

Product Leaders in Transition



Product Growth
Leaders

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Steve Johnson Product Growth Leaders

I help teams overcome the chaos in managing products.
Author, speaker, guitar player, clean-shaven since 2024.

✉ steve@productgrowthleaders.com

in [/in/sjohnson717](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sjohnson717)

▶ [@SteveOnManagingProducts](https://www.youtube.com/@SteveOnManagingProducts)



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**What is a
purple
squirrel?**

A candidate with the
perfect combination
of skills, education,
and experience...

...who will work for
peanuts

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You are a product. Use your
product management and
marketing skills to sell
yourself.



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The “10 seconds” resume

In the first 10 seconds, the hiring manager's goal is to see if they can *obviously* disqualify you:

- You already don't do the role they're looking for.
- You don't have enough years of experience.
- You don't have the right domain knowledge.

If you *are* qualified, make sure your resume doesn't make you look unqualified.



Nils Davis, Resume and LinkedIn Coach

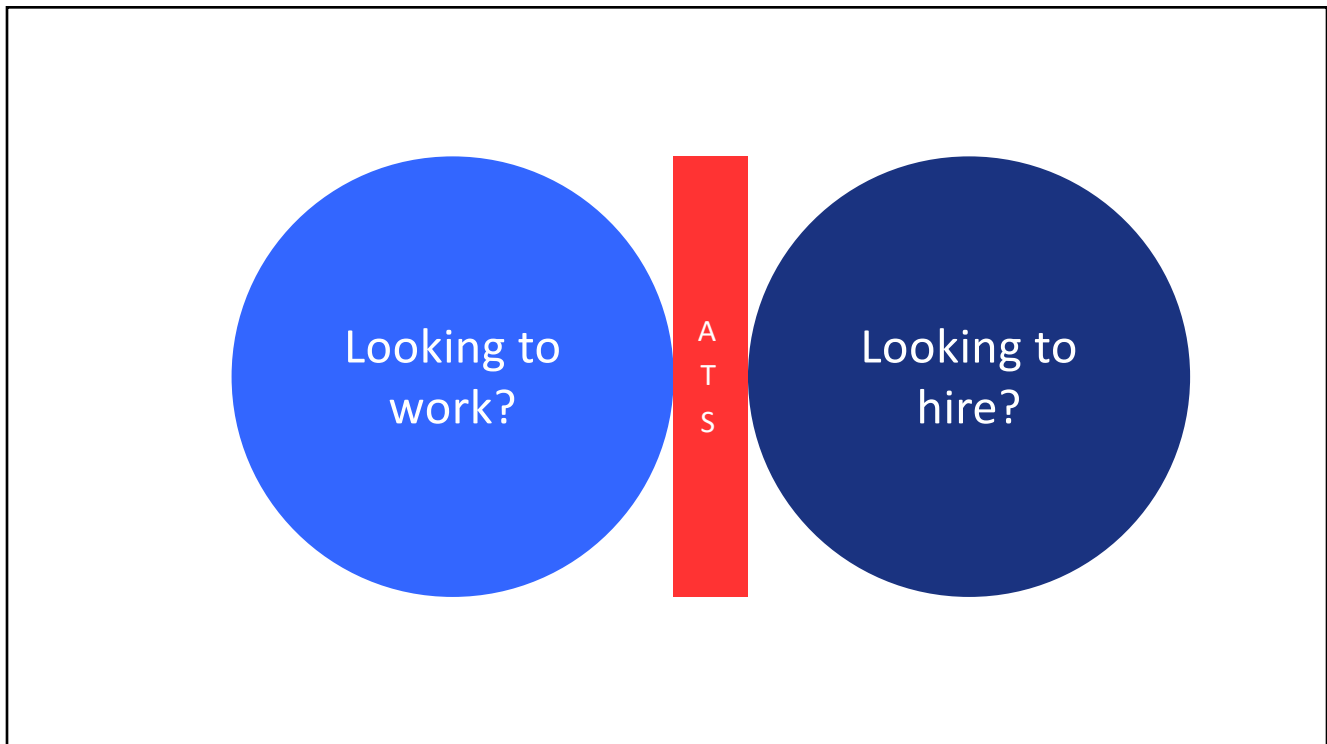


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Finding a job is a job

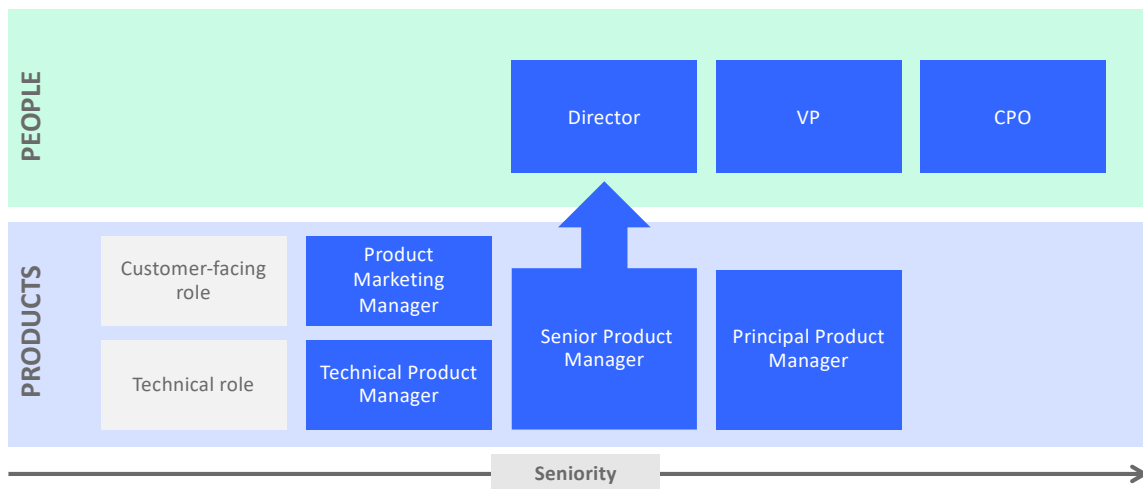
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Searching for a job can be fun and often frustrating but it's something you already **know how to do.**



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What skills are you selling?

JESSE KENDALL, CPP

PAYROLL PROFESSIONAL

123 Elm St • San Francisco, CA 94103 • (415) 555-5555 • jkendall@notmail.com

Certified Payroll Professional: Management professional with an extensive history of improving the efficiency of high volume payroll divisions. Comprehensive knowledge of payroll functions, tax forms, and pre-tax deductions; able to coordinate local, state and federal tax filings. Successful history in developing and administering payroll policies and procedures while ensuring compliance with internal and external regulations. Experience in Big Five accounting outsourcing and shared service center environments. Proven track record of beating tight deadlines with time to spend and ensuring the timely filing of all payroll tax returns.

