

Writing Powerful Bullets

Guidelines

Anatomy of Powerful Bullets

Powerful resume bullets ‘paint a picture’ with words of the impact you have had and the skills you have demonstrated in previous work, volunteer, and educational experiences. Writing your bullets this way helps employers more easily assess how you might meet their needs. To make your bullets as powerful as possible, ask yourself the following questions when writing them.

- Does each bullet start with a powerful verb? (past tense for past-tense jobs)
- Does each bullet ‘show’ (rather than just tell) what I have to offer?
- Are my bullets concise? (This does not necessarily mean short. It means to-the-point.)
- Do my bullets flow? Or does the reader have to re-read them to understand what I am trying to communicate?
- Am I showcasing the skills/attributes that are most relevant to this audience?

‘Before’ Bullets

Many applicants include ambiguous descriptions of their job duties. This approach prevents the employer from assessing the impact you had, the skills you developed/enhanced, and how you might meet their needs.

Administrative Assistant

Jan 2015 – Present

Jensen Appraisal Company

Germantown, PA

- Conducted research on properties
- Assisted in appraisal report compilation, editing, and generating
- Corresponded with current and potential clients; ran accounts payable/receivable system
- Completed misc. office paperwork/errands

Improvement Process

To improve vague, duty-based bullets, brainstorm the skills you demonstrated and the things you accomplished. Then incorporate key, relevant ideas into your bullets.

What did I accomplish for company, co-workers, and/or clients?

- Maintained organization amid chaos which literally kept this small business going and enhanced quality of products provided to customers
- Saved company thousands of dollars keeping accurate records (which avoided IRS audit fees) and collecting payments for delinquent accounts
- Maintained effective working relationships with clients

What skills did this require?

- People skills/ Adaptability/flexibility
- Problem-solving/research
- Business judgment
- Work well under pressure
- Organization/attention to detail
- Appraisal software competence

‘After’ Bullets

The applicant’s bullets now paint a powerful picture for the employer of what the applicant can do to meet their needs.

Administrative Assistant

Jan 2005 – Aug 2008

Jensen Appraisal Company

Germantown, PA

- Increased company capacity to serve more clients by streamlining and optimizing appraisal report process
- Utilized exceptional communication and problem-solving capacities to maintain effective relationships with existing and new clients
- Acquired rapid proficiency in Alamode, ACI, Apex, and RMLS, which increased product quality and decreased turn-around time for clients
- Utilized interpersonal skills and business savvy to collect funds from delinquent accounts, which recovered thousands of company dollars annually

More Before & After Samples

VAL'S BEFORE BULLETS

Crew Member/Supervisor

Arctic Circle

- Supervisor over employees, counted change
- Cooked the food for guests
- Took orders on the register
- Took out orders to the guest

Aug 2018 – Present
Idaho Falls, ID

-Bullets need more details
-What skills/attributes did he demonstrate or enhance?
-What did he accomplish for company or customers?

VAL'S AFTER BULLETS

Crew Member/Supervisor

Arctic Circle

- Prepared high-volume food orders for hundreds of customers a day
- Ensured customer satisfaction through ability to assess and meet customer needs when issues arose
- Supervised 8 employees daily and organized work schedules for entire 24-person crew
- Maintained quality of food orders through efficient multi-tasking and adapting well under pressure

Aug 2018 – Present
Idaho Falls, ID

MELINDA'S BEFORE BULLETS

Teacher's Assistant

Hand in Hand Development Center

- Assisted school teachers daily in the classroom
- Prepared lunch
- Helped students participate in class activities
- Tutored students in literacy

Apr 2019 – Present
Vancouver, WA

Weak verbs

MELINDA'S AFTER BULLETS

Teacher's Assistant

Hand in Hand Development Center

- Applied optimal learning techniques while facilitating classroom story, play, and project time with 20 students daily
- Implemented an 8-student literacy tutoring program which enhanced reading and grammar skills
- Exceeded health and safety inspection standards by consistently maintaining clean and organized eating and learning environments throughout the day

Apr 2019 – Present
Vancouver, WA

MATTHEW'S BEFORE BULLETS

Full-Time Volunteer Representative

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

- Learned Spanish and the native language of Guarani. Communicated in Spanish daily
- My responsibilities included supervising 6-20 missionaries and coordinating trainings, organizing service projects and meetings, and motivating the missionaries

Asuncion, Paraguay
Dec 2016 - Dec 2018

Does not flow; needs more context

Avoid Personal Pronouns

MATTHEW'S AFTER BULLETS

Full-Time Volunteer Representative

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

- Acquired strong proficiency in both written and spoken Spanish and Guarani within 6 months
- Supervised and motivated 6-20 full-time volunteers, coordinated trainings, and organized service projects and meetings

Asuncion, Paraguay
Dec 2016 - Dec 2018

Writing Powerful Bullets

Practice

The following brainstorm activity will help you create powerful, compelling bullets that will grab your audience's attention.

Who Is Your Audience?

Company Name:

Job Title:

Location:

Top Things Your Audience Wants

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-
-
-
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Most Recent Job

What Did You Do?	What skills did you utilize, develop, Or enhance?	What did you accomplish for company/org, co-workers, clients?

Revised Bullets (Highlight your impact and skills that are most relevant to your audience)

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Next Job

What Did You Do?	What skills did you utilize, develop, Or enhance?	What did you accomplish for company/org, co-workers, clients?

Revised Bullets (Highlight your impact and skills that are most relevant to your audience)

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