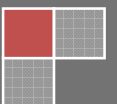


2010

# 10 Job-Hunting Blunders and How To Avoid Them

Ten blunders that show you are not up-to-date or properly prepared for your job search and how to avoid them.



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1. Wasting valuable résumé space on your “Career Objective”.  
Though even some résumé services are still using this format, wasting valuable space expounding on what you want from your job is a touching little nod to the past, but, frankly, Scarlett, no one gives a darn.  
⇒ Use this space instead for a crisp summary of what talents and skills you bring to the company.
2. Typos, grammatical errors, misspellings on any written materials (résumé, cover letter, or - heaven forefend – writing samples).  
⇒ Proofread, proofread, proofread again, then ask your smartest nerdy-ist friends (and/or a professional career advisor) to proofread some more - and take their advice seriously.
3. Failing to customize your cover letter and résumé.  
⇒ When applying for a specific opening and/or a position with a specific company, be specific. Address your cover letter to the proper person if you have names. There are many ways to describe the same characteristics -- carefully check your wording to ensure that it matches any phrases they have used in describing the skills and characteristics they seek.
4. More than 2 pages. As Shakespeare has pointed out, brevity is the soul of wit.  
⇒ Your resume is a tool to get you in the door for an interview. Keep it crisp. No more than 2 pages. It is not necessary to list job history beyond about 10 years. Your cover letter should be no more than one page with a lot of white space, preferably 3-5 short paragraphs.
5. Not dressing the part.  
⇒ Even if you are applying for a job at a low-key tech company where employees wear cut-offs and hiking boots, an interview is always a bit more formal than your average work day. Business casual with a nice jacket at an absolute minimum (at a really low-key firm), a business suit for most other professions.
6. Not doing your research and showing it.  
⇒ If you are fortunate enough to land an interview with a company, please come prepared to show that you have taken the time to research that firm and have some intelligent questions. You might ask about the company’s goals, revenue, the job and how it fits within the company, what the interviewer is looking for in the ideal job candidate, etc. This is an opportunity to display your interest in the firm and its mission and to point out how well you fit in.
7. Not getting to the point in your resume  
⇒ If your credentials for the job don’t jump off the page within 10 seconds, a reviewer is highly likely to put your resume in the ‘discard’ pile. Use the top 4” of that first page to briefly give your contact information and a compelling professional summary of your skills and experience.
8. Not marketing yourself effectively on your resume.  
⇒ Your resume is a marketing document. Use every bit of it to highlight your talents and accomplishments in the best light possible. Don’t simply describe the duties of your past assignments – make them work harder by turning them into action-oriented accomplishment stories – with numbers or other measurable criteria if possible to give a clearer picture of your accomplishments. (e.g. Kept department calendar and arranged travel VS Successfully

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managed calendars, staff meetings and travel arrangements for 6 Directors in a fast-paced office.)

9. Being invisible or unprofessional online.

⇒ Recruiters and hiring professionals google candidates. What will they find? Having a profile on a professional networking site like LinkedIn (in particular if you have recommendations there) is becoming a 21<sup>st</sup> century must-have.

10. Not having good, prepared references.

⇒ If you actually get to this point, things are looking really good. Don't blow it by not preparing your references properly. Contact the people you'd like to put on your reference list to ask permission to use them as references and find out how they would like to be contacted. Let them know that you will call them to give them a heads-up if they are likely to be called. When you are asked for references, give your selected references that heads-up call and tell them a little about the new position and what you think the company is likely to be looking for in calling them. Give the company a carefully-selected reference sheet with 3-4 names as well as a brief description of your relationship with that person. Be sure to include the contact information that your reference has indicated is best for him or her. (e.g. Bob Jones. Mr Jones was my supervisor from 2003-2007 at XYZ Co. He requests an email to set up a time to talk. [bjones@xyz.com](mailto:bjones@xyz.com) )