

7 LITTLE CHANGES THAT'LL MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE WITH YOUR RESUME

Wondering how to get recruiters to notice your resume and application? We're sharing the seven secrets to a more powerful resume.

Like it or not, your application to your dream job isn't going straight to the person hiring for the role. Instead, it has to pass through a gatekeeper—typically someone in HR—who is responsible for vetting resumes before passing them along to the very busy hiring manager. This is the speed-dating round: You have only a few seconds to make a good impression or risk getting tossed into the reject pile.

If you do make a good impression, a hiring manager will look at your resume like they might an online dating profile. They know exactly what they're looking for in a candidate, and a few misused words on your profile (or resume) could cost you your chance at the position. Even though you liked the company enough to send the first message, you'll receive the dreaded "thanks, but no thanks" email in return that will have you wondering where you went wrong.

So how does your resume attract enough attention to get invited on a first date, i.e. interview? Here are seven little changes that will make a big difference on your resume.

Remove fluffy, clichéd, generic or obvious statements.

"I have excellent communication skills and am a pro multi-tasker." Even if this statement rings true, it's also so overused that the hiring manager won't give it a second thought. Be specific about your skillset; don't just copy terms from resume samples that you think fit you. Chances are, they describe everyone else as well.

Remove broad, generic and outdated skills

"I am proficient in Microsoft Office 2007." Every time you update your resume, take a careful look at your skills listed. Be sure your skills are not too broad (computers), outdated (Office 2007) or generic (phone). Just list skills relevant to the position you're applying for, and leave the extras out.

Put education in its place

Do you want to put more emphasis your education or your work history? The answer to that question will tell you whether your education belongs at the top or the bottom of your resume. One of the biggest mistakes is prioritizing a newly earned degree, even if you've worked in that industry for a significant amount of time. Gatekeepers and hiring managers might see your resume, assume you're a new grad with little experience and move on to the next candidate.

Don't take style risks

Be bold in your interview, but not on your resume. Italicizing, highlighting or underlining keywords can cause your resume to appear distracting, cluttered and unprofessional. Keep it simple.

Show, don't tell

Don't just list your accomplishments; rather, show how you exceeded. Which sounds better: "Made \$500K in sales in 2014" or "Exceeded sales quota by \$100K, making \$500K in first year sales"? Sure, \$500K in sales seems impressive, but it needs to be put into context—for example, what if your yearly quota was \$1M? The second example shows that you exceeded expectations, making you an asset to any team.

Ditch the headline

If the first thing a gatekeeper or hiring manager sees on your resume is a headline unrelated to the role you're applying for, you won't get a second glance—into the reject pile you'll go. If you want them to keep reading, you have two options: Ditch the headline, or change your resume for every role. Option two is clearly the better bet; however, if you don't want to put in the effort, simply remove the title from your resume.

Pay attention to location

Some companies don't want to consider an out-of-state candidate for a job opening, as interviews and relocations can be pricy. Some gatekeepers and hiring managers frequently disregard out-of-state candidates because they misinterpret the requirements or details of the position (they didn't see the location, thought it was freelance, etc).

If you're looking to relocate—whether it's to be closer to a family member or otherwise—be sure to state the reason in your resume and cover letter. This shows that you didn't make a mistake in applying to a job situated halfway across the country, and a gatekeeper and hiring manager won't be wasting their time by following up with you.

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