

# Resume Makeover

When John came in to have his resume reviewed he admitted he wasn't sure what he needed to include or even what the resume was supposed to do for him. After a conversation about his goals and his background, we see a very different picture than the one he originally presented on paper. Below are the before and after versions of his resume.

## BEFORE

|                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                          |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>John Wyatt</b><br>Wheelock Student Center 3622<br>Tacoma, WA 98416<br>(612) 555-5555<br>jwyatt@pugetsound.edu         |                                                                                                                                                                          |            |
| <b>EXPERIENCE:</b>                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                          |            |
| December '06 to June '08                                                                                                 | Super One Foods                                                                                                                                                          | Duluth, MN |
|                                                                                                                          | <b>Bakery Department Employee</b><br>Wrapping product<br>Preparing par-bake and frozen foods to be baked<br>Cake Decorating                                              |            |
| June '09-August '09                                                                                                      | YMCA Camp Widjiwagan                                                                                                                                                     | Ely, MN    |
|                                                                                                                          | <b>Trail Building Staff</b><br>Organizing and distributing large amounts of equipment and food<br>Repairing equipment ranging from tents to single burner Coleman stoves |            |
| August '09- August '10                                                                                                   | Super One Foods                                                                                                                                                          | Duluth, MN |
|                                                                                                                          | <b>Cashier</b><br>Cashiering<br>Stocking shelves<br>Assisting customers                                                                                                  |            |
| September '10-Present                                                                                                    | University of Puget Sound                                                                                                                                                | Tacoma, WA |
|                                                                                                                          | <b>Diversion Café Barista</b><br>Making coffee<br>Cashiering<br>Assisting customers                                                                                      |            |
| <b>EDUCATION:</b><br>Marshall High School diploma (May 2010)<br>University of Puget Sound (projected graduation May '14) |                                                                                                                                                                          |            |
| <b>SKILLS:</b> Proficient in German                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                          |            |
| <b>REFERENCES:</b> Available upon request.                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                          |            |

## Focus Changes Everything

Once John had a clear focus, he added information to every part of his resume to support that goal. Since he was applying to a program he had participated in, he included that experience under his **education**.

Including **relevant coursework** helped demonstrate his level of commitment to language learning, and he selected some **relevant experiences** he had that connected to the role.

Lastly, he chose to include **activities** directly related to the type of organization and demonstrated additional skills he had to offer.

In the end, the final version of John's resume told a clear story of someone with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the role he wanted.

## Biggest Issues

**Lack of focus:** Based on the information shared, it wasn't clear what kind of role he wanted. When asked, John said he was looking for a camp counselor position at a foreign language camp he attended in high school, yet there was nothing shared to support that goal.

**Poor organization:** John needed to reverse the order he used for both the experience and education and include the title of his degree.

**Lack of visual appeal:** His dates of employment were filling up all the white space on the left side of the page. By moving them to the right he could use the space more effectively.

**Unnecessary phrase:** Employers assume that you will provide references, so there's no reason to include the statement "References Available upon Request"

## AFTER

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>John Wyatt</b><br>Wheelock Student Center 3622, Tacoma, WA 98416<br>Cell: (612) 555-5555 • jwyatt@pugetsound.edu                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                    |
| <b>OBJECTIVE:</b> An Assistant Counselor position at the Concordia Language Villages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                    |
| <b>EDUCATION:</b><br>Bachelors of Arts in <b>German Language and Literature</b><br>University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA<br>Expected May 2014                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                    |
| German Intensive Camp, Concordia Language Village, Moorhead, MN<br>August 2008<br><i>* Earned college credit and placed into intermediate level courses at university</i>                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |
| <b>RELEVANT COURSEWORK:</b><br>Intermediate and Advanced German Language • Twentieth Century German Film •<br>The Age of Goethe* • German History and Political Systems* • International Business<br><i>* Taught in German</i>                                                                                                                               |                    |
| <b>RELEVANT EXPERIENCE:</b><br><b>Course Assistant, German Department</b><br>University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Sept. 2011-Present |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Score tests and grade basic assignments for 101 and 102 level German courses</li><li>Meet with struggling students and guide in-class discussion groups</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                      |                    |
| <b>Leader, German Conversation Group</b><br>University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Jan. 2011-Present  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Initiated an informal group conversation group for students to practice German language skills and develop a community with like-minded interests.</li><li>Develop conversation topics for weekly meetings by reading German-language news publications</li><li>Coordinate a monthly German film night</li></ul>       |                    |
| <b>Trail Building Staff</b><br>YMCA Camp Widjiwagan, Ely, MN                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | June-August 2009   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Organized and distributed large amounts of equipment and food for more than 250 campers and staff</li><li>Repaired equipment ranging from tents to single burner Coleman stoves</li><li>Met with groups of campers to develop goals before and after trail</li><li>Taught Wilderness Water treatment classes</li></ul> |                    |
| <b>OTHER EXPERIENCE:</b><br><b>Barista</b> , Diversion Café, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA<br>Sept. 2010-Present                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                    |
| <b>ACTIVITIES:</b><br>Member, Puget Sound Outdoors<br>Member, Kayak Club                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                    |

## Content: Effective Descriptions

The description of experience is just as important as the way it looks. No matter how well organized the resume, it can backfire if it doesn't communicate the necessary skills and experience effectively. **Use statements to tell a story that make it clear what skills and knowledge can be applied at the employer's organization.**

Use strong action verbs in the past tense (present for current positions) and provide sufficient detail. Write in a concise style that omits personal pronouns (I, my) and articles (a, the). Below are some example resume statements and ways to strengthen them:

### Example: Receptionist at a Physical Therapy Clinic

Poor: Providing customer service  
Better: Provided customer service for physical therapy patients

Consider: *What did the service entail?*  
*Were there policies and procedures?*  
*What were the results?*

**Best: Scheduled appointments, processed payments, and resolved billing issues for a busy physical therapy clinic**

### Example: Customs Person, Bryn Mawr College

Poor: Responsible for planning programs and events  
Better: Designed programs and events for 50 residents

Consider: *What kinds of programs?*  
*What was the purpose?*  
*What was the impact?/outcome?*

**Best: Designed alcohol awareness programs and events for 50 first-year residents resulting in the lowest number of alcohol-related incidents among all of the halls**

### Example: Research Assistant, Psychology Department

Poor: Duties included research  
Better: Conducted research on homelessness rates in Tacoma

Consider: *What was the purpose of your research?*  
*What methods did you use to collect information?*  
*How did you analyze the information?*  
*What did you do with the data you collected?*

**Best: Collected quantitative data from county demographic sources and interviewed 25-30 residents of current shelters to gather personal narratives.**

— Or —

**Researched homelessness rates in Philadelphia and drafted summary documentation to support grant application for funds to create new homeless shelter.**

#### Phrases to avoid:

Responsible for...Assisted with....Helped with...Duties included...

Why? Each of these common sentence openers are usually followed by a laundry list of duties performed. Often you'll find the verb you need directly following one of these phrases.