



7 Critical Resume Mistakes to Avoid

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FROM THE AUTHOR
OF #ASKLINDSAY

7 Critical Resume Makes to Avoid

My first eBook is dedicated to my #asklindsay readers and supporters. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

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7 Critical Resume Mistakes to Avoid

Let's Get Started!

First off, I want to say thank you for downloading my free eBook on the 7 Critical Resume Mistakes to Avoid. I am hopeful that this guide will assist you in ensuring that your resume has all the vital elements to help you make it past the first screening process and onto further states of consideration.

Why Your Resume Matters

Why is your resume so important to your job search? Your resume is your foot in the door. It is the representation of your experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities; it is the paper version of you. It will make or break your job search.

I've had the good fortune of working in the Talent Acquisition and Recruiting industry for more than 15 years. I've reviewed more than one hundred thousand resumes and hired thousands of people from every industry and department across Corporate America. I started #asklindsay to help empower people to achieve their career aspirations; it is my chance to give back and assist others in order to be successful in their career search. Let's get going!

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You only have six seconds to impress the recruiter... so let's make them count.

That's a staggering statistic and I can say that it is highly accurate. Recruiters are reviewing hundreds of resumes each month. You want to be sure your resume gets the attention it deserves.

Six seconds?! That can't be right!

This measurement was taken directly out of a study done by the job search site theladders.com. They used "eye tracking" technology to determine a heat map (or most viewed areas) of a candidate's resume. What they discovered was that there were six things that a recruiter immediately focused on.

- Your Name
- Your Current (or Most Recent Company) and Position
- Your Previous Employment
- The Duration of your Previous Employment
- The Duration of your Current Employment (or Most Recent Company)
- Your Educational Background

Now you know the key areas of your resume which will be reviewed by the recruiter or hiring manager! You can read my article about this in greater detail [here](#).

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This guide includes seven of the most critical resume mistakes which will get your resume tossed before it has even been considered.

Mistake #1 – Leaving Out the Basics

Some of these will be completely obvious, yet they are some of the most common critical errors I see. These are the key points of information that you should include on the header of your resume.

1. Your Name
2. Your Email
3. Your Phone Number
4. Your Address
5. LinkedIn Profile

Let's cover these in greater detail.

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The Basics

Your Name: This should be your preferred name. Hopefully this one is obvious.

Your Email: This is essential. Email is the communication medium of choice for today's recruiters and applicants. Your email must be on your resume.

Use a work appropriate email. Ladyglittersparkles@gmail won't do much to give you credibility at work. Yourname@ is a good choice. Gmail and other providers have free email services. No excuses; make it happen.

Your Phone Number: It's important that you have a working phone number listed. Be certain your voicemail is appropriate and has space remaining to record incoming messages. I also recommend discontinuing ring back tones during a job search.

Your Address: At a minimum, include your city and state. If you're available (or already planning) to relocate, I'd include that on your header as well.

Your LinkedIn Profile: If you don't have a LinkedIn profile, sign up now. Consider it your virtual resume and imperative to your job search.

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Mistake #2 – Your Resume has an Objective Statement

Some of my readers will likely be thinking this is news and some will have already seen this trend evolving over the last decade. Objectives are passé and best suited for entry level type roles.

A Professional Summary Replaces an Objective Statement

If you have an objective statement on your resume, it's time to replace it with a professional summary. A professional summary may also be referred to as a resume summary, positioning statement, or executive summary.

Key Aspects of a Professional Summary

1. It does not include pronouns like “I” or “me”.
2. It is a summary of your work experience.
3. It should include your greatest skill sets.
4. It should be targeted to the employer or role.

Having a well written professional summary is a distinguishing characteristic of an attractive resume.

If you need help writing your professional summary, join my FREE Facebook Group:

<http://bitly.com/jobseekernetwork>

Mistake #3 – Your Resume Includes Unnecessary Information

What doesn't belong on your resume:

1. Your Social Security Number (in any variation)
2. Your Age
3. The Year you Graduated High School or University
4. Your Marital Status
5. Your Children
6. Your Ethnicity
7. Your Religion
8. Your Picture
9. Your Military Discharge or Disability Status
10. Your GPA
11. Your Salary or Requested Salary
12. Your Reason for Leaving a Previous Position
13. Explanations for Gaps of Unemployment for less than 6 months
14. Your Hobbies or Special Skills
15. References Available Upon Request
16. Your Supervisor's Name
17. Buzzwords or Company Jargon
18. Greater than 15 years of experience
19. Lies
20. Stickers

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Let's Break this Down Further

1. Your Social Security Number (or any variation)

Unlike other countries, the US doesn't require you to list your social security number. This is private information; since you can't control the distribution of your resume after it leaves your hands, I recommend leaving this piece of information off.

