



# TAILORING YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER



In today's highly competitive job market, customizing both your resume and cover letter to each individual position will differentiate you from other applicants and demonstrate that you are the ideal fit for the opportunity. This is often the difference between getting an interview and being passed over.

**250+** many open positions receive over 250 applications

## *Why tailor?*

Hiring managers often rely on software to select the best candidates by scanning for keywords in resumes, cover letters and even LinkedIn profiles. Other employers look for keywords manually. If your materials lack the keywords they're looking for, you may get overlooked.

## *Here's how to do it: keywords.*

Tailoring your resume and cover letter is all about including the right keywords. How do you do that? It's a simple two-step process.

## *Step 1*

**Identify how your background and skills align with the role.**

Take a look at the job description. The keywords that relate to you will be pretty obvious. They will relate to things like:

- Wording used to describe the business and position
- Skills required
- Types of experience the employer is looking for

Highlight and write down the likely keywords. Pay close attention to the specific wording used. Once you've compiled a list, you should be able to draft a brand statement that follows this format:

## MY \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ MAKE ME AN EXCELLENT CANDIDATE FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

*Here are two examples:*

*"My academic background in marketing, my skills in social media and data analysis, as well as my interest in pursuing a career in food branding make me an excellent candidate for this opportunity."*

*"My three years of experience in sales and customer service, my skills in fundraising and development, and my passion for helping diverse communities access health-focused education make me an excellent candidate for this position."*

## Step 2

Incorporate the keywords into your resume and cover letter.

It's time to tailor. Look for any opportunity to use the keywords—the specific words, as much as possible—throughout your resume.

Do the same in your cover letter—look for opportunities to use keyword language in how you articulate your experience, skills, personal strengths, goals and passions.

Don't be afraid to use the same keyword more than once.

- In your summary statement
- In your experience section
- In your skills section

Think about what might make you different from any other qualified candidate (sometimes this is a specific passion you have, or something compelling about your background, that seems relevant to the position). Be sure to make this claim clearly in the cover letter and audit the resume to make sure it supports this claim.

*Differentiate Yourself!*