Currently responsible for directing all payroll transactions for the world's largest retail company.

COMPETENCIES:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| ☒ Payroll Tax | ☒ Overtime Calculations | ☒ Web-Based Payroll |
| ☒ Benefits Setup | ☒ Financial Reconciliation | ☒ Workers' Compensation |
| ☒ Regulatory Compliance | ☒ Expense Reports | ☒ Customer Service |
| ☒ Garnishments | ☒ General Ledger | ☒ Teamwork Facilitation |
| ☒ International Currency | ☒ 401(k) Plan Installation | ☒ Accruals |

PAYROLL LEADERSHIP:

ABC Services, Inc. • San Francisco, CA

STRATEGIC BUSINESS UNIT (SBU) | MANAGER – Payroll Services: Directed the payment and filing of all payroll taxes for BCD Inc. and its 24 subsidiary companies (over \$6 billion in taxes each year), and ensured highest accuracy. Traveled nationally to off-site locations to train on client systems and better understand the customer needs. Managed, recruited, trained, and evaluated the performance of 16 employees. Earned fast track promotion through increasingly responsible leadership roles. Selected in 2003 to manage Wage Attachments, Miscellaneous Payments, and Banking Workgroups, in addition to existing leadership roles.

Workgroup Management – Payroll / Employment Tax
Oversaw team responsible for paying payroll taxes for 25 separate companies within BCD Inc. and CDE Corp. Filed Federal 940, 941, and 945 tax returns and managed 250 SUTA returns each quarter. Led team that successfully converted all of the salaried employees of CDE Corporation Systems to a new FEIN. Process involved EFT payments, opening new accounts, updating tables with the new account numbers and SUTA, and coordinating with the Disbursements Team to set up new payment vendors in the GEP system.

Supervisory Leadership

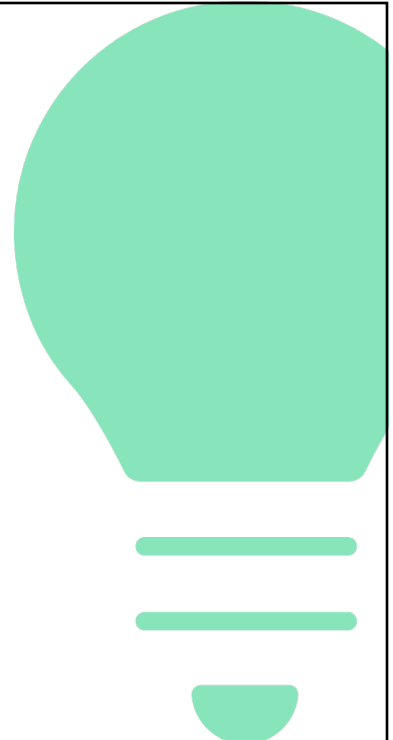
- Ensured teams met all requirements outlined in service level agreements and measured performance monthly.
- Achieved zero customer and center management.
- Achieved zero turnover rate by creating and implementing incentive plans, cross-training employees and special projects that engaged team members.
- Entrusted with additional responsibility of managing the Employment Tax Team in 20xx.
- Directed outsourcing group and successfully migrated the payroll workgroup from BCD Inc. to Bentonville Service Center.

