
Coding Resume Tips That Will Get You Hired

By Nicole Umphress, career coach at General Assembly



OUTSIDE YOUR RESUME

Developers have to be creative in their job search and find alternative ways to connect with other developers and employers. That means using LinkedIn and local meetups to network and form relationships with others in the industry. Ask people to coffee and learn more about the work they're doing. Find out what worked for them and how they landed their job. But you need to have that resume ready for when you find the right "in."

It's no secret that coding is one of the most in-demand skill sets in today's tech-driven world. According to a 2016 [Burning Glass report](#), programming jobs are growing 50% faster than the overall job market. Companies in all industries — startups, financial services, healthcare, and beyond — have a need for web developers and programmers. But with more people learning to code, it means there's also lots of competition.

Building an impactful resume is the first step in landing a coding job, and it needs to spark a recruiter or hiring manager's interest enough that they want to pick up the phone and call you. This may be your only opportunity to get their attention — so make the most of it!

Employers are not only looking for people who have the right technical skills, but those who take it a step further and can articulate why they're interested in the company/role and what makes them qualified. They need to be passionate about the field and not only focusing on making more money.

As a career coach at General Assembly's Austin campus, I guide students and recent graduates of our full-time, career-transforming courses through their job-search process. Students I've worked with have landed positions as front-end developers, full-stack web developers, and implementation engineers at companies like IBM, Q2ebanking, Bazaarvoice, and more.

Here are my best tips for making your resume stand out and landing your next coding job.

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Know how to explain your work to a broad audience.

It's important to be able to describe the technical stack behind your project(s) in simple but effective non-technical terms because employers will see you as an asset to the business as a whole, not just to the specific engineering team you'll be on. It's an easy way to display your communication skills. Practice by talking about your work with non-technical (and technical) friends and family, over and over and over again.

Tailor your resume to fit the position you're applying for.

Every company and position you apply for will be different, so the same should go for every resume you send. Before you send your application, read through the role description, as well as the company's "about" page and mission. Pull out keywords, ideas, and company values that align with your experience, and weave them into your resume and cover letter.

The more you can frame past experience to fit the job you're going after — even if the role is wildly different from your current position — the more attractive you'll be to an employer. For example, let's say you're angling for a web developer role, but currently working as a project manager. Are there aspects of your PM role, or skills you used, that are relevant to the developer position? You may not have had a developer title, but you did some really extensive research or problem-solving. Highlight those things instead of listing your job responsibilities.

If the company is looking for specific skills or traits, it's crucial to make sure those are highlighted appropriately. Resumes are often filtered through an applicant tracking system, so you'll increase your chance of making it through the system if your resume clearly displays keywords and role requirements. One great resource for this is [jobscan.co](https://www.jobscan.co), where you can compare your resume with the job posting to see how well they match for keywords.

Go beyond a list of job duties: Show how you've made an impact.

Your resume is a chance to show off your expert use of programming languages, frameworks, databases, and other software.

If you're newer to the field, I encourage you to add a projects section, in which you can highlight recent projects and link to them.

If you've been in the field for a while, you should focus on the ways you

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Be active in the local tech community.

Do as much in public as possible. Get involved in your local tech community by going to meetups where your future potential co-workers are. Write blog posts and make your code open source. Give a presentation at a local meetup about something you learned recently. These things sound like a lot of work, but try to do just one thing a month. After a few months you'll start to build a solid network and portfolio of work.

specifically made an impact in your current and previous roles rather than list your responsibilities. Did a new feature you implemented increase user rate by 50%? Did you contribute to a new platform that transformed the way your company's billing system operates? Include that!

Don't overthink your resume design.

Many recruiters will spend only six seconds (!) looking at your resume, according to [an eye-tracking study](#) done by the job-search site TheLadders.com. So you better make it quick and get to the point.

It's fine to use Google Docs or Microsoft Word — you can create a nice resume using either. However, if you want to spice it up a bit, try using templates from sites like [Canva](#) or [Enhancv](#) and really make them your own. The only potential pitfall of using a template site is that an applicant tracking system may filter your resume out if the text is unreadable. I've learned that certain tracking systems have trouble deciphering information in a two-column resume so it's good to keep it to one column for that purpose.

Make sure the most relevant information is the easiest to see. Don't use too many different fonts, sizes, or colors — I recommend a maximum of two each.

Avoid these common mistakes.

There are a few issues that job applicants mess up time and time again. Thankfully, there are easy fixes for all of them.

- Don't let your resume go over one page. This is my No. 1 no-no.
- Skip the generic objective/summary statement. Applicants hate writing them and recruiters hate reading them. Instead, think about a profile statement that tells who you are and showcases your professional brand, for example, "I am a creative UX designer dedicated to developing simple yet innovative designs founded in collaboration, research, and usability."
- Bump the education section to the bottom of your resume. Leave out your

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Make your ideas and projects publicly available.

Either have a decent amount of work on your GitHub account, or a personal portfolio showcasing what you can do. Someone who is contributing to open source projects also really catches my eye. Even if you're working on bugs or fixing up some technical debt, it shows that you care about the coding community and are not just coding for your own enjoyment. It also shows your ability to work in a team, too.

graduation year (unless it was in the last six to 12 months) and GPA (unless it was for a graduate program and it was impressive).

- Make sure there are no spelling or grammar mistakes. Have a few people review and gut-check it — the more eyes on it, the better.

Don't rely only on your resume to land the job.

I once heard cover letters described as a spare tire — something you want to have as backup. A cover letter is key as an introduction to your personality and goals, and it's a great opportunity to show your interest in the specific company you want to work for.

You should also create a strong portfolio that showcases your projects and links to your GitHub, blog, and LinkedIn profile. For your GitHub in particular, it's important to show that you have daily commits/activity. Finally, a few hiring managers have told me they like to see applicants' passion projects. Being able to talk about a project that you're working on, or podcasts, authors, or thought leaders you're following in the field is attractive to potential employers.

Now that you've got the tools for a great coding resume, go make yours the best it can be!

Nicole Umphress is a career coach at [General Assembly's Austin campus](#), where she arms students and recent graduates of full-time courses with the tools they need to get and excel in a new career. GA's coaches are motivating accountability partners who set students up for success in their job search through one-on-one coaching sessions, mock interviews, workshops, and more.

Dive into coding at General Assembly. Become a full-stack developer in our transformative [full-time Web Development Immersive course](#), available across our [global campuses](#) and [online](#). Both during and after their full-time courses, students receive personalized job-search support from career coaches like Nicole. If you're looking to learn part-time, explore our on-campus courses in [Front-End Web Development](#) and [JavaScript Development](#), or our online [HTML, CSS, & Web Design](#) or [JavaScript Development Circuit](#) courses.

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