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20 Buzzwords Guaranteed to Fast-track Your Résumé to the Paper Shredder

By [Kris Alban](#)

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Bad Buzzwords

There are two things inherently wrong with using sample résumés from a textbook or website as a model to write your own:



- They are dreadful. Often these sample résumés are written by someone that couldn't get a job in their industry, and thus resorted to instructing others how to also not get a job.
- Everyone else is copying phrases from the same sample résumés.

As a hiring manager, I have seen the results of this and it isn't pretty. I see countless résumés and cover letters with the same exact buzzwords. This would be irritating enough on its own, but what's worse is that these "buzzwords" are so awful that every time I see them, they give me the same feeling as fingernails on a chalkboard. The good news is that 80% of applicants seem to be using these same ones, so avoiding them and injecting a little creativity into your résumé can land you in the top

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I surveyed several hiring managers and career coaches to find the all-time, most cringe-inducing buzzwords. The feedback, which was excellent, is summarized below with the buzzwords grouped by how many times each one was called out.

Honorable Mention (mentioned once)

Highly Skilled Go-getter

"What did you get? Coffee? Lunch? Please stop using this phrase."

Lauren Young - Owner, Freshly Baked Communications

Successfully Championed Passion Utilized

"It's 'utilized' in resumes to make a three-syllable word out of the word 'use'. I USE it to distinguish the blowhards who like to sound smart from the good communicators." Dan Ryan - Consultant for Praxis Nonprofit Strategies

Buzzwords Mentioned Twice

Hardworking Experienced

Thrice Repeated

Highly Motivated Punctual/Reliable Seasoned

"Sounds like a candidate who's been cooked - stringing along a list of adjectives without backup to support...loyal, hard-working, focused, etc. They mean nothing without examples." Roy Cohen, career coach and author, [The Wall Street Professional's Survival Guide](#)

too. There are plenty of resources t



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Buzzwords Condemned Four Times

Detail-Oriented Multi-tasker

My dog can multitask...seriously.

Cursed Five Times

Quick Learner Self Starter Innovative/Cutting Edge

"If you think you did something truly innovative, tell me what you did. I'm smart enough to know if it's (a) groundbreaking and (b) relevant to my needs." Joel Bilheimer, Executive Vice President of Pershing Tech

Runners Up - Blackballed Six Times

Responsible for

"All it says is that you were responsible for something, it doesn't say that you actually did it. Recruiters and hiring managers want to see action, results and accomplishments. The days of putting fluff on your resume are gone." Patricia Ellis - OnTargetCareerCoaching.com

Goal/Mission Oriented Excellent Interpersonal/Communication Skills

"Too generic. Which specific communication skills are essential to job at hand? Do you deliver persuasive written communications? Are you an engaging presenter? Do you consistently close the sale? Tell us!" Larry Braman - President, Global Career Consulting and Placement

The grand prize winner is...

Team Player

"Everyone says this, so it doesn't mean anything unless you can demonstrate it in your experience. Maybe you were forced into a team,



maybe you led a team. I have no way to tell the difference.” R. Bobby Umar, P.Eng, MBA - President, Raeallan

Conclusion

I received so much great feedback that I will have to do a follow-up to include all of the excellent résumé advice. But for now, go here to receive a [free résumé critique](#) from an iGrad Career Expert.

A special thanks to all of the following contributors. For more great advice please follow them on Twitter:

- [Joel Bilheimer](#) - Executive Vice President, Pershing Tech
- [Larry Braman](#) - President, Global Career Consulting and Placement
- [Roy Cohen](#) - Career Coach and author of [The Wall Street Professional's Survival Guide](#)
- Patricia Ellis - OnTargetCareerCoaching.com
- Shane Fischer - Attorney at Law, Fischer Law
- [Anne Follis](#) - Certified Professional Resume Writer at CareerHappy.com
- William M Gaffney - Partner/Chief Networker Amaxa Group
- John G. Kramb - CEO, Adams County Winery
- Sandra Lamb - Career and Etiquette Expert and the author of [How to Write It](#)
- [Ronnie Manning](#) - Owner, Mynt Public Relations
- [Yolanda M. Owens](#) - College Recruiting Specialist and author of [How to Score a Date with Your Potential Employer](#)
- [Carrie Rocha](#) - PocketYourDollars.com
- Dan Ryan - Consultant for Praxis Nonprofit Strategies
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