

Should You Use ChatGPT to Write a Resume?

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Illustrated by Kouzou Sakai

Summary. With its ability to write everything from essays to poetry to code, ChatGPT is changing how we think about tasks related to writing, research, and automation. Should ChatGPT write your resume? The answer depends on what roles you're looking for, and... [more](#)

Generative AI tools are becoming more accessible to people around the world, and the potential use cases feel endless. With its ability to write everything from essays to poetry to code, ChatGPT, in particular, is changing how we think about tasks related to writing, research, and automation. In my work as a researcher in this space, I frequently get asked about applications of this technology from both an efficiency and an ethical standpoint. One recent example is: Should I use ChatGPT to write my resume?



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Before I answer this question, let's look at what ChatGPT really is. It's a large language model with a chat interface developed by OpenAI, an AI research and development company. ChatGPT has been trained on lots of data — basically most of what's been posted to the internet up until September 2021 — which it uses to create remarkably useful text responses to prompts provided by users.

Powerful algorithms make it possible for ChatGPT to look at a string of words and predict which word or words should come next. The “chat” portion of ChatGPT is a conversational interface (in the form of a chat window) where users can type questions, requests, or other prompts that ChatGPT responds to. It has proven to be a surprisingly powerful tool for generating all kinds of useful content — from writing prose to poems to code.

Given that, it's not surprising that college students and job seekers alike have been exploring ChatGPT's advanced capabilities to generate essays, cover letters, and resumes. But can ChatGPT really be trusted to write an effective resume? I tested it out.

Using ChatGPT to write a resume

Writing a resume on ChatGPT is fairly simple. You input a “prompt” or guidelines to tell the AI what you want, and then wait for it to generate results. To experiment, I asked ChatGPT to write a resume for me using a very basic prompt describing my past titles and roles.

Write a resume for me. I am the coauthor of the first best-selling book on conversational AI, *Age of Invisible Machines*. I'm also the CEO and co-founder of OneReach.ai and the owner of UX Magazine. Previously I founded EffectiveUI, one of the world's first user-centered design agencies, which was acquired by Ogilvy/WPP. Before working in design and technology, I was a sound editor for Warner Bros.

Here's what ChatGPT wrote:

[Your name], CEO, Co-founder, Author, and Owner

Summary:

Award-winning entrepreneur, co-author of a best-selling book on conversational AI, and experienced sound editor. Proven track record of leading successful companies and teams, and driving innovation in the design and technology industries. Demonstrated expertise in user experience design, conversational AI, and strategic planning.

**We've used strikethrough text on any elements that ChatGPT got wrong.*

Here's what I learned:

The results were as expected. ChatGPT was advanced enough to go beyond writing a standard chronological resume and included what is now standard practice: a “summary” paragraph. Anywhere the resume needed specific details, GPT included a [placeholder text] space.

That said, the software was not perfect. What ChatGPT rendered for me was a lightly personalized (partially completed; partially incorrect) resume template. It organized the ideas I fed into the software and created a decent first draft. Beyond that, I had to look deeper at each section of the draft to edit the information that ChatGPT had generated for me.

So, should you use ChatGPT to write a resume?

The answer depends on what roles you're looking for, and how ChatGPT can aid you. For instance, if you're a good writer or are applying to roles that require you to be good at writing — like a reporter or a content director — it's best to avoid using generative AI. ChatGPT won't help you enhance or showcase your core skills of writing or language. It may actually do the opposite by making the employer question your credibility as a writer or content producer. The one exception may be if your potential employer is looking for content creators who can use generative AI tools to create higher quantities of useful content.

Outside roles that are specific to content writing, ChatGPT can be a useful ally as you craft your resume. The idea is not to rely on AI to create a final draft of your new resume or cover letter. Rather, use it as a tool to put together a strong first draft of your strengths

and ideas. If you choose to go this route, be sure to consider these insights for the best possible results.

Double-check the draft for inaccuracies.

When I asked ChatGPT to write my own resume, it made incorrect guesses about my company, OneReach.ai, especially related to funding and operations. It made an incorrect assumption that we'd raised money from investors. In reality, I bootstrapped my company to profitability for many years before our first round of investment. I had to manually edit that information in my own version of the document before presenting it to others.

Interestingly, the details that ChatGPT got wrong inspired me to improve my resume and think outside the box while editing the draft. The placeholders or gaps in information pushed me to consider more deeply the details I wanted to present and how those details would land with a recruiter or hiring manager. For instance, adding information about why I bootstrapped my company could signal to a potential employer my ability to sustain myself financially and not dilute the ownership of my startup.

