

Avoid Resume Wreckers Practical Tactical Tips

☐ Aim for The Company's Target

If your resume objective or summary does not exactly fit what the company is searching for, you hurt your chances of being selected for an interview. With the increasing importance of resume scanning, not using the right title or key words can automatically eliminate you. To be a "direct hit" each time, rewrite your resume constantly to match your experience to each company's specific needs.

☐ Truth or Dare

Always be truthful, but do not just tell the truth, sell it! Altering or embellishing what you have done or how you did it can, and often does, come back to haunt you. Just take the truth and match it to the company's job requirements. Cherry pick the accomplishments you want to write about.

☐ Standardize Titles

Using a job title in the resume that is inconsistent with your area of expertise or unknown to the reader is confusing. Choose the common title for your experience – in other words, think generic. If a resume reader can not quickly figure out what you do, you may be ignored. Give yourself a label that is easily understood. For example, if the company gave you the title of Technology Support Analyst and what you did was introduce new product onto the manufacturing floor, change your title to New Products Engineer.

☐ Report Results, Not Responsibilities

A resume is a marketing tool not a job description. Writing down your job duties makes your resume ordinary and expected. Tell the potential employer what you accomplished in your job. What made you successful? Limit duties to a couple of lines below the job title, and use bullets and white space on your resume to highlight your specific accomplishments. They stand out this way.

☐ Quantify and Qualify

Describe how you were effective at what you did. If you doubled productivity, explain how you got there. Numbers are impressive but not descriptive. Your resume should show you in action as a creative and accomplished problem solver, someone who can solve this company's problems effectively and efficiently because of an impressive track record.

☐ Short and Sweet

Resumes are scanned, not read. They are meant to be highlights or headlines of your expertise written in memo format - short, sweet and to the point. A two page resume is long enough to get this job done. Studies show the longer the resume, the less likely it is to be read.

☐ Easy – Pleasy Reading

Resumes are scanned first to evaluate if they are worth taking the time to read. Hard-to-read resumes aren't read. Look at your lay-out. Is the type easy to read? Is there white space or is the paper jam packed with words? Is it easy to figure out what you do and where you have done it? Write a resume like a memo, not a book. Consistently highlight your expertise. This is a company's first impression of you. Make it a good one. Sell, don't tell. Make it easy for the reader to see why you are a great fit for this job.

☐ Upward and Onward

What do you think about the guy who still brags about high school? Those are days gone, and so it is with a resume. Your most recent jobs are the most important. Show progression, not regression. Small shifts like omitting how many people you managed or how large the budget was can help avoid overshadowing current responsibilities.

☐ Over the Hill

Omitting dates or remarks like "before 19xx" and "previous experience" all raise a red flag to a seasoned resume reader that you are attempting to hide your age. Careful here. Choose your strategy wisely because you may be eliciting the exact response you are attempting to avoid!

☐ Patterns

A Jack-of-all-trades, Master of none is not popular in this age of specialization. Write your resume to show a theme, consistent experience relating to the company's need. Too many job seekers do not understand that being able to do the job does not mean you will be given the opportunity. The resume must appear to be an exact fit. Otherwise, you may be passed over for someone who appears on paper to be a closer match.

Lack of stability is a red flag to an employer. They see a pattern of changing jobs and wonder if you will do the same to them. Be sensitive to this issue and try to show a natural progression to the career changes or explain why there were so many jobs. Identifying contract assignments, company closings, relocations, mergers, sales, etc. helps to explain a series of short-term assignments.

Conformity

Hiring managers want to know what you did where, how, when and why. The clearest way to do this is to create a resume in reverse chronological order with accomplishments stated under each job. A great resume is simple to follow. The more complicated you make it to match accomplishments to jobs or dates, the less likely you are to impress the reader.

Ego

When writing your resume, remember it is NOT about who you are, it is about meeting and matching the company's needs. The temptation to put down what you believe is important often leads job seekers to ignore the purpose of a resume. The resume is nothing more than a marketing tool. It is not a career autobiography. An effective resume answers this one question the company asks while reading resumes: "Why should I interview you instead of all the other people who have sent me a resume?". It isn't about what you have done, it is about what you have done that meets the hiring company's requirements. Nothing more, nothing less.

