



Customizing Your Resume

1. Cut and paste job description into an MS Word file and save it –
Example: (“BrubakerJohnAetnaProjectManagerPosition01514”).
2. Do a Keyword Analysis of the ad – reading the advertisement and highlighting what appears to you to be the top 6 or so phrases (one, two and three word phrases along with longer phrases and sentences). Pay special attention to the CORE DESCRIPTION OF THE POSITION. Also pay special attention to phrases that identify skills/knowledge that you have that we do NOT have in the existing content. Be sure to properly use terminology and phraseology of the industry and job function.

NOTE: The shorter phrase you highlight (three words max) will be adapted for use in the Core Competencies. Longer phrases/sentences you highlight might be later integrated into the Opening Sentence and Cover Letter.

3. Take those phrases, highlight them in red, and put them at the top of the MS Word file. Then take THAT and bring it into the appropriate one page resume. Re-save/rename the file – Example: (“BrubakerJohnProjectManagerResume01514”).
4. Write a Headline (“Title”) of the resume that matches – or comes as close as you can to matching, the EXACT job title you are going after. Specific wording makes a difference, so cut out any “fluff” (adjectives such as “Results-Oriented” or “Award-winning”). The “perfect” title or headline for any resume is the “exact” job title you are going after. If you cannot do that – because your background doesn’t fit – then change the word “Profile” to “Objective” and write in “A position as an . . .” – and use the title you are going after.
5. Do a heavy upgrade of the Core Competencies. (**NOTE:** Make sure when you insert the new content that you don’t lose the old. You want to make sure you have a “Total Core Competencies” file. Save that to a separate file and use it the next time you are customizing a resume for this particular job category.) Now, “Think like a hiring manager” – The goal is to get your core competencies to be as close a match as you can to the core competencies they seek – as described in the ad. Pay special attention to:

- a. Skills/phrases that are an exact match – keep them as is.

- b. Skills/phrases that are already in your core competencies, but in which you use different wording than the ad uses. Change it to their wording. (Example – you have “Customer Service” and the ad uses the phrase “Client Services”. Change “Customer Service” to “Client Services”). Pay special attention to the first line going across – these should capture the three strongest and most important skills of the work.
 - c. Skills/phrases that you have and they want, but are not now in your Core Competencies. Take those and swap them out for competencies that you have that they are NOT looking for. Very important that you “think like them.” Example might be – you have “Team Building” in your set, but the position you are applying for is a pure individual contributor position. If you are featuring skills that the position does not look for, you are creating distance between yourself and the hiring manager. Delete (as appropriate) any skills you have listed that the ad doesn’t call for.
 - d. If you feel that you want to “add a line” – then try and add in three skills. Same thing with taking away a line. If you start, for example, with 15 (3 x 5), you might end up with 12 (3 x 4). I like even lines if possible
 - e. Get skillful in “editing” your skills so that they fit in the space allowed. If you need to, then highlight the box and change it to a 9 point font.
 - f. The “objective” here is to have a resume with a 60-70% “near perfect” match to the ad.
6. Take a shot at re-languaging the OPENING SENTENCE so that it will read to the skeptical hiring manager why you are such a great fit for this position. The more it “feels” to them that you echo their language, terminology, philosophies and desired skills/knowledge set, the better it is. The Key focus is to ANSWER THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOB – to make your best argument. This is the sentence which, if proven true in the Resume and Cover Letter, will make you a desirable candidate. Try to avoid beautifully phrased, but somewhat vague, terminology. The more concrete your words fitting their needs, the stronger your argument. This is the ESSENCE of customization. **NOTE:** Imagine that you are on the phone with the hiring manager and he/she has asked you “give me, in a single sentence, why you are a good fit for the job” – You would say “Because I am a . . . “ (Hint – it is perfectly fine to use the adjectives here, “award winning, results oriented....”).
7. Whatever doesn’t make sense to fit into the Core Competencies, embed whatever of those phrases or concepts you can into the rest of the resume. This is particularly useful for putting in specific phrases that they use that strike you, but don’t necessarily fit into this short form tight space “Core Competencies.” In the sample that follows, you will see this phrase from a job description:
- “Manage multiple priorities under tight deadlines to advance speed-to-market expectations.”*
- This is not something that lends itself to being listed in “Core Competencies”. But I would work to get the phrases “manage multiple priorities under tight deadlines” and possible “speed-to-market” in either the resume or the cover letter. The multiple priorities phrasing should fit just about every job seeker – and by inserting it you are upping your customized presentation. Also realize that whatever

you can't get into the resume, you will get a second shot to use these phrases in the cover letter.

To watch me painstakingly go through an example of this, watch this webinar: **How to Win at Online Job Search** bit.ly/ZpPnTh (More than an hour showing in detail how to "customize" a resume and letter for a particular company/position, submit it and relentlessly follow up.)