

Why You May Be Wrong About Your Resume

You spent an entire weekend writing your resume and going through every line in painstaking detail. You have proofread it for errors and checked and double checked all of the dates. It's neatly typed and shows off your skills.

You are ready to begin circulating it on Monday, or are you?

Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.
Henry Ford

The most common complaint I hear from Executive Recruiters and Hiring Managers concerns the resume with many stating that “more than 80% of the resumes are atrocious.” So, with all of the information regarding resumes why are so many people getting it wrong?

Why Smart People Fail This Important Step

Most people believe that if you are reasonably intelligent and have a good command of your native language, writing a resume is an easy task. This was reasonably true 20 years ago when the volume of resumes being received by employers was considerably lower than today.

Your resume is not a presentation of your job history and titles but it functions as your personal marketing brochure. Marketing requires knowledge of your target market in order to write copy that will motivate them to buy. If your resume does not have a clear target, it's likely to hit the slush pile.

Make Them Want You

Have you ever read an ad for a product or service that seemed perfectly suited to your needs? If the ad crossed your radar when you really did need that product or service, would you at least log on or call to find out more? Marketers spend a great deal of time to ensure that happens. They know who needs, wants or desires their product/service and they write copy for that audience.

Your resume is your ad copy. Does it speak to your target employer? Does it inspire them to want to learn more by calling you in for an interview? As they quickly scan, is their interest piqued enough to put you in the “Yes” pile?

Five Resume Mistakes and How To Fix Them

1. You read or heard that your resume must be one or two pages so you expand the margins and use a very small font. There is no “set” length for the resume. A better solution is to be judicious in the information that is captured. If you have a long job history you may want to eliminate older experience.
2. You have written a general resume. An effective resume has a specific target in mind and your accomplishments and qualifications support that target.
3. You list responsibilities but no results. Your resume should demonstrate what you can do for a new employer. Support your target goal by demonstrating past results and quantify them. Numbers tell a powerful story on your resume.
4. You have great information that no one can find. Assume your resume will be skimmed in 20 seconds. Highlight key information that is relevant to your goal on the front page where it will not be lost.
5. You mistake a clever layout for “creative.” If you are tempted to center your entire resume and present in a curly cursive font, resist the urge. There are creative touches you can add but you should do so with the audience and delivery methodology in mind. Non-standard fonts are inadvisable for electronic delivery. Your typeface should be easily read. Conservative industries may frown upon “colorful” resumes.

Take the time to understand your target market. Visit company websites, read job descriptions and take notes. Understanding the problems your market is trying to solve will help you to eliminate information that is not relevant.

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