

Tailoring a resume for project management

As you prepare for your job search, you will need to create or update your resume to reflect your experience in order to apply for project management roles. You have learned so much during this course, and it is important that your resume reflects that. An effective resume highlights your skills and experience and is tailored to the position you are applying for. Let's explore how to make your resume stand out by incorporating your new project management skills and your previous experience.

Tailor the content

- **Identify what is important to the potential employer.** What does the employer want to know about you? Make sure that you carefully read the job description and notice which skills are mentioned. You can also read several job descriptions for the same type of role to identify which skills and requirements show up frequently. For instance, although specifics will vary by role and employer, many project management-related roles require the ability to effectively organize and coordinate across teams and projects, manage multiple tasks simultaneously, and communicate effectively. You should take note of these skills and be sure to highlight them using similar terms on your resume.
- **Create one master project management resume to edit and tailor to each job application.** You should make sure that the order of your skills and qualifications matches the job description. In doing this, you are making sure that the things that are most important to the employer are at the top.
- **Match the language used in the job description.** Some employers use automation software to filter resumes. If the job description uses keywords like *procurement* and *risk management*, make sure your resume uses those keywords, too.
- **Use project management terminology.** This will help the person reading your resume understand how your past experience is relevant to a project management position.
- **Decide what not to include on your resume.** You may have some skills that are important to you, but those same skills may confuse or distract the hiring managers reading your resume.

- **Highlight how your past experience and skills are relevant to project management.** If you have been working as a construction foreman but want to begin managing construction projects, your planning and staff management skills will be essential in your new role. Make sure to point out how those skills will be beneficial to the employer.

Choose an appropriate format

No matter what layout or template you choose for your resume, there are several things you should keep in mind

- The design of your resume should be simple and easy to understand for both human and artificial intelligence readers. You don't want your resume to be discarded before a real person has a chance to read it!
- Your resume should be easy to read and should convey all of the important information in short bullet points.
- Your resume should be one- to two-pages long and contain only the last ten to fifteen years of relevant experience. It is appropriate to use two columns on a one-page resume, but if your resume is two pages, be sure to use the entire width of the page.

Update the relevant sections

Once you have determined the appropriate format for your resume, you will need to update each of your resume's major sections, which include:

- Contact information
- Professional summary
- Core competencies
- Professional experience
- Education and certifications

Pro tip: Resumes should be written in the third person and should not contain personal pronouns.

Let's discuss how to incorporate your new skills into these sections of your resume.

Contact information

Your header should contain your contact information and should go at the top of your resume.

Your header should include the following information:

- Your name in a larger font than the rest of your resume
- The city and state you live in (you do not need to include your street address for privacy purposes)
- Your phone number and a link to your email address
- Link to your LinkedIn profile URL
- Links to any other personal websites or portfolios, if applicable to the role you are applying for
- Your header should be relevant, simple, and easy to read. Here is an example of a resume header:



Professional summary

Below your header, include a professional summary.

- **Use your summary to set the tone.** Your summary should be one to three lines and should clearly state why you are the best candidate for the position. It should highlight the most important things you want the reader to know about you. If you are applying for a new role, you will want to update your industry specialty. You likely have

experience that can be related to project management, and you will want to incorporate that relevant experience into your new professional summary. Make sure you tailor your description of yourself to the role you are applying for.

- **Merge the description of the role you are applying for with your past experience.**


Here is an example:

Project manager with two years of demonstrated success in project scoping and planning. Skilled in cross-functional collaboration and project execution. Articulate communicator who thrives in a results-driven collaborative environment.

- **Use keywords from the job description to describe yourself.** If the job description states that the company is looking for a candidate with knowledge of both traditional and Agile approaches, you should add that to your resume—you have gained that knowledge with this certification.

Once you have your professional introduction, your next sentence should explain how your unique expertise will make you valuable to the employer.