Development & Reengineering

Implemented process improvements, including on-line tax filing and conversion of tax

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Remember: You're being
hired to solve a buyer's
problem.
(It's not about what **you** need.)



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Refine with AI

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PROMPT
“Please make
recommendations to
improve this resume.”

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High-Level Assessment

Your resume is **rich with achievements and authority** — it reads like a living archive of product management history. However, for use in a *presentation* (not an actual job submission), you'll want to **simplify, modernize, and highlight impact visually** rather than descriptively.

The goal is to **show evolution** — not list chronology — and to **demonstrate career arcs that matter in an AI-transformed job market**.

Structure Improvements

1. Condense the Intro

Your opening (“Who am I?” and “Objective”) reads conversational but old-school for a presentation. Instead, use a slide-friendly headline format:

Slide Title: “Who I Am”

Body: Product management coach, author, and speaker.

Hook line: Helping teams simplify process to amplify outcomes.

Keep the philosophy (“minimal process, simple templates”) — it’s your brand — but compress to one line.

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PROMPT

“Reformat this resume into a modern 1-page version optimized for 2025”

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STEVEN COWAN JOHNSON

CONTACT	14899 Alpine Bay Loop, Gainesville, VA 20155 USA Phone: +1-571-261-1381 Email: steve@productgrowthleaders.com LinkedIn.com/in/sjohnson717
OBJECTIVE	Product leader for teams standardizing their product management best practices.
WHO AM I?	A product management and marketing process coach, author, speaker, and advisor. My approach is based on the belief that minimal process and simple templates result in a nimble product marketing and management team. I have been working within the high-technology arena since 1979 with experience in technical, sales, and marketing management positions at companies specializing in enterprise and desktop hardware and software. In my various technical marketing roles, I have launched dozens of product offerings. Before founding Under10, I was a co-founder of Pragmatic Marketing and the lead instructor for over 15 years and personally trained thousands of product and executive teams.
REPUTATION	- Created one of the first blogs on product management and marketing with 2500+ posts since 1999, with over 75,000 page-views in 2011; featured on Alltop and Top 100 Blogs - Author of <i>Turn Ideas Into Products: A Playbook for Defining and Delivering Technology Products and Look Beyond The Product: The Business Role of Agile Product Management</i> - Authored "The Strategic Role of Product Management" ebook, viewed over 100,000 times - Author of multiple ebooks on product management topics including product management expertise and portfolio roadmapping - Featured speaker at Business of Software 2014 and 2016; delivered many keynote speeches at product management conferences
STATS	As of 2020 - People: over 50,000 have attended my presentations or keynotes - Events: over 1,000 in 200+ cities in over a dozen countries - LinkedIn: 3000+ connections; top 1% most viewed profile in product management - Twitter: 8500+ followers with over 13,000 "tweets" since May 2008
EXPERIENCE	2012-present: Product Growth Leaders , CEO, product ops coach, product strategist • 2019: CPO for Pragmatic Institute to define online and on-demand delivery methods • 2018: Co-founder of Quartz Open Framework • 2017: Product Strategy Advisor to Eigenworks , a win/loss analysis company • 2014: CPO & co-founder of Under10 Product Playbook software (discontinued) • 2012: CMO for Primary Intelligence
EDUCATION	University of Tennessee, B.S. of Business Administration, specialization in Marketing and Computer Science The Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, Leadership Development session Pragmatic Marketing, certified in product management, marketing, and data science Scaled Agile Framework for the Enterprise, certified SAFe® Program Consultant (SPC)

Steve Johnson

Product Management Coach • Author • Speaker

Gainesville, VA | steve@productgrowthleaders.com | [productgrowthleaders.com](https://www.productgrowthleaders.com) | [linkedin.com/in/sjohnson717](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sjohnson717)

Profile

Product leader and educator helping organizations standardize product management best practices. Co-founder of Pragmatic Marketing, creator of the Quartz Open Framework, and author of *Turn Ideas Into Products* and *Look Beyond the Product*. I blend decades of product experience with a practical, story-driven approach to simplify how product teams plan, prioritize, and deliver value.

Career Highlights

Product Growth Leaders – CEO & Founder (2012–Present)
Coaching product leaders and teams to build standardized processes and playbooks.

- Developed and delivered 20+ deep-dive programs for product strategy and execution
- Creator of the Quartz Fundamentals for Managing Products programs and five others
- Co-developed the Quartz Open Framework for defining and delivering products
- Advisor and interim CPO/CMO for multiple B2B software companies

Pragmatic Marketing – Co-Founder & Lead Instructor (1993–2008)
Built the industry's first standardized product management curriculum.

