

Recruiters' Top Ten Pet Peeves

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“The Internet has changed the focus of a job search,” explains Michael Worthington of RésuméDoctor.com. “Just because your résumé is nice on paper, it doesn’t mean it’s nice on a computer.”

In fall 2002, RésuméDoctor.com asked more than 2,500 recruiters from a variety of industries what they see on résumés that they just can’t stand, and created a list of the top 20 pet peeves. “This is what the industry is saying, so you better listen to it,” Worthington warns.

Here are the **top 10 pet peeves** from the survey and some advice from recruiters for eliminating them from your résumé:

1. Spelling Errors, Typos and Poor Grammar

According to Bruce Noehren of J. Douglas Scott & Associates, this directly reflects your reputation. “You don’t gain anything by getting it right,” he says. “This is credibility you should already possess.”

Of course, you want to use spell check, but that won’t catch every mistake. “Manger” is a correctly spelled word, but it means something very different from “manager.” Be sure to pay close attention to those buzzwords related to your field.

2. Too Duty-Oriented

“If you’re using your company’s job description, you’re missing the point of your résumé,” says Paul Schmitz of Hufford Associates. Recruiters already know what the job is; your résumé should highlight your accomplishments in that position.

Schmitz advises you show what you’ve really done by outlining the process, outcomes and results that are specific to you.

3. Inaccurate Dates or None at All

Recruiters need to know when you worked where to get a better understanding of your working history and to use the dates for background checks. According to Kathi Bradley of Bradley Resources, “Missing dates, especially for long periods of time, could send up a red flag, and the résumé may be discarded as a result.”

Include specific ranges in months and years for every position. If you have gaps, explain them either in your cover letter or introduction, but not in your résumé. “It always helps to continue your education and training and to list any volunteer work during a slow period,” says Bradley. “Listing these under education or volunteer work should explain some of the gaps.”

4. **Inaccurate or Missing Contact Information**

“You create a résumé for one reason: To get a phone call,” says Kim Fowler of Fowler Placement Service Inc. How can someone contact you if the phone number is missing a digit or your email address is incorrect?

Be sure every résumé you send has your correct contact information, including name, phone number, email address and street address. Recruiters will not look you up; they’ll move on to the next candidate.

5. **Poor Formatting**

Different typefaces and boxes may look nice on paper, but if the résumé needs to be scanned, they can cause confusion. Recruiters suggest keeping your résumé in plain text.

6. **Functional Résumés**

Whenever possible, recruiters advise you go with a chronological résumé and focus on the skills and accomplishments that pertain to the job you’re seeking. If you’re concerned about a layoff, be assured that “nowadays, unemployment is quite prevalent, and recruiters regard it differently,” says Jeanne Pace of Pace Search Services. “Most people do something to keep their work [skills] going.” Use that information to fill in the gaps.

7. **Long Résumés**

“I simply don’t have the time to read them,” says Bob Moore of Computer Recruiters Inc.

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9. **Unqualified Candidates**

You may want a job, but if you don’t have the skills and experience needed, recruiters will feel you’re wasting their time.

Look at the job description. Be sure to highlight the skills they are looking for with a bulleted list of your related qualifications at the top of the document.

10. **Personal Information Unrelated to the Job**

With the limited time recruiters spend on your résumé, you don’t want to distract them with your age, height, weight and interests unless they’re directly related to the work you want to do.

“You need to make the link between what a recruiter needs and what you bring to the table,” explains Fowler. “Anything personal that is not directly linked to the position takes away from the point of the résumé.”