2. Your Age

Age is a discriminatory factor and regardless of the laws that exist to prevent it, it can still happen. Don't list your age; bottom line.

3. The Year you Graduated High School or University

This is another piece of information that can indicate someone's age. This information isn't significant and takes up important space on your resume. Avoid mentioning your age in general when it comes to the job searching process and create an elevator pitch that doesn't include that bit of information. Learn more about how to create an elevator pitch [here](#).

The only exception to this is if you are a new graduate looking for your first position after college.

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4. Your Marital Status

This may be required in other countries, but this data should not be shared if you're looking for a role in the US.

5. Your Children

This isn't work related, so avoid this topic in general during the application process. In addition, any information in regards to family planning should also be excluded.

6. Your Ethnicity

Your ethnicity is protected information. This doesn't belong on your resume.

7. Your Religion

I recommend completely avoiding this in conversation during the job searching process because there is a chance you could be discriminated against for this.

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8. Your Picture

There is a great debate about this topic, but in general, recruiters say that pictures don't belong on your resume. If you are a model or real estate agent, this may be acceptable or necessary. Be thoughtful about the picture you provide. [Don't use your DMV photo!](#)

9. Your Military Discharge Status or Veteran Disability Status

Your discharge status is private. There is no need to disclose this during your interview. You can learn more about how to discuss these topics during the interview process [here](#).

10. Your GPA

Honestly, unless you're applying to law or medical school, this number means very little. Save your resume real estate for more important information.

11. Your Salary or Requested Salary

This doesn't belong on your resume, period. Salary negotiation is one of the hardest things that you'll do when you receive a job offer. [Learn how](#) to handle these negotiations like a pro.

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12. Your Reason for Leaving a Previous Position

Reasons for leaving a past position should be discussed during the interview process, not listed on your resume.

13. Explanations for Gaps of Unemployment for less than 6 months

It's not uncommon for people take breaks for family, post-graduation, or after a layoff. I recommend continuing with your next position on your resume and address any questions about the gap during the interview. If your gap is longer than 6 months, you can learn how to strategically address this during the interviewing process [here](#).

14. Your Hobbies or Special Skills

While these are entertaining to your recruiter, they do little to assist with your resume getting attention for the right reasons. My favorite resume example: "Interests - Basketball, Hot Wheel Collecting, Parenting, and Exercise." Second favorite: "'I have a rough grasp of Russian". Unless your hobby is specific to the job you are applying, leave these out.

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15. References Available Upon Request

This is an obsolete addition that is best removed to make room for more pertinent material for your resume.

16. Your Supervisor's Name

This information doesn't belong on the resume. If this information is requested, list it on your application, background check form, and/or discuss it during your interview.

17. Buzzwords or Company Jargon

Buzzwords are a pitfall in the resume writing process. Know the difference between buzz words and descriptive adjectives and stick with the latter. Explain acronyms and remove company specific jargon to ensure your target audience understands the work you did previously.

18. Greater than 15 years of experience

Let me be clear that I'm not discounting anyone who has greater than 15 years' experience; I'm right there in the same boat. But how valuable is the experience that you gained a decade and a half ago? Is it still something you use daily? If so, include it. What if you've been with a company longer than 15 years? Join my FREE Facebook Group:

<http://bitly.com/jobseekernetwork>

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19. Lies

This is a no brainer, but don't list anything that isn't truthful. Ramifications from this action can lead to termination, personal brand degradation, and long-term unemployment.

20. Stickers

I've only encountered this [once](#), but it is safe to say that you shouldn't adorn your freshly printed resume with stickers.

Mistake #4 – Your Resume Is Greater Than Two Pages

If your resume is three or more pages then it's time to cut it down. If you have patents, publications, or special instructions on how to apply for a job, please disregard. Always be thoughtful on what you include on your resume and ask yourself if the content is relevant and of value.