- Trained over 50,000 product professionals in 200+ cities worldwide
- Authored "The Strategic Role of Product Management," viewed 100,000+ times
- Delivered hundreds of keynotes and webinars; known for storytelling and humor

Earlier Roles – Product & Marketing Leadership
Landmark Systems (ASG), MAXM (BMC), Goal Systems (Legent)

- Directed product management and marketing for enterprise software portfolios
- Introduced agile-style methods before the term existed
- Transitioned organizations from service-centric to product-driven models

Select Publications

- Turn Ideas Into Products — A Playbook for SaaS product management
- Look Beyond the Product — The business role of product management in agile
- 2500+ blog posts since 1999; featured on Alltop and Top 100 Blogs
- Featured speaker: Business of Software, ProductCamp, and numerous PM conferences

Certifications & Education

- University of Tennessee — B.S. Business Administration (Marketing & Computer Science)
- Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth — Leadership Development
- Pragmatic Marketing Certified (PMC-III) | SAFe® Program Consultant (SPC)

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Purpose: Tune your resume to match a specific job description.

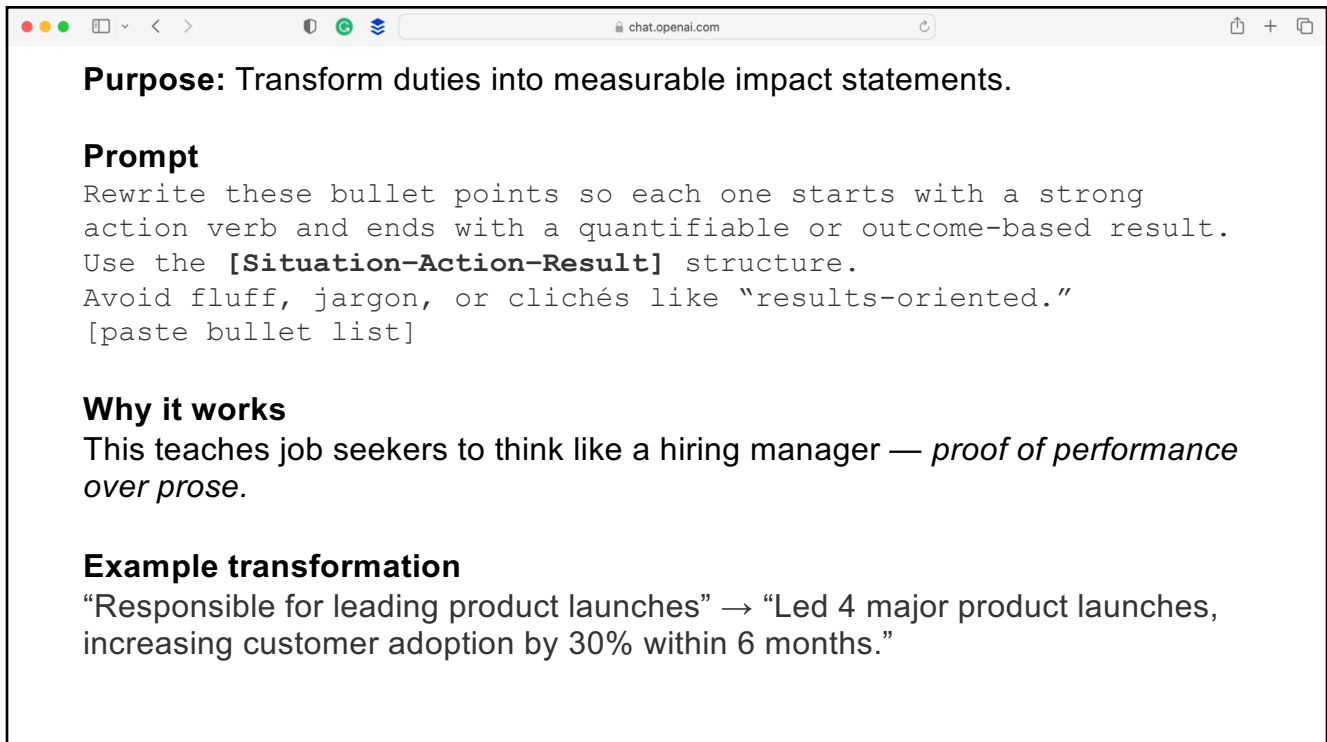
Prompt

I'm applying for this job: [paste job description].
 Here's my current resume: [paste or summarize key sections].
 Rewrite my summary and top 5 bullet points so they reflect the employer's priorities, using language consistent with the posting.
 Keep my authentic tone, but make it clear that I'm a strong fit.
 Output in resume format, ready to paste back into my master document.

Why it works

AI is great at pattern-matching language — this gets you *semantic alignment* with the job posting while staying human-sounding.

