

Best And Worst Resumes

Monster.ca /career-advice/article/best-and-worst-resumes-ca

Best and worst resumes

By Joe Issid
Monster.ca Tech Jobs Expert

Today, the great majority of job applications are submitted online. And, more than likely, the recipient of said application is a total stranger. In the world of IT recruiting, your resume is your passport – it can grant you access to exciting new places just as easily as it can shut some doors. As such, you need to keep in mind the importance of a good resume and how it reflects you as a candidate and as a person.



In my experience as an [IT Manager](#), I have evaluated scores of resumes and am willing to share some of the best and worst that have shuffled across my desk.

Let's start with the worst.

A candidate for a job in Quebec claimed to be perfectly bilingual but spoke no word of English. Or French. While his resume was written in perfect English, he was not able to communicate with us during a phone interview.

Tip: [don't apply for a job if you cannot speak any of the languages that are required](#). It makes for a very confusing interview.

I received a resume that was 7 pages long and outlined every position that the candidate had held over the preceding 20 years. It was not relevant for me to know that the candidate had sold t-shirts to tourists in Niagara Falls in the 1980s.

Tip: keep your resume very relevant to the position for which you are applying. Please.

A candidate submitted their resume claiming to have previously worked for the company to which he was applying. A quick check with Human Resources revealed that this wasn't true.

Tip: it is obvious. Don't do it. Also, pay attention to where you are applying. Seriously.

A hiring manager is not able to make personnel decisions based on the personal situation of the candidate. I once

received a cover letter outlining personal financial hardships that a candidate was enduring along with a plea to be hired. While it was hard to ignore, my job is to hire the best candidate and not the most desperate.

Tip: As hard as it may be, you need to leave your personal life outside of your resume or cover letter. In fact, sharing too much personal history can permanently turn off any recruiter.

Oh, and always spell check. [Nothing is worse than receiving a Word document with squiggly red lines everywhere.](#) It, effectively, disqualifies you immediately.

Tip: there is no tip here. It makes you look stoopid. Ahem.

So, how about some good resumes? Here are some examples that certainly caught my eye as I performed the unenviable task of sifting through piles and piles of resumes:

A candidate once listed 'fighting stupid' as [a core career objective](#) at the top of his resume. Now, this is quite unorthodox but it certainly compelled me to continue reading. The rest of his resume was fairly pedestrian but it certainly intrigued me enough to continue.

Tip: if you have a strong sense of humour, don't be afraid to show it. Just don't overdo it.

I received a resume that was shorter than one page and contained no more than 200 words. The candidate was experienced and qualified yet was able to list all of his career and educational highlights in a very clear and concise manner. I tripped over myself trying to contact the candidate.

Tip: being able to sell yourself without being verbose is a great skill and a very welcome boon to any hiring manager. Brevity is cherished.

Ordinarily, I would strongly recommend against performing any gimmicky tactics with your resume (for example, attaching photos or videos if none are requested). However, receiving a resume printed on bright pink paper did catch my eye. You see, IT is very much a male-dominated industry; to receive a powerfully feminine resume was both clever and refreshing. It gave me reason to examine it more closely.

Tip: if you are an atypical candidate, try and find clever ways to highlight that fact. Employers are always looking for unique talent to grow their enterprise.

Admittedly, I am a sucker for [candidates that take risks](#). While I did not pursue the candidate, I did closely examine her resume after her cover letter contained nothing more than an admittedly unfunny *knock knock* joke.

Tip: don't be shy to take a calculated risk. But be careful; read the job posting carefully and think about the type of company to which you are applying. If you are [applying for a job at a video game company](#), a creative sense of humour may be more welcome than, say, at [a large international law firm](#). Follow their tone and you will be just fine.