## Demystifying Resume Keywords

Many recruiters are now opting to scan applicant resumes into a computerized screening database system in their endeavors to simplify the screening and selection process. For a job seeker this means that when developing their resume they must not only ensure that the content is impressive and distinguishable from their competitor's but also that it is keyword optimized in order to secure a high ranking during a computer-based search.

Previously known as buzz words, keywords are generally nouns (however can also include verbs), and are typically structured into compulsory and advantageous categories to identify crucial skills and experience required in a candidate.

To perform a resume search the recruiter enters relevant keywords into their computerized tracking system. Comparable to an internet search engine (which uses a spider to 'crawl' around the internet to assemble appropriate information according to the stipulated keywords), a recruiter's computerized tracking system recognizes specific keywords within all the resumes located on their database. When the tracking system locates a keyword, it is termed a 'hit', with the greater number of relevant keywords located in the document giving that resume a higher ranking.

To guarantee your resume will be included among the highest ranked document, keywords should be industry/job specific and applicable to what a recruiter or potential employer would be looking for in a suitable job applicant. They may include job titles, relevant skills, industry jargon, and necessary education / academic achievements.

Keywords can be generated from the resources outlined below:

- Job postings – either printed or online;
- Job descriptions / person specifications;
- Industry Association Websites;
- Career related discussion forums;
- Yellow Pages – either printed or online;
- Job Related Publications (which can include the Occupational Outlook Handbook – http://bls.gov/oco/home.htm; or O*Net – http://online.onetcenter.org);
- Resume and career exploration books/material;
- Corporate websites (including our organization; or job opportunities web pages);
- Other resumes that have been posted online; to name a few.

To optimize your resume's ranking with search engines and computer tracking systems include a 'keyword' section toward the forefront of your document as well as incorporating keywords throughout your resume. Avoid placing keywords nonsensically throughout your document as you must maintain a fluent writing style to ensure your resume flows smoothly.

Following is an example of a keyword section for a Senior Brand Manager's resume which was strategically positioned at the forefront of their document:

KEYWORDS:
Brand Equity Building, Brand Planning, Brand Portfolio Management, Marketing Strategy Planning, Dynamic Marketing Program Planning, Communication & Media Planning, Consumer & Market Research, New Product Development & Product Launch, Project Management & Fruition, Value-Based Management Approach, Cross-functional Relationship Development, Budget Management & Forecasting, Key Alliance & Partnership Building, Influential Communication Style, Distribution Channels Setup & Expansion, Sales & Operational Planning, Analytical & Conceptual Problem Solving.

To enhance the resume's ranking when being reviewed by a computer applicant screening system or internet search, similar keywords were also included throughout the body of the resume.

As a final measure to ensure you have included sufficient keywords in your resume scan, mark them with a highlighting pen to confirm consistent placement throughout your document.

Continued success!


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