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Put Your Best Forward With Your Resume

Whether you're a [recent college graduate looking for entry-level employment](#) or a student seeking an [internship](#), you're going to need a resume. Most employers want to see a cover letter, too, but more than that, they want to see a resume that looks as if the candidate took his time with it and put some thought into where he's applying.

I asked my resume experts what resume "faux pas" (false steps) annoyed them the most. The consensus was TYPOS. No one liked them and most said they would toss a resume that had them into the trash. But there are other resume flaws that could hinder a candidate's chance of landing just the right [entry-level job](#) or [internship opportunity](#).

Carly Drum, managing director of [Drum Associates](#), doesn't like to see "silly email addresses for contact."

Two things that don't sit well with Tom Ruff, founder and CEO of the [Tom Ruff Company](#), are "sending a draft of the resume where you can still see the editing notes," and "emailing the resume to multiple people at once instead of personalizing the email to an individual: laziness doesn't score points."

Craig Kasco, recruiter for [1-800-GOT-JUNK?](#), also dislikes "blanket resumes" because "it shows that the applicant has not put any thought into the application process at all."

Like some others, [Linda Pophal](#), human resource management expert and business journalist, has three pet peeves:

- "Submitting what is clearly a generic 'form letter'"
- Misspelling the name of the company and/or hiring manager - along with giving a sense that the candidate has not done enough background research to understand the company and its needs
- A focus on 'I' vs. 'we' - candidates whose resumes speak about all of the great things they've accomplished independently are always suspect. In most cases it takes a team to make things happen."

Steven Himmelrich of [Himmelrich Public Relations](#), dismisses candidates who exaggerate. And he advises candidates to list all experiences on their resumes. He said he was "far more impressed with the waitressing than the internships" of a woman he interviewed because the waitressing jobs, he said, show "perseverance, hard work, and commitment."

Kassi Belz, director of client services for [MassMedia](#) agrees with Himmelrich, "What most college students don't understand is that you can include those part-time bartending and retail jobs on your resume. The key is identifying the skill sets they learned at these [jobs](#) and how it can help this business."

Dr. Rachelle J. Canter, president of [RJC Associates](#), dislikes exaggerated resumes. "The reader doesn't expect a resume that sounds like a 35-year-old's, and if they get one, they'll think you're engaging in puffery," she warns.

"Weak language is a major faux pas," says Lisa Mitrenko, senior manager for [Capital One](#). "Using strong action verbs that are relevant to the position being applied for are important. Recruiters read many resumes and so making sure that there are words that will grab their attention is important."

Debbie Anglin, principal for [Anglin Public Relations, Inc.](#) pointed out that "many resumes are missing start and end dates for employment history, the name of the company (i.e. Marketing Intern at a Dallas Gas Company) or an understandable, brief description of what they did for the employer."

Karen Wright, operations director for [KMSU 89.7 FM](#) and Tina Hamilton, PHR for [HireVision Group](#), have similar pet peeves. For Wright, it's on the cover letter and the resume, "when students write the salutation to the wrong person (from a completely different company) or not changing the objective on their resume to fit the [job](#) for which they are applying (such as saying they want a computer programming [job](#) when they are applying for a news reporter position)." Hamilton, too, is turned off by inattention to the objective portion of a resume. "The 'Objective' noted on top is different from the position in which they are applying (ex: Applying for an Engineering position - Objective is to be a Graphic Artist). this is sudden death for any resume that I receive," she says.


[Sue Thompson](#), author and speaker, Michelle Tillis Lederman, founder of [Executive Essentials](#), and Lee Salz, founder of [Sales Dodo](#), provide a little food for thought for [recent college graduates looking for entry-level jobs](#) as well as students seeking quality [internships](#):

"In a professional atmosphere, I need my employees to be able to communicate professionally. A cover letter and resume are the first impression I receive that they may or may not be able to do this," says Thompson.

"If the resume is not inviting to read - I don't read it," says Lederman. "If I have to trudge through a bullet with three adjectives and lots of big words and have no idea what I read even after reading it three times - I am done reading."

Finally, Lee Salz has interesting advice about the purpose of a resume, "Resumes should be designed to tell a story. Give your resume to multiple people (professors, business friends, etc.) and ask what message the resume communicates. If the message it sends is not the intended one, back to work!"

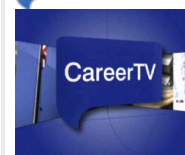
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