

Using Strong Verbs in Your Resume

By Emily Sanderson

When preparing a resume, in order to sound assertive and poised, using strong verbs is wise. In order to avoid repetitiveness in your resume you can use a bullet structure which will allow the use of an active voice without the constant usage of nouns. Active voice is a simple and straight forward way you can present your qualities to a potential employer; it can make reading your resume easy and quick. Don't be afraid to take responsibility for the things you have accomplished in past work experience; it may get you the job you have been waiting for



Whether you use bullets or place structured phrases in prose form separated by semicolons in your resume, you know that resumes must sound assertive, project confidence, and place you in a category above the rest. Using strong action verbs in your consistently structured phrases makes your resume easy to read; potential employers can retain more information about you. In addition, solidly written phrases establish that you will actively deliver in the position for which you are applying.

Active versus Passive Voice

So you have taken a writing class or two. Perhaps in your current job you write all the time to a specific audience using an accepted format. Depending on your profession, you may use passive voice more frequently despite having been taught to use active verbs in school, but rightly so. The following are two examples of the differences between passive and active voice:

Passive: "The matter will be given careful consideration."

Active: "The firm will consider the matter carefully."

Passive: "RFP responses were evaluated in seven categories."

Active: "Staff evaluated RFP responses in seven categories."

Passive voice deflects the subject of the sentence in order to focus more on the object or action. This format is very appropriate for business documents, particularly for large companies. However, when writing your resume, you are talking about the actions of one person — you — and about how you are qualified and experienced for a position for which you are applying. The first step in exerting yourself into the limelight is through the use of active verbs in the structured phrases in your experience section.

We have already established that the subject of your resume is you. However, in order to avoid repetitive language and cut out unneeded verbiage, the subject is not mentioned in the structured phrases. The following is a sample list of bullets on a resume:

- Planned and directed company involvement in trade shows
- Conducted national and international marketing and advertising campaigns
- Organized annual sales meetings and conducted sales report presentations

- Managed sales teams of 12 to 15 sales personnel
- Headed department hiring processes and mediated conflict resolution

Notice that these structured phrases are not complete sentences, but if they were, the subject would be “I” in every case. Use present tense for describing the job functions of a job you are at presently and past tense for previous job functions at former employers, of course. Be varied in the verbs that you choose — don’t use the same ones over and over again. The following is a list of active verbs to keep in your toolbox.

Achieve	File
Advise	Format
Aid	Handle
Analyze	Help
Appeal	Instruct
Arbitrate	Interface
Arrange	Interpret
Assess	Lead
Assist	Litigate
Clarify	Manage
Coach	Mediate
Collaborate	Negotiate
Collect	Organize
Combine	Oversee
Compile	Perform
Compose	Plan
Conduct	Prepare
Connect	Produce
Consult	Proofread
Coordinate	Provide
Counsel	Represent
Craft	Research
Create	Resolve
Defend	Review
Demonstrate	Serve
Design	Summarize
Develop	Supervise
Diagnose	Survey
Direct	Teach
Distinguish	Transcribe
Draft	Tutor
Edit	Write
Evaluate	

This list is just a place to start. Your specific work experience may call for more specific verbiage. Use words like “assist” and “aid” sparingly. You want to show potential employers that you were into a project up to your elbows,

and don't be afraid to take responsibility for things that you have implemented, organized, and participated in. You have worked hard to be where you are right now.

Some people are amazed at what they have accomplished in their careers when they put everything side by side. Your resume should be designed to get you a first interview, but it may also serve to empower you. Often in a work environment we use the subject "we" in describing accomplishments, and that is because we (there's that word again) have become so team oriented and focused on the success of the overall companies for which we work.

But remember: a resume is all about your professional accomplishments and your work experience. Potential employers want to know about the transferable skills you have gained through your previous work experience that can be applied to their organizations, and through the use of strong, active verbs, you will proclaim your qualifications with confidence.