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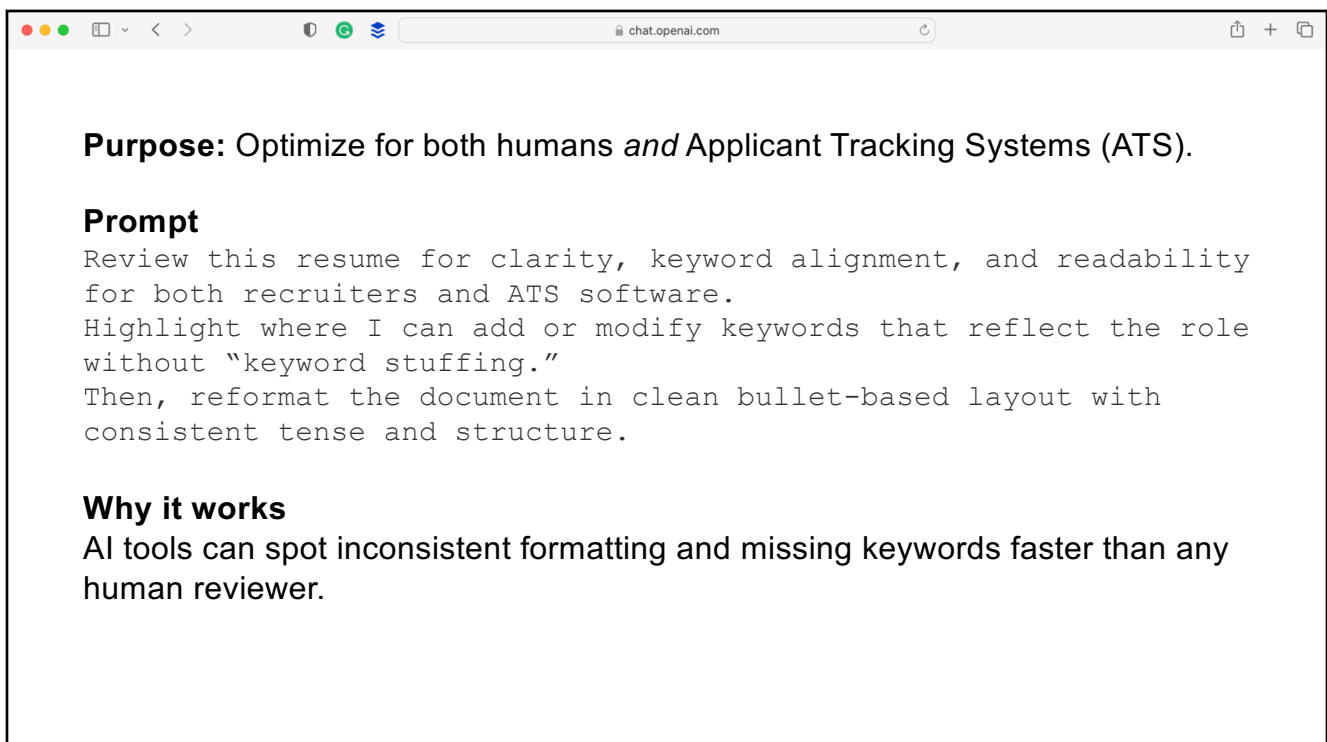
Purpose: Transform duties into measurable impact statements.

Prompt
 Rewrite these bullet points so each one starts with a strong action verb and ends with a quantifiable or outcome-based result. Use the **[Situation-Action-Result]** structure. Avoid fluff, jargon, or clichés like “results-oriented.”
 [paste bullet list]

Why it works
 This teaches job seekers to think like a hiring manager — *proof of performance over prose*.

Example transformation
 “Responsible for leading product launches” → “Led 4 major product launches, increasing customer adoption by 30% within 6 months.”

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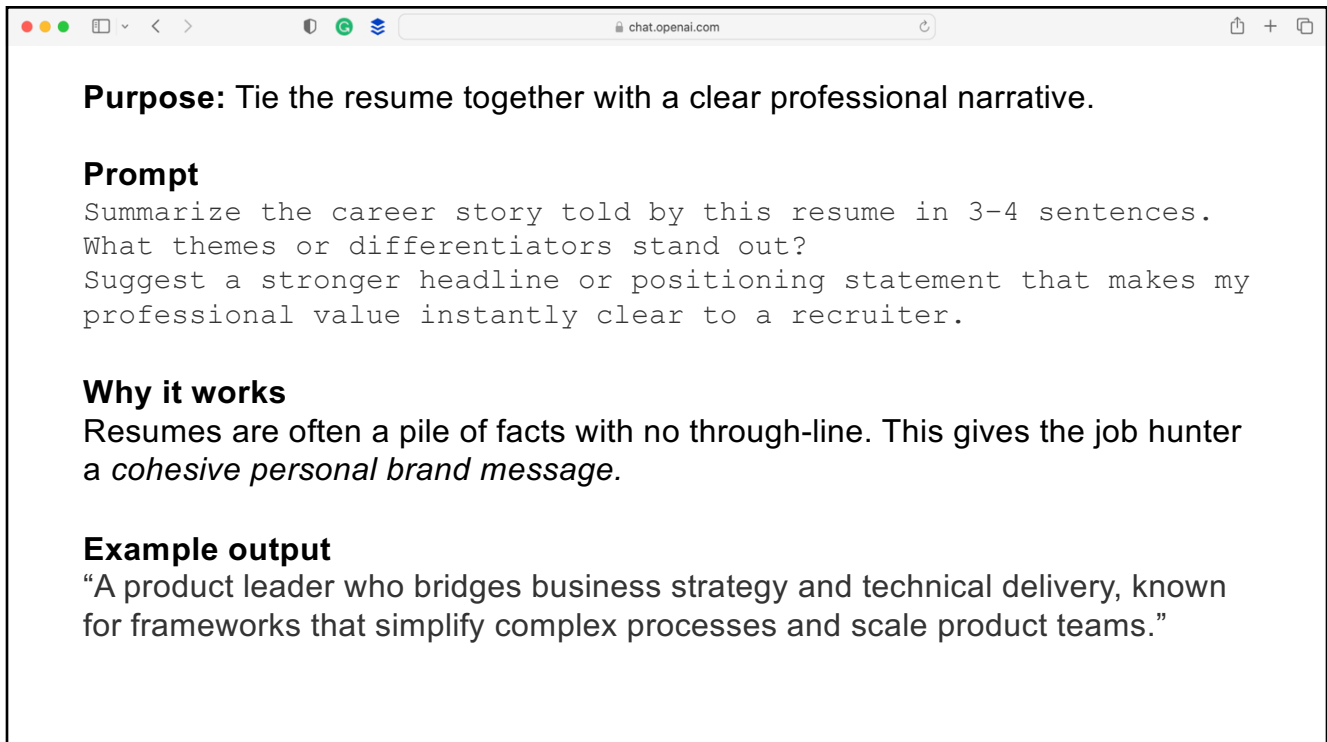


