans**
- Plan, coordinate and execute **User Acceptance Testing (UAT)** to ensure solution delivered meets business needs

#### **Key requirements/skills/experience**

- **3+ years of project experience** and **project methodology including requirements definition**
- Proficiency in **Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Visio, and Blueprint**
- Excellent **written, verbal, communication and presentation skills**
- Strong **interpersonal skills** including **leadership, diplomacy and conflict management**
- **Four year college degree** required or equivalent work experience
- **Six Sigma** and **Business Analyst training** or certification (**CCBA, CBAP**) a plus



### 3. Strategic organization

Seasoned professionals often order the sections of their resume with work experience on top followed by education and certifications and then volunteer or leadership experience. This order can cause some of the most relevant experiences to end up on the second page and hidden from the recruiter. For example, If you are transitioning from higher education administration to counseling and you earned a license in Marriage and Family Therapy, don't force yourself to stick to the "typical" organization of a resume. Put your license on the top! Utilize an order that demonstrates you are the best person for the job.

### 4. Marketing using resume format

While a resume should always contain honest information, formatting can drastically change the way this information is communicated and perceived. Any of the following formats can work for career changers as long as it is used strategically:

- **Chronological** – Experiences are listed in the order in which they happened; most recent to oldest. This format is generally used by applicants with extensive related experience, or for those applying within their organization for a lateral move or promotion. If done well, it can be an effective format for career changers, but it is generally not recommended because it highlights experiences not transferable skills.
- **Functional** – A functional resume highlights transferable skills and simply lists work experiences without additional detail. This format is often recommended for people with little to no work experience.
- **Combination** – A combination resume is just what it sounds like; a combination of the chronological and functional formats. Combination resumes highlight transferable skills while still featuring work experience.

### STEP 3: Cover Letter

For a career changer, a solid cover letter is vital. Many of the principles introduced here apply to the cover letter, as well. Please see our handout "Career Changers: Writing an Effective Cover Letter" for assistance!



## Case Study: Career changer from program director to medical sales

Below is an example of a **chronological resume**. It is chronological because he listed his work experience in backward chronological order first, with little attention given to transferable skills.

While this is a good resume for a job within the athletic field, “Jay” came to Career Development wanting to break into medical sales. This resume would likely be thrown out by a sales recruiter because it provides little evidence that Jay could transition well into a sales role. See the next page for Jay’s new resume.

123.456.7891 • JKINESIOLOGY@GMAIL.COM

## JAY KINESIOLOGY

---

RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

**Site Director**, YMCA Child Care, St. Paul, MN, August 2014-Present

- Alleviated communication issues by implementing a client friendly website to better serve the needs of each individual family allowing them to access important documents, see upcoming events, and access registration.
- Managed staff and received training in Hiring the Best and Human Resources to ensure employee retention.
- Fundraised for the YMCA by asking clients directly and enlisting parent volunteer fundraisers to ensure reaching goal of \$10,000 for the Shoreview branch.

**Sports and Programming Internship**, YMCA, Shoreview, MN Jan 2014-Present

- Coordinated budgets and schedules for field trips in partnership with supervisors and field trip sites.
- Assisted in interviews and weekly meetings that focused on preparing for fundraising campaigns.

**Summer Sports Lead Program Staff**, YMCA, Shoreview, MN April- Present

- Prepared a 13 week daily program schedule for a summer sports program.
- Strategized with supervisor to plan for staffing needs and budgetary constraints.

**Specialty Coach**, YMCA, Shoreview, MN Sept 2013-Present

- Coached classes for basketball, gymnastics, and soccer for ages ranging from 3-11 years old.
- Customized class activities to ensure positive growth for kids.

**Program Staff**, Island Lake Elementary, Shoreview, MN Sept 2013-Present

- Oversaw daily attendance and activities for maximum participation for grades K-5.
- Communicated daily with the supervisor and other staff to guarantee safety and organization.

---

EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Science, Kinesiology with emphasis in Health and Wellness**  
**Coaching Minor, GPA 3.6**  
 University of Northwestern-St. Paul, St. Paul, MN, Graduation Date: May 2013

- Awarded Dean’s list (2012)

---

COURSES AND TRAINING

**Coaching Theory:**

- Studied vital skills of coaching strategies and how to deal with players of different ages.
- Used this class to aide in my overall personal philosophy with coaching.

**Health and Fitness Evaluation and Diagnosis:**

- Learned how to design workouts based on medical history, current condition of fitness, and desired goals of the individual.
- Directly utilized this class in the development of the strength and conditioning



Below is an example of a **combination resume**. It is considered a combination resume because it contains attributes of both a functional resume (transferable skills listed within the paragraph in the top and the key knowledge section) and a chronological resume (the experience section).

Because Jay thought in-depth about his audience (a medical sales recruiter and/or manager), his new resume contains many key words and pays special attention to numbers and measurable results. He did this because he knew that sales is a very results-driven field. Jay also used his educational background to his advantage by highlighting knowledge areas that would be pertinent to medical sales.

123.456.7891 • JKINESIOLOGY@GMAIL.COM

## JAY KINESIOLOGY

Ambitious, self-motivated professional with a solid background in customer service, sales, interpersonal, and management skills, seeking to launch new career as a medical sales representative. Background in the medical field, eagerness to learn, and strong desire to succeed.

### KEY KNOWLEDGE AREAS

Goal Setting and Fulfillment • Customer Relationship Management • Microsoft Word • Microsoft Excel • PowerPoint • Publisher • Web Design • Human Anatomy • Exercise Physiology • Nutrition • First Aide • Diplomatic Complaint Resolution • Project Management

### EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology with emphasis in Health and Wellness; Minor in Coaching**

University of Northwestern, St. Paul, MN, May 2013

- GPA 3.6
- Awarded Dean's list (2012, 2013)

### EXPERIENCE

**Site Director, YMCA Child Care, August 2014-Present, St. Paul, MN**

- Accomplished **115%** of participant goals (number of children in the program) and grew the program to an all-time high, bringing in **\$2,500** weekly, through holding open houses, speaking to parents about our program, and working closely with school administration.
- Contributed to **\$2,500,000** in total revenue by the Child Care department that finished **\$45,000** above net sales goal, with a final amount of **\$1,120,000** in net sales for 2014.
- Alleviated communication issues by implementing a client friendly website to better serve the needs of each individual family allowing them to access important documents, see upcoming events, and access registration.
- Fundraised for the YMCA by asking clients directly and enlisting parent volunteer fundraisers to ensure reaching goal of **\$10,000** for the Shoreview branch.
- Managed staff and received training in Hiring the Best and Human Resources to ensure employee retention.

**Sales, LA Fitness, April 2013-August 2013, New Brighton, MN**

- **Top sales performer** at New Brighton site
- Cold called **over 30 customers** daily to ensure billing is up to date on non-paid accounts.
- Aided members in renewing yearly and monthly memberships.

**Owner, Jarred's Computers, August 2009-January 2011, Phoenix, AZ**

- Grew from 1-2 computers a week to 10 computers a week resulting in an extra **\$800** a week of sales by communicating with a wide range of client networking through phone calls, emails, and in person meetings to discuss commitment and retention of clients.
- Developed and managed a small business building and distributing desktop computers.
- Installed over 40 computers to start a telemarketing company and administered tech support for the company.