

20 Things to Remove From Your Resume

It's how you make a good first impression with a prospective employer and get them interested in what you can do for them. So invest a little time in making it work for you. Besides correct and tidy typing and printing on good, clean paper – or for submitting online, a clear and easy-to-read Word doc, here are 20 things you need to not have on your resume.

1. The “Objective” – lose it

Employers know your real objective is to get hired. As for what you want, they have no reason to care. In reality there are only two things an employer wants to know: How you can make them money and how you can save them money. Tell them these things with a summary of your skills, professional experience or qualifications instead of the old objective.

2. Secondary skills

Include and place at the top of your resume only those skills that you actually want to continue developing in your next job. Dump the ones you don't want to do in your next job – or you just might get stuck doing them.

3. The unprofessional or political email address

If you're still using an old, seemed-appropriate-at-the-time email address like gnarlydude56@yahoo.com or PartyGirl666@xyz.org it's time to create a new, more professional one. Or if it shows partisanship by using any political references in either the user name or email brand (such as XYZ@youngRepublicans.com or IproudLiberal@gmail.com). DO NOT include your birth year in your e-addie. If you need to make John.Doe@XYZ.com unique, add the last four digits of your phone number.

4. Misspelled words and poor grammar

Misspelled words, poor grammar and using ALL CAPS are total opportunity killers. Proofread your documents, and then have someone else proof it for you.

5. Superfluous things

Don't list hobbies on your resume – save these for interview conversation. And any awards you list should be from community service or previous work.

6. Old-school resume formatting

Do research on what's currently being used in resume styles. Keep your font plain (and consistent throughout). This goes for LinkedIn, too – don't go crazy with your formatting. Be concise.

7. High school jobs

The only exception to this is if you recently graduated from high school or if it is requested.

8. Personal information

Don't include things like date of birth, ethnicity, religious affiliations or disabilities unless the job you're going for is somehow related. Don't give reasons for leaving your previous job, or former employer's street addresses, web address or phone numbers. If they want that they can look it up.

9. A photo

The only reason you should ever include a photo with a resume is if how you look really does matter and was requested by a prospective employer. The advice for LinkedIn is, of course, is the exact opposite. Profiles with photos get more clicks, and more clicks get you seen more. Just make it professional and don't get all artsy – unless you're an artist.

10. Gaps in work experience (if you can)

In some cases you may have a gap of a few months or more between leaving a job and getting a new job. Consider filling this gap with volunteer work, or perhaps you helped someone with his or her business, which would be consulting.

11. Your landline (home number) if you still have one

Don't list your home number on your resume – always use a cell number. Employers want to know that you are reachable at any time, not just when you're at home.

12. References available on request

This is considered filler for a resume. You will be asked for references if you make it to the next step in the interview process. However, try to collect as many recommendations as you can on LinkedIn.

13. The second page

Provide the most-important information about you and your expertise on one page – rarely is the second page even glanced at. On LinkedIn, try not to go on and on.

14. Beginning and end months

List the year you began and the year your position ended, unless requested. The exception is if a particular position began and ended within the same year.

15. The word “Resume”

Don't title your resume, “Resume”. Don't title it at all. Your name and contact info go at the top, and the employer can figure out what it is at a glance. For uploading, if you use John_Doe_resume.doc they can tell what it is and who it's from.

16. Duties descriptions in paragraphs

Use bullet points. But limit how many, and keep them short. Avoid using bullets that go onto a second line. Prospective employers are much more likely to trash a resume with paragraphs versus a neat and clean bulleted resume.

17. Salary figures – past and future

If you document what you were making, you could be selling yourself short, and if you say how much you would like to make, you could be killing any chance of an interview.

18. Generic job titles

Recreate generic company-issued job titles so that your future employer has a better idea of what it was you actually did. What one company might call a laborer could be a material handler, pallet stacker, sweeper, assembler or a dozen other things.

19. Duties and responsibilities

You want your prospective employer to see those things you can do better than anyone else, so don't just list duties and responsibilities. Instead, focus on what you have done that makes you special. List challenges and how you overcame them, including how your company benefitted or profited from your creativity and passion. How was the company better off when you left than when you began?

20. Don't give your age

Don't list positions from more than 15 years ago, and don't give graduation dates. Age discrimination exists, so don't exclude yourself before an interview lets them see how awesome you are!