

POWER VERBS

FOR JOB SEEKERS

Hundreds of Verbs and Phrases to
Bring Your Résumés, Cover Letters, and
Job Interviews to Life

MICHAEL LAWRENCE FAULKNER
with MICHELLE FAULKNER-LUNSFORD

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Dedicated to Ken Boyer, the gatekeeper.

*Ken was my first college professor and had a powerful
influence on the direction of my life.*

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CHAPTER 1

Why and How Power Verbs Can Pump Up Your Résumés, Cover Letters, Interviews, and Personal Networking Efforts

The power verbs in this book are those that can be used for job searching and networking. They are arranged alphabetically under major and minor categories of the most desirable and sought-after human values, personality traits, personal characteristics, behaviors, and employability skills. There has been substantial empirical research done on the topic of what employers are really looking for in applicants. The results of these studies—what employers really seek in job applicants—were used to provide the framework for what power verbs to include and how to best organize them for readers.

The authors have included hundreds of the most useful power verbs as part of the practical implicit approach to employers and networking contacts. Job searchers can pump up their résumés, cover letters, thank-you notes, interviews, and other forms of human communications that are critical to job searching. In addition, individuals who want to enhance their personal, social, and business lives by building a powerful network can enhance their networking skills.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Those of you searching for attention-grabbing, highly impactful power verbs should think about the kinds of critical employability skills and the most desirable employability and personality skills by broad topics (for example: accomplishments and achievements, communication skills, ability to work with teams, and ability to find and fix problems). Once you've determined these broad categories of skills and traits, you can search alphabetically to refine the hunt for just the right power verbs. To help you find all possible power verbs, cross-check words in the index.

The power verbs that are not in common use have international pronunciation included.

Each power verb has synonyms and abbreviated definitions to help you position just the right power verbs for the impact and effect you desire.

In most cases, the power verbs include examples of the specific word in actual use as a “Résumé bullet point.” Bulleted points have a style purpose that says, “Something important follows.” Employment experts have recognized for some time that smartly bulleted résumé points are the most effective, efficient, and productive method for job seekers to display their value to a prospective employer. The problem is that good people have had exciting, responsible jobs and have accomplished significant achievements in their work and social lives, but fail to correctly display these achievements in bullet form. While many employ the bullet model, they have two fundamental but deadly flaws. First, résumés frequently include too many bullet points. Second, many of the bullets included were somewhat dull narrations repeating, in synonyms, job descriptions that have already been indicated.

Résumé bullet points should draw attention to your accomplishments—your quantitative selling points. Résumé bullet points depict achievements and should not just restate the job description. An achievement is anything that can be measured in numbers, dollars, percentages, or some measure showing improvement due to some action, attainment, decision, deed, endeavor, exploit, feat, step, success, undertaking, venture, or work attributed to you.

Hiring managers are busy people and appreciate applicants who respect their time by providing a few (3 to 4) simple, easy-to-read, yet impactful bullets of their achievements for each position. Note that we said achievements; we did not say restatements of their job description. Your résumé is a form of an extended calling card, and its purpose is to get you a face-to-face interview, not tell your entire working history.

Some power verbs include a field titled “Collocates to.” This is a listing of primarily less familiar words that includes other terms that have a tendency to be grouped or chunked together with that verb.

Some power verbs include the power verb that is used in a sentence, a quotation, a newspaper article, or a magazine article.

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT POWER VERB

Soft skills are listed in Chapter 3: the critical employability skills, behaviors, and personality traits that employers are looking for in job seekers.

Hard skills are listed in Chapter 4: those personal skills and experiences that employers say are of equal importance to employability skills.

Experience, credentials, and education are listed in Chapter 5: achievements and accomplishments likely to be of importance to employers.

Many power verbs can be used in multiple categories. When a power verb can be employed in a crossover category, this is shown next to the power verb.

Every employer looks for a specific set of skills from job seekers that match the skills necessary to perform a particular job. But beyond these job-specific technical skills, certain skills are nearly universally sought by employers. The good news is that most job seekers possess these skills to some extent. The better news is that job seekers who have weaknesses in these areas can improve their skills through training, professional development, or obtaining coaching/mentoring from someone who understands these skills.

The best news is that once you understand the skills and characteristics that most employers seek, you can tailor your job-search communication—your résumé, cover letter, and interview language—to showcase how well your background aligns with common employer requirements.

Numerous studies have identified these critical employability skills, sometimes referred to as “soft skills.” We’ve distilled the skills from these many studies into this list of skills most frequently mentioned. Look for ways to include, inject, weave, identify, and show examples of these characteristics in your résumé, cover letters, and answers to interview questions.

Now, go search for the power verbs that will pump up your job searching and networking!

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