



TOP **25** RÉSUMÉ MISTAKES

**SOMETHING EVERY EXECUTIVE NEEDS TO KNOW
EXECUTIVES AVOID THESE TRAPS**



Top 25 Resume Mistakes

1. **Typos, grammar and spelling mistakes.**

Your resume is a representation of the calibre of your work and level of attention to detail. Failure to devote proper time to proofreading your document is a huge career shattering mistake. Tip: Set the default language of your word processing software to Canadian English. Be aware on the spelling differences between Canada and the US.

2. **Creating a “Bill Gates” resume.**

Microsoft has developed a plethora of resume templates and while this simplifies the process, using a template creates a document that mimics thousands of other resumes in look and feel. Stand out from your competition by creating a unique and enticing resume.

3. **Sloppy formatting.**

You might think your resume is 2 pages but when someone else opens it they see a 2 1/3 page document. Email your resume to a friend or colleague before using for job search to verify congruency between the document sent and the document received.

4. **Selecting the wrong format.**

Avoid a functional style of resume which is the #1 disliked format by HR professionals. Capture the reader's interest by creating a combination resume commencing with your Personal Brand, your soft and hard skills, then document your career history in reverse chronological order sharing quantifiable career achievements.

5. **Utilizing the wrong font or an incompatible font.**

By its' very nature of being the standard default font, **Times New Roman** is overused and old-fashioned. Readability on mobile devices must also be taken into consideration. The current list of appropriate fonts include: Calibri, Cambria, Trebuchet, Arial, and Verdana.

6. **Lack of clarity in your target role.**

Failure to define what you're looking for and/or expert at is a hindrance. Who are you? What are you looking for? Give yourself a title such as Project Manager or Senior Sales & Marketing Leader.

7. **Your resume begins with an Objective or Profile statement.**

Bring your resume into the 21st century by removing obsolete Objective and Profile statements. Use the space in the upper third of page 1 to promote what is unique about you. What makes you special?

8. **Failure to promote your Personal Brand.**

A resume is your prime marketing document and just like all products, you should have a personal brand. Craft a 'tag line' in 15, 17, or 19 words. Compose a 4 or 5 line paragraph describing your expertise, leadership and communication style. Sell your value proposition to the potential employer.

9. **Emphasizing the wrong information.**

Bold your job title, degree, and industry certifications NOT the name of your employer or the university you attended.

Top 25 Resume Mistakes (continued)

10. No keywords? No opportunity to be noticed.

Just like the Skills & Expertise section of LinkedIn, keywords are a critical component of your resume. Unsure of the keywords for your industry? Go to my website and search the blog section for “Keywords are Key is Here” providing links to keywords in 22 different industries.

11. Won't pass Applicant Tracking Software (ATS).

If you're sending your resume electronically, chances are high it's going to be put through an ATS screening process first and not the human eye. Not all ATS systems are equal. It is best to avoid using graphics, shading and underlines in a resume to ensure content is not overlooked during the scan.

12. Sounds too much like a job description.

Your resume should ignite the reader's interest. Share career achievements, the value you personally brought to each role. An employer isn't interested in your responsibilities; they want to know what you actually achieved. You can build certain metrics, i.e.: budget, number of employees into an accomplishment story.

13. Failure to tailor the resume to the job posting.

Employment decision makers can quickly tell when you have mass mailed the same resume. Take the time to not only review the job description but also conduct due diligence on the company. Revise your resume to match the position, keywords, corporate culture and other employer-specific information.

14. Lack of, or no, STAR stories.

Employers want to see accomplishments. Use the acronym STAR – Situation, Task, Action, Result to extract career achievements with quantifiable metrics. You should have at least 1.5 STAR stories per year of employment.

15. Repetition-induced boredom.

Refrain from repeating the same action verbs such as developed, managed and designed in your resume. Use a Thesaurus or go to my website and download the free handout “2,010 Resume Action Verbs”.

16. Oops, there's a career gap.

Failure to address career gaps can instantly result in your resume joining others in the recycle bin. Cover career gaps creatively and honestly. An acceptable approach is “Personal Sabbatical, 2009 – 2010”.

17. Inappropriate length.

A resume that is too short or too long will instantly eliminate you. Write a document that is a full 1, 2 or 3 pages, not 1.5, 2 1/3, or 5 pages. A 2 page resume is the gold standard and 3 pages is the maximum.

18. Using a Hotmail address.

Save the Hotmail email address for personal use, not for job search or career management. The most widely used and acceptable email address is Gmail though an email address from your ISP provider is also acceptable.

Top 25 Resume Mistakes (continued)

19. Inappropriate customized email address.

Always use a personal and professional email address in a resume, not a customized unprofessional address such as blondebarbie@live.ca. Avoid using the email address of your current employer.

20. Don't make me guess when you graduated from university.

Intentionally omitting dates gives the impression you're trying to hide your age. This is a BIG RED FLAG! Be open and honest and show the year of graduation.

21. Interests don't sell your candidacy.

Personal interests such as skiing, reading, or assembling Ikea furniture (yes, I've seen this), don't belong in a career focused document.

22. Incorporating a picture.

Pictures are appropriate and expected in a professional biography and on social media profiles including LinkedIn but discouraged from inclusion on a resume.

23. Age, Sex, Marital Status, Politics, Religion

While commonplace and expected in some countries, none of this personal information is relevant to a North American job search.

24. "References available upon request".

Banish ending your resume with this outdated and overused statement. It is assumed any serious job hunter will have references at the ready to be provided when asked.

25. Failure to devote the proper time and attention to writing your resume.

There is no "perfect" resume as the process is very subjective. What one decision maker determines is a deal breaker, might not be to another. It is best to always submit a resume that is professional, targeted to each employer, cleanly formatted, concisely written and conveys who you are and what you offer to the employer....in other words, a "mistake free" resume.

Contact Elite Resumes to determine if you're making resume mistakes.

We offer a free no-obligation resume critique.

Martin Buckland, President of Elite Resumes, is a leading resume writer, career and executive coach and job search strategist with a global clientele. Martin utilizes his 20 years of expertise to work interactively with senior level clients and those who aspire to be business leaders to initiate and develop career marketing strategies during their career transitions. Martin currently 20 certifications in career management including: *Master Resume Writer, Certified Professional Branding Strategist, Certified Professional Resume Writer, Certified Employment Interview Professional, Job and Career Transition Coach, Certified Job Search Trainer and Co-Pilot Executive Coach.* www.aneliteresume.com, email: martin@aneliteresume.com, call 905-825-0490 or toll free 866-773-7863