

The Top Resume Mistakes

Typos and Grammatical Errors – Your resume needs to be perfect from a grammatical standpoint. If it isn't, employers will read between the lines and draw un-flattering conclusions about you. Such as: "This person can't write," or "This person obviously doesn't care."

Lack of Specifics – Employers need to understand what you've done and accomplished. Take the following for example: *Worked with employees in a restaurant setting* vs. *Recruited, hired, trained and supervised more than 20 employees in a restaurant with \$2 million in annual sales*. Both of these phrases could describe the same person, but the second description's details and specifics will more likely grab an employer's attention.

Attempting One Size Fits All – Whenever you try to develop a one-size-fits-all resume to send to all employers, you almost always end up with a resume employers will toss in the recycle bin. Employers want you to write a resume specifically for them. They expect you to clearly show how and why you fit the position in a specific organization.

Highlighting Duties Instead of Accomplishments – It's easy to slip into a mode where you simply start listing job duties on your resume. For example: *attended group meetings and recorded minutes; worked with children in a daycare setting; updated departmental files*. Employers, however, don't care so much about what you've done as what you've accomplished in your various activities. They're looking for statements more like these: *used laptop computer to record weekly meeting minutes and compiled them in a Microsoft Word-based file for future organizational reference; developed three daily activities for preschool-age children and prepared them for a 10 minute holiday program; reorganized 10 years' worth of unwieldy files, making them easily accessible to department members*.

Writing Too Much or Too Little – Despite what you may read or hear, there are no real rules governing the length of your resume. Why? Because human beings will be reading your resume, and different human beings have different preferences and expectations where resumes are concerned. That doesn't mean you should start sending out five-page resumes. Generally speaking, you need to limit yourself to a maximum of two pages, but don't feel you have to use two pages if one will do. Conversely, don't cut the meat out of your resume simply to make it conform to an arbitrary one-page standard.

A Bad Objective – Employers do read your resumes' objective statement, but too often they plow through vague pufferies like, "Seeking a challenging position that offers professional growth." Give employers something specific and, more importantly, something that focuses on their needs as well as your own. Example: "A challenging entry-level marketing position that allows me to contribute my skills and experience in fundraising for nonprofits."

No Action Verbs – Avoid using phrases like "responsible for." Instead, use action verbs: "Resolved user questions as part of an IT help desk serving 4,000 students and staff."

Leaving Off Important Information – You may be tempted, for example, to eliminate mention of the jobs you've taken to earn extra money for school. Typically, however, these soft skills you've gained from these experiences (e.g. work ethic, time management) are more important to employers than you might think.

Visually Too Busy – If your resume is wall-to-wall text featuring five different fonts, it will most likely give the employer a headache. So show your resume to several other people before sending it out. Do they find it visually attractive? If what you have is hard on the eyes, revise.

Incorrect Contact Information – Double-check even the most minute, taken-for-granted details.

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