

# Resume Writing Best Practices & AI Prompts

*To ensure a standout resume in competitive job markets*

## RESUME WRITING BEST PRACTICES

- **Open with a succinct and attention-grabbing professional summary:** These three to four sentences should showcase the top skills and accomplishments aligned with your future career objectives. It is *not* an objective statement.
  - The first sentence should be your elevator pitch, an overarching view of your experience, and the biggest value you can offer to a new role.
  - You can follow up by highlighting one or two of your biggest successes so far. This can be a process developed, team members trained, client relationships strengthened, promotion, or performance targets achieved.
  - You can close out with some industry-relevant skills, certifications earned, or impactful soft skills that would be valuable to the prospective employer.
- **Remain concise:** Resume content and bullet points should be short and impactful. Do not include personal pronouns (I, my, me), and while you should aim to be grammatically correct, dropping sentence connectors like “the” or “a” is acceptable and can help content remain straightforward.
- **Prioritize the impact:** Whenever possible, include the value you brought to the organization and the tangible results of your hard work. The CAR method enables hiring managers to easily view the impact you had, helping them visualize how you could replicate that for their organization.
- **Lead with an action:** Starting sentences with action verbs like administered, managed, spearheaded, drove, and facilitated can improve how memorable your content is to readers.
- **Tailor your materials:** Customize your materials to fit the job description and the audience you aim to resonate with. This will also help improve your document’s ability to surpass Applicant Tracking System barriers as you apply for various roles.
- **Be mindful of Length:** A resume should remain under three pages, and if you are a mid-career professional, it should not exceed two pages.

## WRITING YOUR RESUME USING THE CAR METHOD

**When drafting your resume, it is essential to go beyond listing job duties alone**—instead, focus on the value you brought and impact on the organization. Highlighting how you addressed a challenge the organization had, the actions you took, and the results it generated gives hiring managers a glimpse of how you could do the same within a prospective new role. The Challenge, Action, and Result (CAR) Method is a well-respected framework for sharing the incredible impact you have had throughout your career journey, no matter the stage.

- **Challenge:** The problem, issue, or growth opportunity you faced
- **Action:** The specific steps or strategies you took to meet the challenge
- **Result:** The outcome of these actions, including, if possible, measurable results

## APPLYING THE CAR METHOD WHILE WRITING YOUR RESUME

It is best practice to provide the details of each role from two viewpoints within the experience section of your resume. Include a concise two-to-three-sentence snapshot of your overall impact followed by three to five bulleted impact stories under each role. Here is how you can apply the CAR method when crafting each bullet point:

### 1. IDENTIFY THE CHALLENGE

Think about the growth opportunities, key problems, or obstacles the organization faced during your previous roles. Examples of these challenges could include:

- Bringing a new product to market
- Rebuilding client trust
- Reducing operational costs
- Increasing revenues in a competitive market
- Implementing process efficiencies
- Leading a team through a major business transition

**Example of the Challenge:** *“Tasked with building go-to-market strategy for new service line...”*

### 2. COMBINE THE CHALLENGE WITH THE ACTIONS YOU TOOK

Once you have defined the challenge, describe the specific actions you took to resolve the organization’s problem. Focus on the individual and often collaborative contributions that lead to an impactful solution or result.

**Example of the Challenge and Action combined:** *“Tasked with building go-to-market strategy for new service line, combining consumer insights and strategic sales strategy...”*

### 3. HIGHLIGHT THE RESULT

Now, integrate the results of this action, including quantifiable details *whenever possible*. These results could include:

- Percentages tied to business growth, cost reduction, or efficiency improvements
- Revenue gained
- Major project milestones secured
- Time saved or processes optimized
- Positive client or customer feedback
- Awards or recognitions for you and/or your teams

**Example:** *“Tasked with building go-to-market strategy for new service line, combining consumer insights and strategic sales strategy to expand organizations global market presence and drive \$3.5M in added revenue.”*

### 4. NOW REVERSE YOUR STORY TO LEAD WITH THE IMPACT

Reverse the story to lead with the results, ensuring hiring managers read the impact you had first in case they do not finish the story.

**Example:** “Drove \$3.5M in added revenue and expanded global marketing presence by leading consumer insight analysis and sales strategy for new-to-market product.”

## AI PROMPTS FOR MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

Source: (“*The Ultimate AI-Powered Job Search Playbook*,” Michelle Dumas, Distinctive Career Services)

Leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) is an excellent starting point for creating your materials, offering speed and assistance with structuring ideas. However, it's important to always review the output before integrating it into your materials. Reworking the language it provides ensures a personal touch, maintains clarity, and accuracy. After all, this is *your* career story, that means you are the one who can tell it best.

### Role and Industry-Specific Ideation Prompts

- “Can you help me brainstorm achievements related to my [specific role or industry] experience?”
- “Can you suggest some ways to quantify my accomplishments in [specific area or skill]?”
- “What are some examples of accomplishments in [specific field or job title] that I can use for inspiration?”
- “Evaluate my resume like a career coach and identify my most compelling unique selling points.”

### CAR Method Prompts

- “I’d like to turn this achievement from my resume into a compelling bullet using the CAR method: [insert your achievement here]. Can you assist me?”
- “I want to rewrite this work experience from my resume using the CAR method. Here’s the information: [provide the original work experience details]. Can you help me create a STAR-based description?”

### Personal Branding Prompts

- “I am currently searching for a job as a [job title] in the [industry name] industry. Based on my experience and strengths, craft an engaging personal branding statement that highlights my value for my target job.”

### Cover Letter Prompts

- “Can you help me write a cover letter for the position of [job title] at [company name]? Here is some information about my background: [briefly describe your experience, skills, and achievements].”
- “I need assistance in writing a cover letter tailored to this job description: [paste the job description or provide key details]. My relevant experience includes: [briefly describe your relevant experience].”