



LAND YOUR FIRST BIG KID JOB



**Grandma's Guide
to Application Success**

START THE SEARCH

1.) Get Motivated

I'm not a career coach. I'm not Tony Robbins. I'm just a guy who knows a weird amount about job application documents.

And I do know that the best place to start your job search is **~within yourself.~**

"Okay, whatever, sensei!", you're surely thinking.

It's true, though. Before you even start thinking about your resume, you have to know exactly what you want and prepare yourself for what you're getting into.

You probably don't need me to tell you that the job market is insanely competitive for entry-level candidates. [A recent study](#) found that **it takes the average college graduate three to six months to find their first job**. It may soon start feeling like everyone wants you to know things you weren't taught and would rather hire their friend Chad who can code.

However, as a certain licensed character from a very-much-copyrighted space franchise once said, "Never tell me the odds!"

A Big Kid Job is out there for you—you just need to be looking for *the right* Big Kid Job.

Take a few days to think about what kind of companies and jobs you really want to apply for. Doing this before starting to apply will save you lots of time, anxiety, and brain power.

What kind of salary do you need? Are you open to moving to another city? Do you have the qualifications you need for your dream job, or do you need to start with something small and get additional training?

Seek out advice from any source you can. Peruse a career advice blog like [The Balance](#), reconnect with your school's career center, or find a trusted mentor.

WHAT TO INCLUDE ON YOUR RESUME (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM)

Resumes are like snowflakes: Any two will be different from each other, but only within the constraints of a clear, orderly structure of necessary components. If they didn't follow this order, they would be chaotic jumbled messes that nobody would enjoy looking at.

Your resume is as unique as you are, but it's also a tool used to accomplish a task. There are certain widely accepted elements that every resume needs to do its task and land you a job.

Let's walk through a good resume from top to bottom, covering everything you'll need to include.

#1) Header

Your header may be the most boring part to think about, but it makes a great first impression. Here's what you need to include in your header:

- **Your full name, in a large font.** This should be the biggest, most apparent text on your resume.
- **The email and phone number where you want to be contacted.** Make sure you have an official-sounding email address for business correspondence. I wouldn't want to give a job to xX_rawrcookieboi_Xx@hotmail.com.
- **Your city and state, but NOT your full address.** Contrary to popular belief, you actually shouldn't put your full address on your resume. You need to include your city and state (and the city and state of the job posting if you're relocating) for clarity, but no one's going to be communicating with you via snail mail.
- **Hyperlinks (if you have relevant ones).** Ready for a truly 21st century tip? Since some recruiters evaluate resumes just on their computer screen, you can include links to relevant content in your header like your LinkedIn profile (once you're ready to show it off after Chapter 4), creative portfolio, GitHub page, or professional blog.

This amount of information should use very little space to save room for the more exciting stuff. You can format it to fit it into just 2 lines like this:

DANIEL LORENZO

plsgivejob@gmail.com | (000) 000-0000 | Somewhere, CO | [GitHub Portfolio](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

#2) Summary of Qualifications

Right below your header is your summary, which is a small but vital little paragraph that looks like this:

Multi-talented marketing manager with three years of relevant experience creating content and developing marketing strategies. Leverages strong writing and editing skills to produce engaging blogs, graphics, and social media content. Skilled at establishing brand standards across various media and channels. Communicates effectively with senior leadership to affect organizational change.

The summary of qualifications is crucial because it draws the recruiter in. It catches their eye with your strongest qualities and provides context for the rest of the resume.

An important note:

You might have been told to include an *objective statement* at the top of your resume. Some people think this is synonymous with a summary, but it's not. The objective statement is outdated and redundant and just don't use it, okay? Here's why:

- **Objective statements all say pretty much the same thing** (something like "Seeking a challenging position..."), and it almost always sounds like you're sucking up.
- **Objective statements explain what you're looking for in a job,** which adds little value because a recruiter doesn't really care. You're applying for this one right now and that's all that matters.
- **A summary allows you to highlight your unique qualifications,** which is much more powerful at the top of your resume.

RESUME PHRASING: SAY IT & SAY IT WELL

When you're trying to sell something, you need to get to the point right away. So, the same rule applies to a resume as to a sales call: **Use as few words as possible.**

Here's how to sell yourself as quickly and effectively as possible on your resume:

Cut some lines.

