

5 Huge Resume Mistakes

By James North

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Here are the 5 reasons why resumes are rejected. Please use this as a checklist to confirm that your resume does not fall into any of these traps.

1. All Features, no Benefits

Make sure you market yourself by highlighting the benefits that you can offer to the job and company. If you fail to market yourself, no one else will market you. Your resume is your first and last chance.

Unfortunately, if you have few or no benefits or if your benefits are hidden away in some dark dingy backwater on line 200 of your resume, the reader will give up long before reaching there.

Read the Job Description and Person Spec. thoroughly. Reflect on the essential and desirable skills and your experiences pertaining to the vacancy. Then you should turn to your features and consider how each one relates to the skills required AND how you can convert your features into benefits.

Remember an effective resume is a marketing tool...your most POWERFUL one when it comes to the job search.

Attributes like, "excellent interpersonal skills" are a FEATURE (of you). What the employer is interested in is "what's in it for me?" if I interview you...."being able to communicate patiently and clearly with customers" is the BENEFIT of excellent interpersonal skills.

"A driving license," is a FEATURE, "willing to travel to clients," is the BENEFIT.

Pack your benefits into your Statement Summary, which should be at the top of page one of your resume and lead with your USP or your BIGGEST benefit.

2. Personal Opinions

It's a big no-no. Firstly, giving personal opinions will be seen by the reader as being unprofessional and something you may even do in future regarding them!

Secondly, its just that...an opinion. When personal opinions are stated on a resume, it can come across as moaning. If there is something unflattering...omit it.

In an interview, you will be able to explain things from your resume and it sounds a lot better than through a few coarse sentences on a resume.

3. Inadequate or Outdated Contact Details

It is surprising how many candidates give no contact details or give an old phone number, email address or postal address. This is simply because they have not proof read their resume adequately.

Other candidates, give a means of contact such as an email address or phone number that they check irregularly. Only give out contact details that you will answer directly or check regularly (preferably 3 or 4 times a day). It is often the difference between an interview and a rejection.

4. Spelling and Grammatical Errors

Proof read once for spelling, once for grammar, again for general content and once again for flow. Never try to proof read once and cover everything.

Most candidates do try this, but unfortunately, if you adopt the "one-read-covers-all" your resume is very likely to have errors.

If you can, get a friend to read it and spell and grammar check it also. After they have read it, do they have any questions? Is anything unclear to them? Will it be unclear to the recruiter? Can you amend it? What are your friend's suggestions?

Don't rely solely on your spellchecker as it would miss these common mistakes:-

"part time" or "party time"

"great" or "grate"

"six" or "sex" or "sax"

"rapid" or "rabid"

"clerk" or "cleric"

A good way to check a resume is to ask a friend to read the resume to you, whilst you follow a copy. It's amazing how many errors you can pick up. And it is quite a thought provoking exercise having your resume read aloud. This method is what's known as "reading back" and is adopted in the legal and financial professions for important documents.

5. Fluff, Long-windedness and Jargon

With up to 400 resumes per vacancy, recruiters have very limited time. They will spend on average no more than 20 seconds on each resume. They want the applicant to make their job easier by getting to the point quickly. Reveal the benefits of hiring you for the job and cut the fluff and superfluous language.

Remember what the MDR is of your resume...to get the interview.

It is not to reveal what a nice person you are, or how many children you have or that your sports team won 6 games on the trot while you were captain. YAWN YAWN

"Sometimes some people can take an age to make the point that they intended to make at the start, but then they get carried away with padding and irrelevant facts within their sentence, which leads the recruiter who is reading to conclude they have not read their resume, nor know where the heck this point is leading."

Long-windedness does not help if you see what I mean. :-)

Try this motto...

"Get to the point!"

Candidates who include fluff, cliché, long-windedness and those who hide behind esoteric words break the flow of their resume and thus alienate the reader.

Communicate the information necessary to evaluate your ability to do the job. Use language that is appropriate to the industry or field, but be aware that jargon may not speak to those who are intermediaries between you and the ultimate hiring manager. Your resume must appeal to the widest possible audience. It is often said that you should aim your resume at an 18-year old with limited knowledge of your industry, if you want to appeal to the widest audience...it is like journalists are taught when writing articles to reach the widest possible audience in a clear and concise way.

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"If you really want something in life, you have to work for it. Now quiet! They're about to announce the lottery numbers." - Homer J. Simpson

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