Using ChatGPT to Improve Resumes and Cover Letters

While ChatGPT can't do all the work for you, it can help you customize your resume and cover letter content and make you stand out in your job search. Below are some strategies and cautions for using AI in your job search.

ChatGPT needs something to work with

The more specific you can be, the better. Draft your resume with as much information as you can: education, including major(s) and minor(s); projects or research; co-ops or internships; work experience; volunteer experience; honors or awards; relevant skills; etc. ChatGPT does best when you ask it to improve your descriptions and details based on a specific job description, so this is not the time to be generalized. Your goal here is to customize your resume to align with a specific job role and increase your chances of getting an interview.

Be cautious about sharing personally identifying information with ChatGPT. Consider removing your name and contact information before sharing your resume.

Example prompts:

- Review my resume like an expert coach and let me know five specific changes I can make based on this job description. [insert resume] [insert job description]
- Are there specific buzzwords I should include in my resume to enhance my resume for applicant tracking systems (ATS) for this job? [insert job description]
- How can I improve my work experience descriptions to better align with this job? [insert job description]
- How can I rewrite this paragraph of my cover letter to better align with this job description? [insert portion of cover letter] [insert job description]
- I am a _____ major at _____ University. What parts of my educational experience do you think would be beneficial to include on my resume for _____ roles?
- I'm seeking _____ position. What are the 10 biggest buzzwords across all job postings for that role?

ChatGPT makes educated guesses about you

When you ask ChatGPT to improve the bullet points on your resume, it will make some guesses about your experience based on its vast data set. It might assume that if you held *X* role at *X* organization that you had *X* experiences. That might not be true.

Likewise, ChatGPT might suggest that you add numbers to create more impact in your job description statements. Employers like to see numbers that support your accomplishments and achievements, but ChatGPT might make hypothetical suggestions based on what it expects for your experience.

Use ChatGPT's suggestions to give you ideas for how to quantify your experiences or incorporate important keywords from the job description, but never accept these changes without carefully reviewing them for accuracy. You should help recruiters see your qualifications, but you don't want to overstate or fabricate your accomplishments.

Don't forget about resume best practices

Be aware of techniques that will make your resume ATS-friendly (to get through those tricky applicant tracking systems and online application portals): avoid photos, images, icons, and graphics; avoid two-column layouts; mirror the language of the job description when possible; include keywords mentioned in the job posting.

Be aware of techniques that will make your resume stand out with recruiters: put the most relevant information on the top third of the first page; include relevant details and skills; share accomplishments and noteworthy moments; be consistent in formatting choices; use category headings that help you showcase what you have to offer; quantify your experience by adding numbers.

Keeping these best practices in mind when incorporating new ideas from AI could make all the difference in your job search! Have questions? Get resume feedback from Career Services! Make an appointment or email your resume to resumehelp@nku.edu.