Purpose: Optimize for both humans *and* Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS).

Prompt
 Review this resume for clarity, keyword alignment, and readability for both recruiters and ATS software. Highlight where I can add or modify keywords that reflect the role without “keyword stuffing.” Then, reformat the document in clean bullet-based layout with consistent tense and structure.

Why it works
 AI tools can spot inconsistent formatting and missing keywords faster than any human reviewer.

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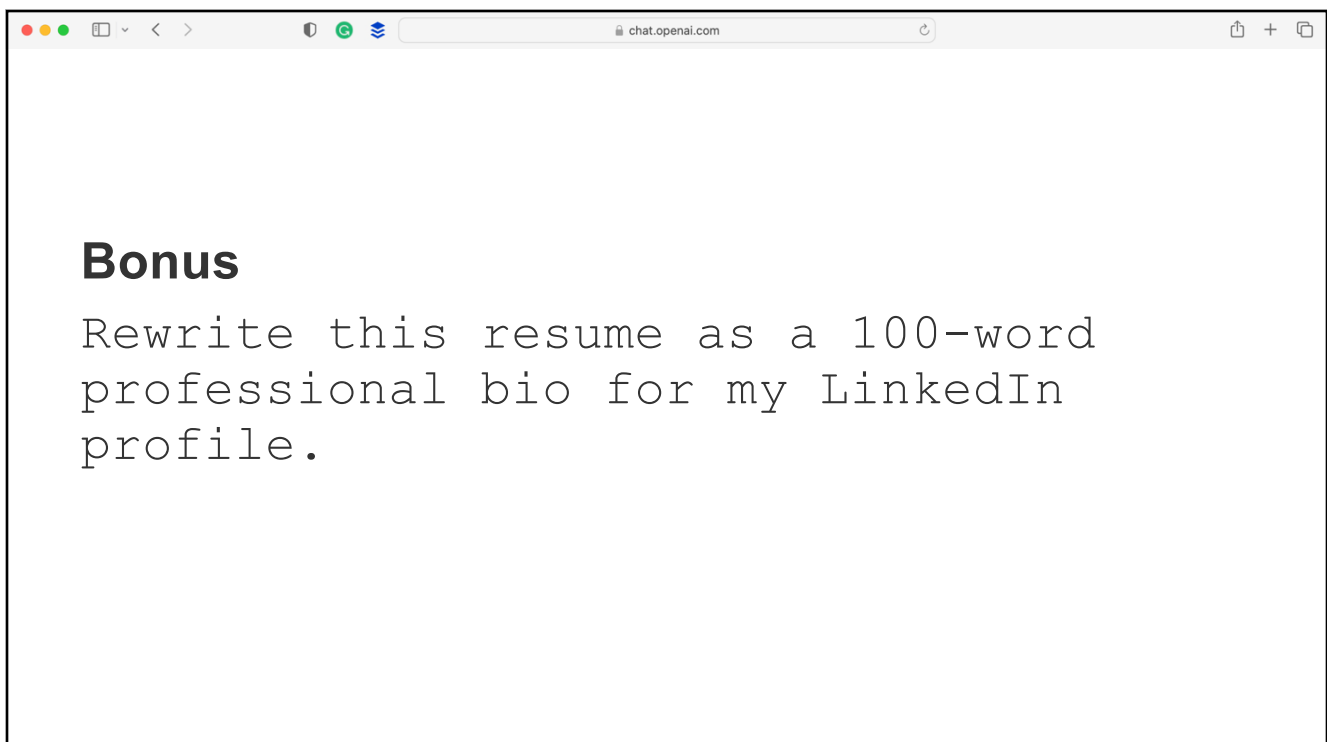
Purpose: Tie the resume together with a clear professional narrative.

