THE HIRING TREE
STRATEGIC HR+AI CONSULTING

BEYOND THE RESUME | POWER VERBS

POWER VERBS FOR YOUR RESUME

Swap weak words like helped and worked for verbs that show what you actually did.

Recruiters often skim the first word of each bullet. A weak verb hides your work. A power verb makes your impact easy to see. **In a 2026 study of nearly 1.8 million resumes, Kickresume found that 95% used at least one weak verb such as helped, used, or assisted in.** Helped and used each showed up on about 4 in 10 resumes.

SWAP THIS, NOT THAT

INSTEAD OF THIS	TRY THESE INSTEAD
helped	mentored, trained, enabled
worked on	built, delivered, implemented
responsible for	led, directed, owned
assisted	coordinated, facilitated, supported
did	completed, executed, produced
handled	resolved, processed, coordinated
made	created, designed, produced
was part of	collaborated, partnered, contributed
managed (often overused)	directed, oversaw, coordinated
talked to	presented, briefed, negotiated

POWER VERBS BY CATEGORY

LEADERSHIP
Chaired · Delegated · Directed · Guided · Headed · Led · Mentored · Mobilized · Recruited · Spearheaded · Supervised · Unified

COMMUNICATION
Advocated · Authored · Briefed · Documented · Drafted · Negotiated · Persuaded · Presented · Promoted · Publicized · Translated · Wrote

ORGANIZING / PLANNING
Arranged · Catalogued · Coordinated · Executed · Implemented · Organized · Planned · Prepared · Prioritized · Scheduled · Streamlined · Structured

CREATING / BUILDING
Built · Created · Customized · Designed · Developed · Established · Formulated · Founded · Initiated · Introduced · Launched · Produced

IMPROVING / ACHIEVING
Accelerated · Achieved · Exceeded · Generated · Improved · Increased · Optimized · Reduced · Strengthened · Streamlined · Transformed · Upgraded

ANALYZING / RESEARCH
Analyzed · Assessed · Evaluated · Examined · Identified · Interpreted · Investigated · Measured · Researched · Reviewed · Summarized · Surveyed

HELPING / SERVICE
Advocated · Coached · Counseled · Educated · Enabled · Facilitated · Guided · Mentored · Motivated · Represented · Supported · Trained

TECHNICAL / DIGITAL / AI
Applied · Automated · Built · Configured · Deployed · Designed · Digitized · Integrated · Programmed · Streamlined · Tested · Troubleshot

TEAMWORK / COLLABORATION
Aligned · Collaborated · Contributed · Coordinated · Co-authored · Co-led · Facilitated · Liaised · Partnered · Recruited · Supported · Unified

USE THIS FORMULA

POWER VERB + WHAT YOU DID + A RESULT OR NUMBER

Tell how many, how much, or how often whenever you can.

The examples below are hypothetical. Use your own real numbers and keep every line true.

NONPROFIT INTERNSHIP
BEFORE Helped with the donor event.

AFTER Coordinated check-in for 80 guests at the annual donor event and tracked 45 RSVPs in a shared spreadsheet.

CAMPUS CLUB
BEFORE Worked on social media for the club.

AFTER Created 12 Instagram posts highlighting club events, growing followers by 18% in one semester.

PART-TIME JOB
BEFORE Responsible for training new employees.

AFTER Trained 6 new cashiers on register procedures, cutting average checkout time by about 2 minutes.

QUICK TIPS

START WITH A VERB
Begin every bullet with a power verb. Skip “I,” “we,” and “responsible for.”

WATCH YOUR TENSE
Use past tense for past roles. Use present tense only for the job you have now.

DO NOT REPEAT
If you already used led, try directed or coordinated. Vary the verb to keep the reader’s attention.

MATCH THE JOB AD
Borrow verbs from the posting when they are true for you. Never upgrade a verb beyond what you actually did.

Steve Smith | The Hiring Tree | steve@thehiringtreebook.com | thehiringtreebook.com

Verb lists and guidance drawn from MIT Career Advising & Professional Development, Harvard FAS Mignone Center for Career Success, Indeed, and The Muse. Weak-verb data: Kickresume analysis of nearly 1.8 million resumes (2026).