

5 Common Errors to Avoid When Preparing your Resume / Cover Letter

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You may be an excellent candidate for the job; however, in the real-world, you only have a page or two to show all your qualities to your potential employer. Let's make the most of it and avoid the following common errors when writing up your resume or cover letter.

Error 1: Copying the job description from the job advertisement and listing them as your own in your application.

What employers look for in an application is clear demonstration of how your education, experience, and other skills are relevant to the qualification of the job position you are applying for. Just listing off (or copying) required skills from the job posting shows lack of care and professionalism. Try highlighting your skills in relation to the outlined qualifications, and avoid listing irrelevant information.

Error 2: Listing training or courses you have taken, without illustrating the relevance to the job you are applying for.

If you have completed certain courses or training, ensure you highlight these courses / training and how it has helped you develop the skills required for the position you are applying for. For instance, if you've picked up computer skills from school (e.g. proficiency in Microsoft Office), illustrate how these skills are transferrable for the field you will be working in.

Error 3: Listing hobbies or volunteer experiences, without showing how these experiences have developed your skills, knowledge, or abilities required for the job you are applying for.

Including extracurricular activities and/or volunteer experience is a useful way to highlight transferable skills. Focus on experience that are relevant to the position and demonstrate how skills, knowledge, or abilities picked up can be an asset for the employer.

Error 4: Writing unclear or vague statements.

Avoid general or vague statements; instead, focus on specific examples that demonstrate the skills required for the job you are applying for. Your application is your chance to show your potential employer how your knowledge and skills align with the outlined qualifications.

Error 5: Not individualizing / tailoring your application to the job you are applying for (i.e. providing irrelevant information).

It's a common mistake for people to write up a general resume and/or cover letter to apply for multiple positions at once, hoping that one would "bite". This type of approach is frowned upon, as employers want to see experiences that are relevant to the qualifications of the position you are applying to. Take the time to individualize or tailor your application, and you will find more success on your job hunt.