

Network to Work Meeting

February 2021

RESOURCE DOCUMENT – *RESUME WRITING*

Highlighting your Skills and Abilities in your Resume

Let's imagine that you are in a job interview discussing why you might be a good candidate for the job. What would you tell the interviewer? Would you tell her a list of things you have done in previous jobs, that is, a list of your job duties and tasks? If so, why? What does a list of tasks say about who you are?

Here's a different scenario. You are at another interview and the interviewer asks you about yourself and why you are a good fit for the job. What if this time you answered the question by saying something like "*I am a(n) _____.*" This answer would let you talk about your qualities, skills, talents and accomplishments. It speaks to **who you are**, not the **things you do**.

This is what will distinguish you from the others applying for the job.

It is important to use your resume to highlight your skills and abilities in order to describe who you are. If your resume doesn't answer the question "I am a(n) . . .", then you are selling yourself short. That's why we encourage you to include a Summary of Qualifications, Personal Profile, Skills Summary or something similar on your resume.

This section of your resume is where you will highlight your qualities, your special work-related skills, your transferrable skills and your abilities. It is always best if you can also include how you used those skills to achieve notable accomplishments in the workplace.

Note: You should modify this section of your resume depending upon the skills required for the particular job for which you are applying. By doing so, you are tailoring your resume to the job.

Identifying and Linking Skills to Accomplishments

Before you can write a Summary of Qualifications or Skills Summary, however, you need to get clear on your skills and talents. Sometimes it can be difficult to identify these; often we take for granted the things we are good at and assume that everyone can do what we do. So let's look at some ways to help you clarify your skills.

1. One way to appreciate your skills and abilities is to **start by making a list of your notable workplace accomplishments**. For example, let's say you are a cashier in a grocery store. You might include an accomplishment like the following in your resume. **Then you can identify the skills behind your accomplishment**.

For example:

Accomplishment:

- *Served hundreds of shoppers with a smile during busy shifts, including a pre-Thanksgiving Day record of 314 shoppers checked and bagged.*

Skills involved in this accomplishment:

- *Patience*
- *Ability to stay calm and maintain grace under pressure*
- *Excellent interpersonal skills*
- *The ability to engage with shoppers and help them manage their emotions during stressful shopping times*
- *Ability to be focused on scanning grocery items with speed and without distraction*
- *Excellent sense of spatial relationships resulting in bags packed efficiently and effectively.*

Below is an example of a Summary of Qualifications for a cashier. Notice how it basically says:

- “(I am a) Cashier with 6+ years of experience”;
- “(I am a) person who has served hundreds of shoppers . . .”;
- “(I am a) person who is well spoken and easy to talk to . . .”

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS (cashier)

- Cashier with 6+ years of experience working for major retailers and grocery stores;
- Served hundreds of shoppers during busy shifts, including a pre-Thanksgiving Day record of 314 shoppers checked and bagged;
- Well-spoken and easy to talk to, able to strike to conversations with customers and improve their shopping experience;
- Native English speaker and proficient in spoken Spanish;
- Coordinated the arrangement of autumn and winter holiday decorations, helping our Trader Joe's receive the award for “Most Festive” California Branch in 2015;
- Awarded “Employee of the Month” on three separate occasions.

2. A second way to identify and link your skills and accomplishments is to start by listing your skills first, and then think about how you have used these skills in the workplace. For example:

Skills:

- *Excellent written communication skills*
- *Extensive knowledge of automotive mechanics and technology*

Accomplishment:

- *Wrote a detailed yet easily readable user manual for customers at a large car dealership. To date the dealer has distributed over 500 manuals to wide acclaim.*

So now let's get to working identifying your skills:

Activity: Identifying Your Skills

Consider the questions below and write out your answers. Can you clarify your skills?

1. A past or current supervisor always counts on you for something s/he thinks you do especially well. What is it?
2. If you had to teach your co-workers how to do a great job in your line of work, what special thing do you do that you could teach them? (What do you know and do really well?)
3. If others were to brag about you and your skills, what would they say?
4. Can you brag about yourself? What are you proud of about yourself?
5. What skills or abilities do your friends or family members count on you for?
6. Think of a great work accomplishment. What skills did it involve?
7. What are your favorite hobbies? What skills do they involve? For example:
 - a. Cooking: Skills may include being: creative; or detail oriented & precise; cooking for others may demonstrate great interpersonal skills.
 - b. Puzzles: Skills may include being analytical & focused.
 - c. Gardening: Skills may include being creative and having a strong understanding of the science of raising plants.