

"Savvy self-marketing is critical to success."

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## Resume Mistakes Can Cost You The Job

by Robin Ryan

Recently I was assisting an employer with the hiring process and reviewed many resumes that were sent in. I couldn't help but be concerned that so many people are not having any job search success because they are using a very poor resume to represent themselves to potential employers. A poor resume drags out a search for new employment.

A candidate's resume typically gets a 15-second glance, if it gets looked at all. Employers complain that they receive hundreds of resumes for any listed opening but 90% of the applicants are not qualified to do the advertised job.

In recent hiring trends many resumes are never being seen by human eyes. An electronic computer scans it, looking at keywords and eliminating all others. Employers confess to getting so many resumes that the speed of applying is a hiring factor. Employers told me they look through the resume stack until they find four or five good ones, call those candidates in for an interview, and may leave hundreds of resumes unread.

Today it is only a well-written resume advertising accomplishments and past performance results that gets noticed. Of course you know that, but when I look at the resumes being sent out to employers I cringe because so many avoidable mistakes are causing job hunters to be rejected. In my books *Winning Resumes* and *Winning Cover Letters*, we published a survey of over 600 hiring managers to learn exactly what gets attention and what gets rejected. A few of the major mistakes revealed included:

- **Lying.** Employers reported they are on the lookout for the significant increase in lies or serious exaggerated claims made in people's resumes. Common deceptions include accomplishments, salary, or size of the team managed. Helen, an HR Executive Recruiter inside a prominent company, wrote on her survey form: "Never, ever, lie. One person I hired lied about having a college degree when she did not have one. We fired her when the lie was uncovered."

**ACTION STEP:** Don't Lie. Most employers catch you in the interview or when they do reference checks, so inflating your qualifications into fabrications is NOT the same as using good self marketing to get hired.

- **No apparent accomplishments.** Employers report that many people's resumes are just dull job descriptions but candidates do not list any kind of results achieved on the job. The surveyed employers heavily criticized generic resumes as a worthless effort.

**ACTION STEP:** Results sell! Use specific facts noting demonstrated skills, and past accomplishments achieved. Our formula for success is using actions=results bullets that command attention. Be sure to include figures on how large, how many, what you did, and how it turned out. Stress actions that resulted in an

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increase in revenues, and any cost or time savings.

- **Lengthy resume.** Surveyed managers reported that resumes only get a 15 second review. "More is not better," noted Martha, an HR Director. "Long careers often travel into numerous pages and important accomplishments get lost. We won't read anything beyond a page especially with so many people applying."

**ACTION STEP:** Write a concise one-page resume noting top achievements. Highlight only the relevant recent information related to doing the targeted job. Use action words to create more powerful sentences.

- **Spelling mistakes and use of micro-type.** A top complaint with every manager and HR person in our survey noted: "I stop reading when I find spelling mistakes." Employers felt typographical errors reflect the poor quality of work they can expect from you. Reducing the font size to cram more into a resume often results in making it harder to read and many employers noted that they simple skip reading the ones with very small type.

**ACTION STEP:** Proofread! Perfection is a necessity to remain competitive. Use size 12 font and a nice layout that is easily read. Use clean fonts (i.e. Arial) so phone numbers and emails contact information is easily read.

- **No cover letter.** Employers report that fewer candidates today use cover letters since many applicants are just blasting their resumes everywhere with a quick click on the send button. Surveyed employers stated cover letters are very influential and can snag an interview by themselves. They repeatedly noted was that it is a BIG MISTAKE using no cover letter at all.

**ACTION STEP:** Take the time to create a targeted letter addressing the specific employers needs. Opening with a couple sentences that advertise your top skills and accomplishments is the secret ingredient to getting your letter read. Then highlight exactly how you can perform the job and show definitive actions and outcomes.

A great resume is an essential career tool. It sends the an employer this key message, "I'm a pro in everything I do, and someone you definitely want on your team."

Source: "Winning Resumes" and "Winning Cover Letters" Books by Robin Ryan.

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**Robin Ryan** is considered **America's top career coach** with over 1000 TV and radio appearances including **Dr. Phil Show, Oprah, Fox News, CNN**. She is the best-selling author of: **What to Do with the Rest of Your Life; 60 Seconds & You're Hired!; Winning Resumes; and Winning Cover Letters**; and also the creator of the **DreamMaker, Interview Advantage** and **Salary Negotiation Strategies** Audio Programs. Robin has a busy career counseling practice providing individual career coaching, resume writing services, interview preparation and salary negotiations consulting to clients nationwide. A dynamic national speaker, Robin frequently teaches audiences how to improve their lives and obtain greater success. To purchase her books and audio training programs or learn more about her coaching services call **425.226.0414**, email [RobinRyan@aol.com](mailto:RobinRyan@aol.com) or click here: [www.robinryan.com](http://www.robinryan.com).

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