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Make sure your resume is top-notch by avoiding the top 10 resume blunders:

1. Too Focused on Job Duties

One of the most prevalent resume blunders is to turn your resume into a dull list of job duties and responsibilities. Many people even use company job descriptions as guides to developing their resumes. To create a resume that is a cut above the rest, you should go beyond showing what was required of you and demonstrate how you made a difference at each company.

Provide specific examples of how the company benefited from your performance. When developing your achievements, ask yourself the following questions:

- How did you perform the job better than others would have?
- What were the problems or challenges that you or the organization faced? What did you do to overcome the problems? What were the results of your efforts? How did the company benefit from your performance?
- Did you receive any awards, special recognition or promotions as a result of your performance?

2. Objective Statement that is Flowery or Too General

Many candidates lose their readers from the very beginning of the resume, the objective statement. The worst objective statements start with, "A challenging position that will enable me to contribute to organizational goals while offering an opportunity for growth and advancement." This type of statement is overused and too general and therefore wastes valuable space. If you are on a career track, consider replacing the objective with a tagline, which is a statement of what you do or what your area of specialty is.

3. Too Short or Too Long

Too many people try to squeeze their experiences onto one page, because they've heard that a resume should never be longer than one page. When formatting the resume to fit on one page, many job seekers delete their impressive achievements. The reverse is also true. Take the candidate who rambles on and on for pages about irrelevant or redundant experiences; the reader will easily be bored. When writing your resume, ask yourself, "Will this statement help me land an interview?" Only include information that elicits the answer, "Yes".

The rule about the appropriate length of a resume is that there is no

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rule. Factors that go into the decision regarding length include occupation, industry, years of experience, scope of accomplishments and education. The most important guideline is that every word in the resume should sell the candidate.

4. Use of Personal Pronouns and Articles

A resume is a form of business communication, so it should be concise and written in a telegraphic style. There should not be any use of articles such as "I" or "me." Here is an example:

The statement:

- I developed a new product that added \$2 million in sales and increased the gross margin of the market segment by 12 percent

Should be changed to:

- Developed new product that added \$2 million in sales and increased gross margin of market segment by 12 percent

5. Listing Personal or Irrelevant Information

Many people include their interests, such as reading, hiking, snowboarding, etc. These should only be included if they relate to the job objective. For example, if a candidate is applying for a position as a ski instructor, he or she should list cross-country skiing as a hobby.

Personal information, such as date of birth, marital status, height and weight, should normally not be included on the resume. There are several exceptions, however, such as some entertainment professionals and job seekers outside of North America.

6. Using a Functional Resume when there is a Good Career History

One of the pet peeves cited by hiring managers is a candidate who describes his or her skills and achievements but doesn't connect them with a particular job. It is irksome not to see the career progression and the impact made at each position. Unless you have a resume emergency situation, such as virtually no work history or excessive job-hopping, avoid the functional resume format. One of the most effective resume formats is the modified chronological type. Here is the basic layout:

- Header (name, address, email address, phone number)
- Objective Statement

- A strong profile section (detailing the scope of your experience and areas of proficiency)
- Reverse chronological employment history (emphasizing achievements in the past 10 to 15 years)
- Education (this might be moved to the top for new grads)
- Other related topics include professional affiliations, community activities, technical expertise, publications/patents, and languages spoken

7. Not Including a Summary or Profile Section that Makes an Initial Hard Sell

A summary section is one of the greatest tools a job seeker has. Candidates who have done their homework will know the type of skills and competencies that are important in the position. The summary should demonstrate the skill level and experiences directly related to the position being sought. To create a high-impact summary statement, read numerous job postings to determine what features are important to employers. Next, write a list of your matching skills, experience, and education. These selling points can then be incorporated into the summary.

8. Where are the Keywords?

With the majority of large—and medium-sized companies using technology to store resumes, the only hope a job seeker has of being found in an applicant search is the inclusion of relevant industry keywords. These do not have to be a separate section; rather, they can be sprinkled throughout the resume.

A good way to determine keywords is to read job descriptions for positions that interest you. If you see industry buzzwords, incorporate them into your resume.

9. References Available

Employers know that if you are searching for a job, you should have professional references. So this statement mainly wastes space. Use it only as a graphical element, to signal the end of a long resume or to round out the page design.

10. Typos

One typo and your chances are greatly diminished. Two typos or more can land your resume in the garbage. Proofread, proofread, proofread, and show your resume to several friends to have them proofread it as well. This document is a reflection of you and should be absolutely perfect.