How to customise your resume for non-profit leadership

Are you thinking of leaping from the corporate world to non-profit leadership? With a few tweaks, you can create a customised non-profit leadership resume that highlights the skills, qualifications, and experience hiring personnel seek.

While many skills from your executive career will be transferrable, you'll want to identify and emphasise the factors most critical to the philanthropic world.

Core Competencies to Highlight on a Non-Profit Resume

Motivation and Leadership Skills

With limited resources, non-profit leaders need to bring out the best in a diverse group of people, including volunteers. With many unpaid team members, leaders must develop creative ways to keep staff motivated and dedicated to the cause.

Program Knowledge

Charitable organisations are looking to make a difference, so they want leaders who demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and commitment to the vision, mission, and values of the organisation.

Governance

Leaders must be familiar with the governing rules and regulations related to non-profit boards. Often, boards oversee and guide operations and strategic decisions. A non-profit leader must also demonstrate savvy with communicating and working with diverse board members.

Planning

Every organisation needs a realistic but flexible plan with short and long-term goals. Things in the not-for-profit world tend to change quickly, and leaders need to adapt and pivot as changes occur.

Communication Skills

Leaders of charitable organisations need to able to advocate the mission to the community. You'll need to get out in the community, meet people, make speeches, network, and be visible to drum support for the cause.

Skills Non-Profit Hiring Boards Want to See on a Resume

- Ability to manage through influence (both direct and indirect)
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- Being able to work with a diverse group of shareholders, team members, and volunteers
- Strong change management skills
- Problem-solving and planning
- Cost-cutting and budgeting skills
- Integrity and high ethical standards
- Diversity awareness and inclusivity
- Fundraising skills
- Financial management

Customise your Resume for Non-Profit Leadership

If this is your first non-profit, hiring managers may assume you'll be too expensive. To get ahead of this possible objection, you may want to give your reasons for making the switch in your cover letter. Briefly outline your choice and why you are committed to this particular cause and organisation.

Sharing your reasons is especially effective if a specific life experience was the driving factor that pushed you to the non-profit world. It helps build your brand and can make an emotional connection with hiring managers.

Of course, as with any resume, knowing your audience is vital. You want to do your research and learn all you can about the organisation, its cause, core values, and mission.

Gathered intel will help you decide what skills, qualifications, and experience to highlight in your resume. Be sure to emphasise skills transferable to the charitable sector, sharing specific metrics as you would for an executive position. Avoid jargon and corporate-speak, explaining your accomplishments, skills, and responsibilities in a clear, easy-to-understand manner.

While many skills transfer, one difference is a more significant focus on volunteer work. Highlighting your philanthropic background shows you are a generous person interested in helping others. Consider creating a separate section on your non-profit resume dedicated to your volunteer work.

 Many of the same techniques you used to craft a stand-out executive resume will apply. With a few tweaks, you can shift the focus and tone of your resume to get noticed by non-profit hiring personnel. You'll be out there making a difference in no time!

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