

# How to form your resume in 2015

*The average time spent by a recruiter on a resume is 6.25 seconds. Your resume is going to be the first ever impression you make on your potential employer, so if it lacks that ever-elusive wow factor, then it's off to the shredder before you can blink. But whether you're a veteran job-switcher or just entering the job market, resume-writing can be a soul-devouring process. And in an attempt to include every little accomplishment, your resume turns into a hideous 10 page-long black-and-white opus magnum with close-to-no line spacing and shameless page margins. So, keeping up with times, here are some ideas for making that unforgettable first impression.*

## 1. CALL-OUT BOXES

Humans are above all, visual beings. Visuals are refreshing and keep the reader interested. It's also a strategic way to direct the recruiter to short pieces of vital information and makes them easy to remember. Like highlighted text in a magazine that's in a type style different from the rest, call-out boxes stand out and the reader's eye will be immediately attracted to it. Save the call-out boxes for the deal clinchers – the things that you know if recruiters know about you, they'll have to interview you.

## 2. THE VALUE PROPOSITION

This is the most important reason why the recruiter should give you a pass and hand you over to the interviewer. Your resume must communicate your value proposition so that the recruiter knows why they should hire you over the next guy – it's what you can offer them something that no one else can. What's most remarkable about your career? Play this trump card right by placing the info in a call-out box or by present it as a breakaway text.

## 3. THE NETWORKING SNAPSHOT

Networking is increasingly becoming an inevitable part of our job hunting experience. So why not



prepare a snapshot of your accomplishments, experiences and skills which you can pass on to your networking circle. Keep it short, visual and to-the-point. A snapshot of your resume would be easily shareable so that word of your expertise can be spread to interested employers or partners if they hear about a great opportunity that

aligns with your line of work. Restrict yourself to a one-page bio that emphasises events most relevant to your goals now. Keep in mind that this is not the ultimate collection of career-related information you might want to put in the hands of a prospective employer, but it's a great way for them to "see" what you can offer.

## 4. FORMATTING

Piggybacking on a previous point, ever wondered why magazines are so popular? If you got to choose between a full-coloured copy of The Economist and a black-and-white copy of the International Affairs page of your daily newspaper, which would you pick? Regardless of the fact that they might contain similar (if not the same) information, you'd pick the magazine any day. Using visuals has nothing to do with compromising content. Colours, graphs and the layout add to the appeal of a resume. They also offer an alternative way to represent the same information and it's a sign of innovation. Graphic design pieces, borders, shading and so on can maximise the effect of content, engaging your reader so they continue reading. Note in point, avoid direct visual content likes photos unless you're a photographer or a graphic designer. Also, if it's not done already, switch the font of your resume to Helvetica, Arial or Times New Roman – in other words, make sure it's discernible and stuck in Word's standard Calibri. While you're at it, increase the line spacing to at least 120% of the font size to improve readability. And if you can't do without a little more space, reduce your top and bottom margins to 0.5" and your side margins to no less than 0.75".

## 5. INCLUSION OF VIDEO

Want to try something different? More and more job seekers are starting to create 30 second long intro videos so employers get a better feel for the person's personality, presence, and cultural fit within the organisation. While a video resume will never replace a written one, if you're in the agency world, consider including a link to your video resume on your written one. However, the importance of the right script and rehearsal cannot be stressed enough. Don't make a video just for the heck of it – make it if you can truly communicate something extra that words alone cannot do justice to.

## 6. CUSTOMISE

Recruiters are specific so it's your job as a job seeker to be just as particular. There is no one-size-fits-all resume. If you learn this early on, you'll get into the habit of constantly updating and tailoring your resumes to match the target positions or situations. Better response rates will follow. Never get sloppy with your resume and take your time to cut out or insert information, and rephrase content. Job descriptions always come with objectives and specifications of the opening, and while following them is crucial, never directly reiterate them word for word.

AMIYA HALDER

## WATER COOLER CHRONICLES

### Ridiculous workplace phrases that have to go

That guy dozing off at the far end of the conference table, he definitely knows what's going on the moment you open your mouth. You stick out like an empty Dhaka street on a weekend. Of course you forgot to do your research on the topic. Maybe you have no opinion to give on the issue. So you drop words like 'synergy' and 'leverage' while all you can think about is when the damn tea will be served. Dropping ambiguous words to form barely coherent sentences to confound the teachers is a rite of passage. So it is no wonder that even in the workplace we reach for these pet phrases every time we are at a loss for words.

