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## Have you done your research?

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It's too easy to respond to job advertisements these days. Let's face it, hitting the send key and attaching a generic one size fits all type resume is not that hard. The problem with this scattergun approach is often the resume response rate will be low – and it's not hard to work out why.

Too many of your competitors (other job seekers) use this scattergun approach and flood the job market. Also, it makes it very difficult for employers to understand why you are most suited to the job and the value you will bring. So, you need to find ways to make your resume stand out.

Customising a resume for a job is one of the best ways to guarantee an interview. A great way to customise a resume is to research the employer BEFORE you send your resume. Most of your competitors don't research until interview preparation, so pre-resume research can give you a huge advantage.

Pre-resume research will enable you to target the company's needs. It will also let you make subtle but significant changes to get your resume to ensure it is noticed. Addressing a cover letter to 'whom it may concern' is not as impressive as using the actual name of the employer. I know I take notice of a letter that has my name on it, what about you? It also demonstrates to the employer your genuine interest in the job as you have taken the time to really understand the requirements of the job/ company.

Pre-resume research will take some effort but the rewards will be worth it. You will be in a better position to apply for the job. You will know more about the position and company and through your research you will become (if you still decide to apply) more genuinely interested in the job opportunity. Most importantly it will impress the employer. Pre-resume research may mean you apply for less jobs but your resume response rate will be higher and let's be honest, the reason we write a resume is to get an interview.

### About the Author

Kerina Alter is the founder/ director of Altered Career, a career marketing and employment services consultancy. She has over 10 years experience working across government, education, charity, science/ technology and corporate sectors in marketing, communication and career counselling roles. During this time, Kerina has consulted with hiring managers, recruiters, participated on numerous recruiting panels, worked with university career service areas and been a board member at Monash University for seven years.

A few valuable years spent in the corporate communications field taught Kerina the value of being able to network, market oneself and write to an audience and a brief.

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