Mistake #5 – Your Resume is Unappealing and Difficult to Read

I daresay that content and format are equally important when evaluating a resume. Here are the biggest formatting pitfalls I see when reviewing resumes:

1. More than two types of font
2. Colorful font(s)
3. Margins are less than .5 or less – target .5 to .75
4. Font is too small
5. Decorative font – I recommend fonts without serifs
6. You used a template and didn't customize it
7. You used a functional resume format - I recommend a chronological resume format

These errors could cause your resume to end up in the recycle bin upon first glance. Less is more when it comes to resume format. Keep it clean and minimalist in theme.

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Mistake #6 – You used Spell Check to Validate Spelling and Grammar

This is not to say you shouldn't use spell check; definitely use MORE than spell check. Pay attention to words that are frequently misspelled or a faux pas: manager/manger, associate/ass., principal/principle; the list goes on. Proofread, spell check, proofread, spell check; I find that the [Grammarly](#) app is a saving grace when I do my writing. Then give your resume to two other people you trust and ask them to point out anything you didn't catch.

Mistake #7 – You Didn't Use [Key Words](#)

As recruiting technology becomes more and more automated, it's vital to have an understanding of how these tools can impact your chances of getting your resume seen.

Some applicant tracking systems use a relativity score to stack rank candidates automatically. This process is similar to when you search on Google and your strongest results appear first. This same methodology happens within an applicant tracking system with key words on resumes. Make certain your resume lands at the top of the relativity rating by including key words and phrases from the job description.

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What are key words?

Key words are important phrases or words which are included in the job posting and job description. Key words differ for every position posted so you must tailor your resume for each job application.

You can determine what the key words are by carefully reviewing the job description and posting. Make certain that you include the specific terminology that the employer uses. The more matches between the job description and your resume, the higher your ranking will be in the applicant pool.

Check out my favorite keyword tool here:

<http://bitly.com/atshack>

Thank You!

I hope that this eBook has provided some insight and clarity into the resume writing and evaluation process. These tips will allow you to avoid pitfalls that can impact your chances to be selected for an interview. Your resume is the first impression of you; I recommend you make it a good one!

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Thanks for taking the time to read my eBook! Check out my FREE Facebook group (<http://bitly.com/jobseekernetwork>) for more free content.

I'd love to hear from you if this eBook helped!

Send me feedback to lindsay@talentparadigm.co.

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Resume Checklist

A strong resume includes:

- ☐ Your Name
- ☐ Your Email
- ☐ Your Phone Number
- ☐ Your Address
- ☐ Your LinkedIn Profile
- ☐ Professional Summary
- ☐ Your Current/Most Recent Position
- ☐ Your Previous Employment (up to 15 years)
- ☐ Current and Previous Employment Dates
- ☐ Your Highest Level of Education
- ☐ Keywords specific to the job description

REMOVE the following items from your resume:

- ☐ Objective
- ☐ Your Social Security Number (or any variation)
- ☐ Your Age
- ☐ The Year you Graduated High School or University
- ☐ Your Marital Status
- ☐ Your Children
- ☐ Your Ethnicity
- ☐ Your Religion
- ☐ Your Picture
- ☐ Your Military Discharge or Disability Status
- ☐ Your GPA

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Resume Checklist

REMOVE the following items from your resume:

- ☐ Your Salary or Requested Salary
- ☐ Your Reason for Leaving a Previous Position
- ☐ Explanations for Gaps of Unemployment for less than 6 months
- ☐ Your Hobbies or Special Skills
- ☐ References Available Upon Request
- ☐ Your Supervisor's Name
- ☐ Buzzwords or Company Jargon
- ☐ Greater than 15 years of experience
- ☐ Lies
- ☐ Stickers

Evaluate your resume formatting and correct if it includes:

- ☐ More than two types of font
- ☐ Colorful or decorative font(s)
- ☐ Margins are less than .5
- ☐ Font is too small (less than size 10)
- ☐ A Template
- ☐ A functional resume format

Final Steps:

- ☐ Have you proofread and spell checked your resume?
- ☐ Had 2 friends review for errors?
- ☐ [Is your resume customized for the job?](#)

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