#### Out of the box

Who are you kidding? It meant something when Steve Jobs said Think Different when he was revolutionising the tech industry. Not so much when the idea you are about to propose about the new social media marketing strategy is something you read about the other day on Wired. Instead be humble, talk about where you saw it produce good results. Even if it's something completely original, it sounds less cheesy if you say "This has not been done before but..."

#### Lock/seal the deal

You just managed to finalise the deal with that client your company wanted. You are ecstatic, run into the



boss's room and proclaim for all to hear, "Boss, deal ta lock kore felsei" (Boss, I just sealed the deal). While the translation seems innocuous enough, the pidgin Bangla is relevant for us. It makes you sound uneducated for starters. The deal may be important but you don't want to show to your bosses you just did them a favour when in reality you just did your job.

#### I don't get paid to do this

Very few jobs stick to the stated job descriptions. And while you should not be expected to take care of the elevator maintenance when you have been hired to serve the coffee, washing the coffee cups afterwards is actually expected. So stop saying this aloud, in front of colleagues and definitely your boss. You just come off as complaining and incompetent.

#### I may be wrong but...

How condescending can you get? Of course you don't think you are wrong. If you do then you come off as passive aggressive or worse, not confident about what you want to say. Assert your opinion and ask for criticism or feedback instead.

And if you still can't rein in your mouth, you should invest your efforts and synergise to differentiate a value strategy to achieve transformational change.

MOYUKH MAHTAB

# PUNCTUATION MISTAKES THAT DRIVE PEOPLE BATTY

*Your words are your most powerful weapons, and yet it's easy to undermine yourself in written communication by violating some very simple rules of punctuation. There's no easier metaphorical way to shoot yourself in the foot. We've all scoffed at errors in emails and letters, wondering whether the writer even bothered to proofread. Smart, insightful, clever people can wind up looking a little less than astute. Here are 16 of the worst offenses.*

#### 1. Putting a period or comma "outside of a quote".

Almost never do this: "Almost never do this". A period or comma goes inside the quote, "like this." (Although, I've been told, "It's different in England".)

#### 2. Commas and semicolons are not the same thing.

Use a semicolon when you want to link two independent clauses; otherwise, you probably want to use a comma.

#### 3. Putting two spaces after a period is wrong. Like this.

If you're over 40, or maybe even 35, you might've learned to put two spaces after a period. This is because you probably learned to type on an early model IBM or Apple. Bottom line: We don't have to do this anymore. Using two spaces after a period makes you look old.

#### 4. Never use more than one exclamation point!!!

You'll only exhaust yourself!!!

#### 5. :)

Emoticons are cute, and they're a good hedge against the tonal imprecision of emails. I probably use them more than I should, but they aren't punctuation.

#### 6. Apostrophe's

There are so many rules here, but in short: Plurals usually don't have apostrophes; possessives often do.

#### 7. It's important to learn the difference between *it's* and *its*.

Related to Rule No. 6, but a common enough transgression to deserve its own entry: *It's* is a contraction of *it is*. *Its*, on the other hand, signifies that "it" possesses something. So preserve *its* dignity by using its correct possessive form, or else it's not going to look right.

#### 8. Learn where quotes "go."

Very often, they're not needed. There are many websites devoted to documenting this "phenomenon."

#### 9. Like my teacher once said, learn to use quotes.

Notwithstanding Rule No. 8, if you're

including the exact words someone said, put them in quotes. If you are paraphrasing, don't use quotes.

#### 10. Also, fragments

A complete sentence needs, at a minimum, a subject and a verb. In the first sentence of this paragraph, the subject is "sentence" and the verb is "needs." In the second sentence of this paragraph, the subject is "subject" and the verb is "is"; there's also a second clause, in which the subject is "verb" and the verb is "is." (I'm beginning to feel like this example is more confusing than it needs to be.)

#### 11. Don't use run-on sentences because they go on forever and make

people think that you don't know the most basic rules of punctuation and also they just aren't much fun to read or to write for that matter. 'Nuff said.

#### 12. Words, phrases, conjunctions

*And, but* and *or* will get you pretty far.

#### 13. That thing when the verb don't agree with the noun

When the noun is singular, the verb should be singular. Same thing with plurals.

#### 14. If you've started using commas and you like them, and you've continued them you need to commit to them.

It's very easy to get addicted to commas, before you know it, they're everywhere. Either use them or don't. (Related: missing decimals. Tk. 1,000 is not the same thing as Tk. 10.00.)

#### 15. Also – and this is important, commas and dashes don't go together.

The short answer here is, pick just one and stick with it.

#### 16. Slavishness.

If the items in this list present you with a "no duh" moment, congratulations. They no longer apply. The number one rule of punctuation is that you have to learn the rules in order to have the right to break them.