ChatGPT has its own biases — but you can learn from them.

Beyond a tool for writing resumes, ChatGPT can also function a bit like a search engine (albeit one that hallucinates) — helping you learn about the most sought-after qualifications in your specific industry. If you're early in your career and need some inspiration to get started, ChatGPT can provide the framework or a structure that helps you move forward in a more intentional manner.

For example, I told ChatGPT that I worked in design and technology and that I was formerly a sound editor for Warner Bros. ChatGPT then assumed that I'd attended film school (I didn't). My background in experience design also likely led it to assign me Lean and Agile certifications that I don't really have. These assumptions, while problematic, can signal to you, as an applicant, what the expectations of the role or industry you're applying to may be.

You can also leverage the tool by feeding ChatGPT prompts like "What are the top three skills or strengths I should communicate to a hiring manager?" The responses aren't guaranteed game-changers, but they might inspire you to rethink your draft through a different lens. Consider asking ChatGPT for a list of the best keywords to include in your resume for a particular job at a particular company to raise its visibility — both to application

tracking software and the human eyeballs at the end of the line.

ChatGPT can allude to the best practices of resume writing.

ChatGPT can help you learn how to actually “write” a resume by showing you different resume formats and examples. When describing my accomplishments, for instance, ChatGPT led each bullet point with a verb. Leading with a “verb” when describing the tasks you’ve completed is a best practice, as well as including quantitative information about your projects, and highlighting important skills.

The ultimate goal is to not replace your own sensibilities. Rather, it’s to speed up your efforts. Think of it as having someone to rapidly collaborate with — they may not have all the facts, but they can help you by supplying perspective and copy.

If you do use ChatGPT, should you disclose?

Let’s say you collaborate with ChatGPT, write a great resume, and land an interview. Should you be honest about it?

Unless you talk about it, it’s unlikely you’ll be called out. OpenAI is said to be releasing a tool that can determine if something was written using ChatGPT, but it’s not producing reliable results so far. Beyond that, if you’ve used the technology in a collaborative manner, detecting its origin becomes even more difficult. Having said that, people are already developing an ear for content that “sounds like ChatGPT.” Often, what they’re detecting is poor prompt quality.

In many companies, however, and especially in the tech industry, hiring managers should be interested in a candidate who’s comfortable co-creating a resume and cover letter with generative AI. If that candidate can talk through the different iterative steps they used — the prompts they used, how they refined their search, and what they learned about the industry or the role in the process — it’s an impressive skill for hiring managers. Well-written prompts get better results, and in some fields, effectively using ChatGPT is a skill in itself because it shows that you’re adaptable and willing to learn new things.

Unfortunately, some companies might see this collaboration with technology in a less favorable light. While most organizations will eventually need to make a shift that embraces changing technology (rather than fearing it), for now, it’s best to do your research on the company you’re applying to before deciding whether to disclose. Unless you have specific intel, it may be difficult to know for sure how a company will react.

Remember when spell-check technology came out? At first, there was a general hesitance toward using it. Employing a spell-checker might give off the impression that you weren't meticulous or careful, and there was frequent discussion about whether or not using it was making people bad at spelling. It didn't take long for the tables to turn. Once it was widely adopted, it became uncommon *not* to use spell-checker's suggestions.

My point is, we use all sorts of technology every day — and while there's been a lot of speculation about whether generative AI is coming for our jobs, I find myself agreeing with this sentiment: It's not AI that's coming for your job, it's someone using AI coming for your job. Using tools like ChatGPT to help craft your resume may very well be the new norm in a few years' time. That doesn't make job candidates any less competent or relevant.

It takes significant human interaction to refine and polish the raw materials GPT provides. It also takes a human to come up with the idea of asking ChatGPT to write a resume. AI is deeply dependent on us. While it will certainly get better at performing the many tasks we set it to, it will likely continue to need our guidance and ideas.

We can all benefit from getting better at working with AI, or "co-botting" as I like to call it. Using ChatGPT to effectively produce a winning resume, in my opinion, is a step in that direction.

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Robb Wilson, CEO and founder of OneReach and author of the *Wall Street Journal* bestseller *Age of Invisible Machines*, has spent more than two decades applying his deep understanding of user-centric design to unlocking hyper-automation. Robb built UX Magazine into the world's largest experience design publication while simultaneously creating Effective UI, a full-service UX firm that competed with IDEO and Frog Design. Robb has also played a part in creating a wide variety of products, apps, and movies for clients like, DHL, Unilever, Expedia, Bosch, and more.