Pro tip: Don't forget to use this section to highlight something that makes you stand out from other applicants. Use an accomplishment from a previous role to show the employer what you can offer them. Take a look at this example of a professional summary section:



Juliana Soto

Professional summary

Solutions-driven individual with experience in solving complex problems, working with cross-functional teams, and executing strategies. Proficient in managing supplier relationships, administering contracts, and learning new technologies. Highly effective at coaching and mentoring Agile teams.

Now that you have your heading and professional summary updates, let's move on to the core competencies section of your resume.

Core competencies

Your core competencies should be a bulleted list of the most relevant skills applicable to the position you are applying for.

Pro tip: Scan the job description for core competencies you have gained during this certification, as well as your past experience, and use those skills as bullet points in this section. Make sure to keep this section relatively short, with four to eight bullets.

Here is an example of a project management resume core competencies section:



Now that you have highlighted who you are and what makes you the best candidate for the job, it is time to tell the story of what you have accomplished throughout your career in the professional experience section.

Professional experience

The professional experience section of your resume provides a summary of the roles and positions you have held in your career. List at least three positions in reverse chronological order and only include what is most relevant to the position you are applying for.

Your professional experience will not change much from previous resumes, because you can't change the past roles you have held. However, you can possibly rewrite some of your bullets to relate them to project management. For example, let's say you worked as a retail store general

manager for the last five years and would like to transition to a project manager role at the corporate level. You might include bullets like the following examples:

- Managed five employee schedules and store budget of \$50,000
- Led a team of ten employees and received “Store of the Year” award
- Planned, procured, and reconciled inventory shipping and receiving

Make sure you are tying the industry lingo back to your previous experience to show the reader—usually a hiring manager—how your skills relate to project management. Use terms like *developed*, *tracked*, *managed*, and *monitored* to show the reader that your past experience translates to a project management role.

Pro tip: Make sure your resume conveys how your past accomplishments are valuable to the role you are applying for. Show the reader how you can make a difference in their organization. An easy way to remember this is through the P.A.R.I.S. framework:

- **P**roblem that needed to be solved
- **A**ction(s) I took
- **R**esult of action(s)
- **I**mpact on project (users, quality, etc.)
- **S**upporting evidence (awards, bonus, etc.)

Below is an example of a professional experience section from a project manager’s resume:



Juliana Soto

Professional experience

Operations Manager, Auto-WNN Company, New York, NY
(December 2019 - Present)

Oversaw the end-to-end development of a training program to address attrition rates within the first two months. This resulted in 100 new employees onboarded with 95% satisfaction and a reduction in training time by 10% year-over-year

- Led task force of five people to create and test materials within 3 month period
- Managed annual operating budget of \$100,000, as well as \$50,000 vendor budget
- Implemented work management software to plan project and communicate daily tasks to 20+ employees

Teacher's Assistant, NY Locals, Greenpoint NY
(August 2017 - December 2019)

- Supervised 50 classes of 30 high school students on my own
- Mentored students in groups and one-on-one on college prep and personal development
- Created weekly lesson plans, annual budget reports, and homework packets, which averaged a 98% completion rate

Education and certifications

Now that the majority of your resume has been updated with your new skills and knowledge, it is time to update your Education and Certifications section. In this section of your resume, you should include any degrees beyond your high school diploma in reverse chronological order. For each degree, list the degree you earned, institution, location, and date of graduation. This section should also list any professional certifications or credentials you hold. It is here where you will list this new project management certification. Here is an example of an education and credentials section of a project management resume:



Juliana Soto

Education and certifications

Google Project Manager Certificate, 2020
KC Community College, B.A. in History, Central, IL 2018

Your resume is now updated and ready to use for project management position applications! You have revised your professional summary, added newly-acquired core competencies, related past professional experience to project management, and added this certification to your resume.

Pro tip: It is always a good idea to have someone review your resume for any spelling or grammatical errors. Recruiters and hiring managers often toss resumes aside that contain typos. Once you are sure your resume is error-free, it is time to start your job search!