Prompt
Summarize the career story told by this resume in 3-4 sentences.
What themes or differentiators stand out?
Suggest a stronger headline or positioning statement that makes my professional value instantly clear to a recruiter.

Why it works
Resumes are often a pile of facts with no through-line. This gives the job hunter a *cohesive personal brand message*.

Example output
“A product leader who bridges business strategy and technical delivery, known for frameworks that simplify complex processes and scale product teams.”

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Bonus
Rewrite this resume as a 100-word professional bio for my LinkedIn profile.

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What's working?

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A MORNING SCHEDULE



60 mins exercise

75 mins LinkedIn and Reddit

90 mins Learning and reading

30

TIPS

Build your network
Leverage your network
Find a reason to connect with others

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Do you need a personal website?

Steve Johnson
Removing the chaos from product management since 1995.

Home About Articles Books Music

Search...

Workshops now available from Product Growth Leaders [Learn more](#)



Remove the chaos from managing products

Guide your product teams from idea to market in only a few weeks. Minimal process and simple templates result in an effective product team.

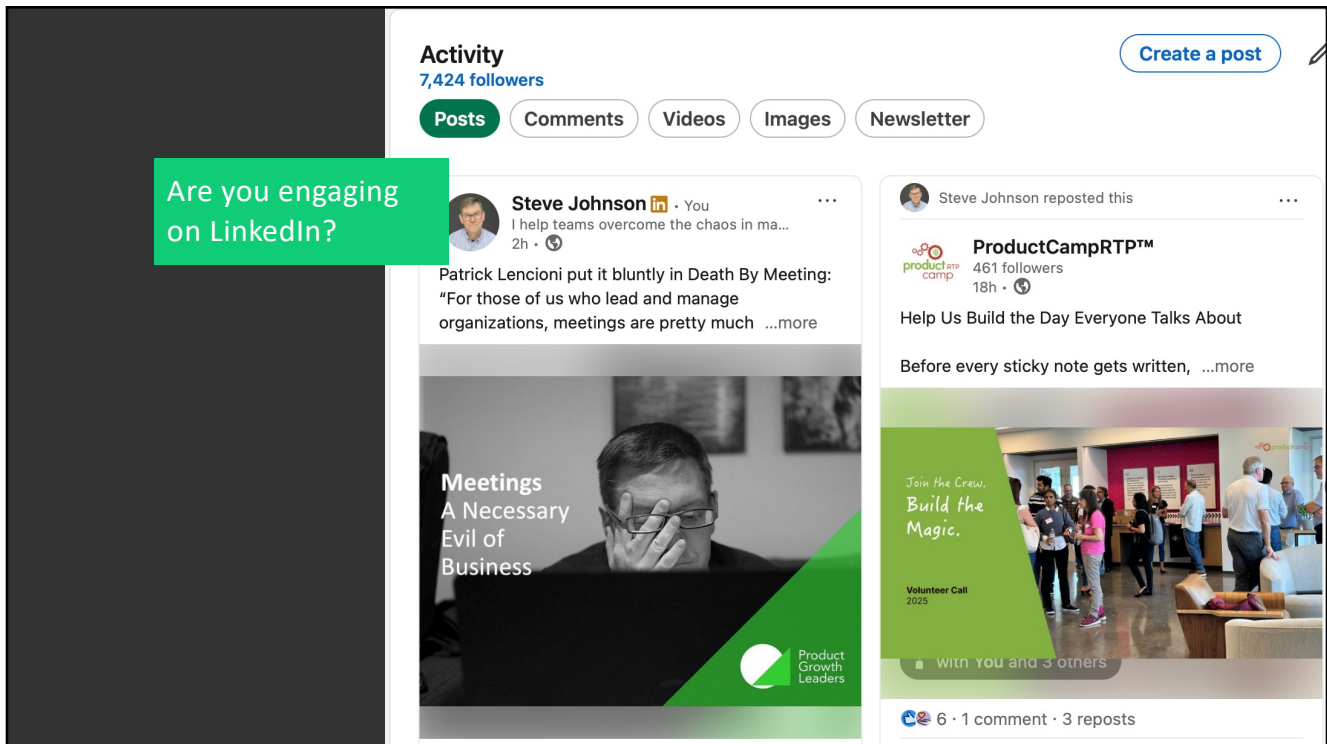
Steve is the author of **Turn Ideas Into Products** and co-creator of the popular Quartz Open framework.

