

Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association

Career Center Tips: Ten Important Resume Fixes



You've been told enough times that your resume needs to be void of any typographical or grammatical errors that it's one area you are actually confident about in your job search. Why, then, aren't you getting any response from the hundreds of resumes you have floating around in the employer world?

Surprisingly, there are many more mistakes that might exist on your resume, many of which you aren't aware. Your e-mail address, for example, could be the one reason you aren't seeing anything in your inbox. Employers are less likely to respond to likes2party@email.com than just MKosobucki@email.com.

Here are 10 quick fixes you can make to your resume to get a better response in your job hunt.

Fix No. 1: Edit your personal information

Any time you include personal information, such as your hobbies, race, age or religion, you're setting yourself up for bias. Though it's illegal for employers to discriminate against applicants because of any of these factors, some will do so, regardless. Plus, while some might think it's impressive that your favorite pastime is skydiving, others won't call you to interview for fear that your hobby will get in the way of your work.

Fix No. 2: Don't guesstimate your dates and titles

There's a vast difference between working as an executive assistant or an assistant executive. If you're unsure of exactly how long you worked somewhere or what your title was when you were there, call your previous employer to ask. Otherwise, when your future employer does a background check, it will seem like you lied on your resume and you'll be eliminated from consideration.

Fix No. 3: Have a less-selfish objective

Employers are trying to determine whether you're a good fit for their organizations, so everything on your resume should point to your experience. Employers would rather see a summary of qualifications that displays your accomplishments and background than a generic objective statement like "To gain experience in...".

Fix No. 4: Focus on accomplishments, not duties

Employers don't care so much what you did in your previous work, but what you got done. Rather than listing your job duties, show how each duty contributed to your company's bottom line. For example, anyone can redesign a department's Web site, but if you demonstrate how your redesign increased program or park reservations by 150 percent, the hiring manager will be more impressed.

Fix No. 5: Make sure you have the basics

Silly as it sounds, many people get so caught up in formatting and proofreading that they don't check for the most basic information, such as an e-mail address, phone number and address. Double-check that your resume has this information -- none of your hard work will pay off if no one can get a hold of you.

Fix No. 6: Don't sell yourself short

It may not seem like you have a lot of experience in the field you're applying to but you probably have more than you think. Work is work, whether you have been paid for it or not, so include any volunteer work you've done. Awards you've received and your education information should also be listed. And, don't forget about any transferable skills you've learned in previous positions.

Fix No. 7: Watch for inconsistencies

Once you choose a format for your resume, stick to it. If you decide to include periods at the end of your sentences, make sure they are at the end of each one. Use consistent fonts, sizes, bullets and other formatting options. Employers will notice your attention to detail and assume your work quality is of the same standard.

Fix No. 8: Fill in the gaps

Most people will tell you to wait to explain any gaps in your work history until you get to the interview. There's a good chance, however, that you won't get that opportunity if there are gaps in the first place. Explain what you were doing during lapses between jobs, even if you spent time with your family, had a long-term illness or traveled for a while. The employer will know you aren't trying to hide a sketchy past.

Fix No. 9: Stay relevant

If you worked in a fast-food restaurant in high school but aren't currently applying to a job in the food industry, leave it off your resume. Many job seekers try to fluff their resumes with irrelevant job experience when they think they don't have enough know-how for the job for which they are applying. Keep your resume to one or two pages and only include your most recent and pertinent work history.

Fix No. 10: Keep it simple

No one wants to look at a resume on fluorescent paper, covered in crazy fonts and symbols. Don't try to impress an employer with your graphic design skills. Find an uncommon, yet attractive and simple layout to catch the eye instead.