Big chunks of text are hard to read. A recruiter scanning a resume won't have time to read through a long paragraph about your accomplishments, so they just won't.

To keep everything compact and readable, don't write any paragraphs over five or six lines or any bullet points over two lines. If you hit those marks, you're using too many words.

Use powerful, active language.

Your resume needs to sound as exciting and dynamic as you are. That's why you should use active verbs to describe your experience.

Action words like "Led," "Collaborated," "Implemented," and "Analyzed" will describe your accomplishments much more powerfully than bland, passive phrases like "in charge of recruiting students."

You also need to cut out useless words like "very," "currently," "in order to," "responsible for," or "duties include." If the sentence makes sense without a certain word or phrase, delete it.

Don't abuse buzzwords

Don't think you have to write in business-speak to sound ~professional~. Nobody actually knows what the heck "synergy" means, because it's a stupid word somebody made up to sound business-y.

Words like these are fine when used sparingly, but using them too often makes you sound too formal and jargony and muddies your meaning:

- **Innovative**
- **Strategic**
- **Team Player**
- **Utilize**
- **Synergy**
- **Dynamic**

WHY DO I EVEN NEED A COVER LETTER?

First, let's address the most pressing question on your mind: ***Is it even worth writing a cover letter anymore?***

Yes! Cover letters have come under fire recently. With the huge number of applicants for each job and the dawn of the ATS, many think that cover letters are no longer used to make hiring decisions.

Some have even been bold enough to [declare the cover letter dead](#) and consider writing them a waste of time. This news has been heard — [a recent survey found that a whole 47% of job seekers in 2017 did not submit a cover letter with their most recent application.](#)

While the place of a cover letter has certainly changed, the nay-sayers are only partly right. It is still a valuable piece of your application package and you should absolutely still write one.

Here's why:

Recruiters don't use cover letters, but hiring managers do.

It's true that recruiters generally don't care about cover letters. The same Jobvite survey we mentioned also found that **only 26% of recruiters surveyed actually read cover letters** and consider them in hiring decisions. We've also [personally heard from recruiters on our podcast](#) that they will typically *only skim your cover letter* if they read it at all.

However, there's a key point that many people miss here. Of course **recruiters** don't care about cover letters, because their job usually isn't to evaluate and hire the top candidates.

Let's talk about how the hiring process works for a second. Recruiters are in charge of finding potential candidates and filtering the applications that come in. They have hundreds of applicants to dig through, so they simply don't have the time to read cover letters. They only briefly skim resumes, disqualify most people, and then forward the top choices to the **hiring manager**. *That's who your cover letter is actually meant for.*

[A different nationwide survey by CareerBuilder](#) found that **49% of more than 2,500 hiring and HR managers** said that an attached cover letter would “*cause them to pay more attention to a resume.*” This was the second most important application factor to the staff surveyed, ranked only behind tailoring the resume to the job (which we have already covered and I hope is hammered into your brain.)

WRITING A GREAT LINKEDIN PROFILE

#1) Headline

Your headline, profile photo, and cover photo are the first things anyone will see on your profile. In fact, your headline and profile pic appear in search results even before that.

So they need to be flippin' awesome!

Your headline should convince people to read more about you — just like the headline of an article convinces you to read the rest of it. Which of these stories would you rather click on?

“Cracker Barrel Shooting Believed to be Accidental”

...or...

“Man Accidentally Shot at Florida Cracker Barrel in Literal, Actual Most American Thing Ever”

Most profiles have a headline that reads like the first example above. It might state the facts, but it is B O R I N G and doesn't show what makes the story newsworthy.

Your headline needs to speak uniquely to who you are and what you can offer. This is why you should NOT just use your current job title, “Student,” “Recent Graduate,” or, especially, “Seeking New Opportunities.”

Instead, fill your headline with **your personal brand** and **keywords from your industry** that will make you stand out. Here's how:

- Look through job postings in your industry, just like you did with your resume.
- Find two or three common keywords in those postings that represent your skill set.
- Combine those with one statement that describes what you do or want to do but is different from your position title (since people can already see that).

Check out these examples:

Business Analysis | Process Improvement | Non-Profit
Management
Dallas, Texas