Turn Ideas Into Products

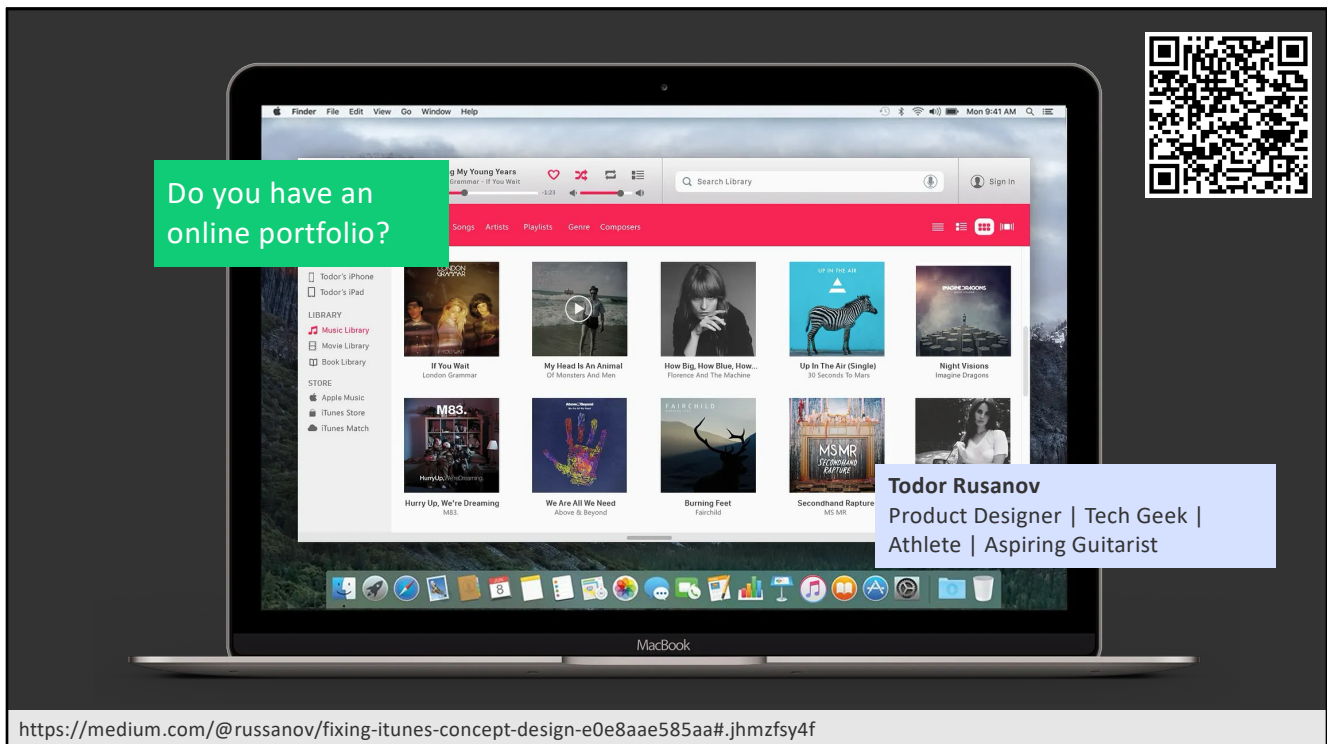
The playbook to lead you step-by-step from concept to launch of technology products.



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Philippe Dubost, Web Product Manager
by [Philippe Dubost](#)

★★★★★ (5 previous positions) | Like 12k

List Price: ~~\$999.999~~

Price: **Add to cart for pricing information** & this item ships for **FREE with Super Saver Shipping**.

Only 1 left in stock — Order soon.

Ships from **Paris, France**. Gift-wrap available (frustration-free breathable packaging).

- Dual competence: technical-management
- 5+ years working on web products
- Entrepreneurial mindset
- "Strong Generalist"
- Trilingual EN/FR/ES

Take a Trip with Philippe
Visit the [Avocado Travel blog](#) (FR) for our full selection of [Japan](#), [Thailand](#) [now](#).

Quantity: 1

Add to Cart

or

Sign in to turn on 1-Click ordering.

Add to Wish List

Add to Profile Registry

Share Email Facebook Tweet LinkedIn Google+

Do you need a landing page?

Check out <https://phildub.com>

Frequently Bought Together





Add all three to Cart **Add all three to Wish List**

- ☒ **This item:** Philippe Dubost, Web Product Manager
- ☒ Asics Gel Cumulus 14 Running Shoes by Asics \$169.99
- ☒ Airline Tickets by Airline

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Philippe Dubost, Web Product Manager
by [Philippe Dubost](#)

★★★★★ (5 previous positions) | Like 844

Currently unavailable.
We don't know when or if this item will be back in stock.

- Dual competence: technical-management
- 5+ years working on web products
- Entrepreneurial mindset
- "Strong Generalist"
- Trilingual EN/FR/ES

Take a Trip with Philippe
Visit the [Avocado Travel blog](#) (FR) for our full selection of [Japan](#), [Thailand](#), [Airlines](#) articles and much more. [Travel now](#).

Do you need a landing page?

Check out <https://phildub.com>

Frequently Bought Together





Add all three to Wish List

- ☒ **This item:** Philippe Dubost, Web Product Manager
- ☒ Onitsuka Tiger Mexico 66 by Asics by Asics \$169.99
- ☒ Airline Tickets by Airline

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Steve Johnson

Product Growth Leaders

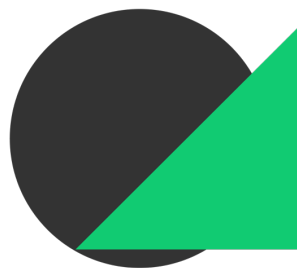
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