



CAREER CONNECTION

Department of Career Services & Testing

Impactful Words Perfect for Your Resume

by Dana Leavy

Nothing is worse (at least for HR) than reading a resume littered with nondescript, blah-sounding adjectives that act more as filler verbiage than powerful marketing phrases that pique your interest.

Case in point:

“Dedicated and results-oriented professional with 10 years’ experience supporting marketing and advertising departments.”

If I asked you what that that person does for a living, I would bet you have no idea.

Even worse – you could probably name 15 people just like that who are also dedicated to what they do in some capacity, and enjoy seeing the positive results of whatever it is they actually do. *Who doesn’t?*

While you don’t have to pen an exhilarating and suspenseful action novel, you do have to be able to talk about your career, your experience, and your value in an interesting and impactful way that uniquely describes you. It’s easy to fall into the trap of overusing resume staples such as *created, developed, managed, handled, coordinated, etc.*, because they sound natural to our speech. After multiple uses they start to lose their integrity, and candidates sometimes try to work around the scenario by defaulting to overly-wordy phrases that say the same thing in a more drawn out way: *“Was primarily responsible for the development of...”*.

Instead, take a look at the words and phrases you choose to describe your responsibilities and qualifications, and ask yourself if there might be a better choice that sounds more powerful, and make you more employable.

Here are a few alternative word suggestions that will help your resume get to the next level:

Accelerated

Use instead of: created, developed, produced

Use to: Convey the idea that you created or developed something that had an immediate impact, and what that impact looked like.



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Example:

“Accelerated more efficient handling of customer inquiries by implementing a simple online feedback form.”

Streamlined

Use instead of: improved, organized, coordinated, made more efficient

Use to: Convey the same ideas as the words above, but that in doing so you created greater efficiency or a similar positive impact.

Example (as a verb):

“Streamlined the web design process by creating a universal style guide for corporate branding.”

Example (as an adjective):

“Created a streamlined process for updating the website by implementing a universal style guide outlining corporate branding guidelines.”

Leveraged

Use instead of: used, utilized, called upon

Use to: Show how you put specific knowledge or skill sets into use to achieve a desired result.

Example:

“Leveraged social media marketing skills to create a Facebook advertising campaign that increased monthly website traffic by 75%.”

Cultivated

Use instead of: built (relationships), developed

Use to: Communicate the idea of relationship building from a more strategic angle.

Example:

“Cultivated relationships with key retail partners to increase sales and marketshare.”

Exposure To

Use instead of: experience, focusing on, with knowledge of

Use to: Present supporting information around areas in which you have experience or knowledge and want to emphasize.

Example:

“5 years of project management experience with significant exposure to digital media and mobile platforms.” More Suggestions



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A few other strong words & phrases that can add a little oomph to your content

- Delivered
- Facilitated
- Propagated
- Generated
- Administered
- Materialized
- Spearheaded
- Advised
- Fostered
- Advanced
- Impacted
- Specializing in
- Focused around
- Recognized for

The quality of language and content can make or break your resume, profile or cover letter. Boring, repetitive language will fall short of effectively marketing your key points, while excessive, complex, or drawn out ideas and phrases will sound artificial and like you're filling space.

The key is to remember that less is often more, and using colorful and descriptive words to communicate your ideas will create a more impactful message around your unique value as a candidate.

