Avoiding Jargon

You might be a seasoned, effective team leader who meets and exceeds goals and is detail-oriented. But it might not be such a good idea to describe yourself with those overused words on a resume.

Resume writing has a tendency to follow a set pattern of narrow, trendy vocabulary, but if you're not careful, your resume can end up using a lot of big words that don't really say anything about you.

To help your message cut through the clutter, here are some tips for avoiding resume writing jargon.

• USE NATURAL LANGUAGE

The business world has a habit of overusing some words to the point that they become meaningless. Instead of filling your résumé with popular buzzwords — "actionable," "outside the box," "synergy" and the like — set yourself apart by writing in a clear, concise, easily understandable tone. You want to tout your specific accomplishments that will make you stand out from other job applicants. Use exact numbers and figures where possible, and use your resume as a chance to tell brief but engaging stories about what skills you can bring to the organization. Instead of simply calling yourself "detail-oriented," give a specific example that proves it.

• FOCUS ON ACTION

Unless you're applying to be an English professor, your employer probably doesn't care about your vocabulary. Your résumé and job interview should put the spotlight on what you have accomplished, not the big, flowery words you may have learned along the way.

Think about the things you've done in previous jobs. What are you most proud of? Use your resume to tell about things you've actually accomplished, which means going beyond merely describing yourself as the ideal job candidate.

• READ IT OUT LOUD

If you're not sure about the wording on your résumé, try reading it out loud.

If it doesn't sound natural when spoken, it's probably not going to leave a good impression with your future boss.

Keep the writing simple and conversational to get your point across clearly. The more awkward, overused words you choose to use, the less likely your resume will stand apart from the others in the pile.