



Fatal Resume Errors

At CDI Corporation and MRINetwork, we see a LOT of resumes. Our recruiters submitted what they thought were the most common faux pas. Use these tips to avoid making fatal errors in your resume:

- Poor grammar, typos, misspellings, etc. A sloppy resume says you're careless.
- Overkill. Anything over a page-and-a-half is too long.
- Vagueness. Quantify your results. Don't state: "Responsible for supervising 300 employees." Instead say: "Managed the marketing department, which increased revenues 82 percent in a four-year period." Don't write a job description; list what you have accomplished.
- Plagiarism. Avoid patterning your resume after the same examples everyone else uses. Hiring authorities get bored with look-alike resumes. Be creative and different-but only to a point.
- Colored paper. Any color other than white is unacceptable. Colored paper does not copy well-your resume will be distributed to multiple people.
- Clichés and buzzwords. Don't use words that you think should sound "smart." Hiring authorities are not impressed with "utilize," "flexible," "team player," and "seeking an opportunity for me to grow and develop."
- Tiresome details. If you're well into your career, skip those college summer jobs. As you advance in age and up the corporate ladder, pare down your resume. Nobody really cares that you worked your way through college waiting tables, especially when you're applying for an executive position with a securities firm.
- Indeterminate gender. If you're Pat, Lynn, or Lee, don't keep 'em guessing. With certain names use Mr. or Ms. as a prefix.
- Lying. First, you don't lie because it's wrong. Second, you don't lie because if you get caught, you won't get the job.
- Omitting your job objective. State clearly what you're looking for. Ambiguity indicates you lack direction and focus.
- Listing your job objective. Note that this contradicts the previous point. Some headhunters think a job objective limits the candidate. If the exact position isn't available within the organization, the candidate automatically eliminates himself from a job. Do your homework in advance to be sure your objective coincides with an open position before including it in the resume. If there are several positions that interest you, do not include your objective.