

Your Biggest Résumé Mistakes

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You formatted your résumé ingeniously. You bolded your name and sized it just enough so it will stand out from the masses. You've proofread, spell-checked and edited it to death. You've even included creative (and of course, vital) information about why you're the best candidate for the job -- but have you gone too far?

In a recent CareerBuilder.com survey, hiring managers and human resource professionals across the nation shared the most unusual résumé blunders they've come across in their careers. Top slip-ups from the survey included:

- Applicant attached a letter from her mother.
- Applicant specified that his availability was limited because Friday, Saturday and Sunday was "drinking time."
- Applicant explained that he works well nude.
- Applicant explained an arrest by stating, "We stole a pig, but it was a really small pig."
- Applicant drew a picture of a car on the outside of the envelope and said it was the hiring manager's gift.
- Applicant explained a gap in employment by saying it was because he was getting over the death of his cat for three months.

Employers do appreciate creativity in job applicants because rooting through piles of résumés often times can be a monotonous task. The key however is to balance that creativity with professionalism. You want to stand out as someone unique but also someone with applicable experience who can add value to the company.

While the goal of a creative résumé is to make a lasting impression, you want to make sure it's a good impression. Not sure what kind of impact your résumé has? Try getting your résumé professionally reviewed... for free. Job seekers can go to **cbRésumé.com**, upload their résumés, and receive instant feedback on how to improve their chances of being hired.

Here are four sure-fire ways to ensure your résumé makes the right impression.

1. Your personal life is just that -- personal.

One candidate included that he spent summers on his family's yacht in Grand Cayman, while another included family medical history. Hiring managers don't need to know personal information such as your waistline measurement or where you spend your summer vacations. Instead, include information on activities that are business-related such as memberships in professional organizations and community service involvement.

2. Simple. Bold. Professional.

Using pale blue paper with teddy bears around the border (like one candidate did) isn't going to strike anyone as anything but weird. Three key ideas to keep in mind when formatting your

résumé are: simple, bold and professional. Instead of flashy formatting and stationary with borders or graphics, create a clean and polished document on résumé paper with consistent formatting for headings and bullet points. To gain a hiring manager's attention, use strong action words such as 'achieved' and 'managed' instead of unconventional fonts or colored text.

3. One size does NOT fit all.

If you're applying for a sales position, it wouldn't make much sense to focus on your experience in an unrelated field like education or information technology. Not only should you play up achievements and experience specific to the job you're applying for, but also provide quantifiable results. For example, it's easy to say that you have experience in sales, but employers will take note if you say that you were responsible for a 10 percent growth in overall sales.

Note: including a picture of you in a cheerleading uniform, as one applicant did, also doesn't make sense.

4. Two sets of eyes are better than one.

After you proofread your résumé a few times, ask someone else to review it. A second pair of eyes may be able to catch mistakes you missed and could provide a fresh perspective on how to improve your résumé.

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