

Still Looking for a New Year's Resolution?

Consider Working on Your Resume

By Robert Half International

You may have already backslid on a New Year's resolution to eat healthier or save more money, but if you're one of many workers who vowed to land a new job, it's not too late. To achieve that goal, here are a few resume-related resolutions to consider and some real-life goofs — dubbed “Resumania” by Robert Half International's founder, Robert Half — from job candidates who could have benefited from resolutions of their own:

Resolution #1: I will customize my resume.

Different companies have different needs, so don't send the same version of your resume to every organization. Tailor your resume by highlighting your skills and qualifications that most closely relate to the requirements of the open position. Carefully review each prospective employer's job advertisement and mirror their language when discussing your strengths and previous experience. In short, make it easy for hiring managers to see how you will play a role in helping them accomplish their goals. This candidate failed to do so:

“OBJECTIVE: To find any type of job.”

Resolution #2: I will write in a straightforward manner.

Hiring managers are drawn to professionals who communicate clearly and concisely. Write short, crisp and compelling sentences in “plain English.” Applicants hurt themselves when they weigh down their resumes with trendy business phrases, technical jargon and flashy five-dollar words. Here's an example of a candidate whose verbiage confuses instead of clarifies:

“SKILLS: Able to remedy posterity and proficiency to the desired cumulus within the work arena. Once expounding upon these various constitutional elements, affinity is achieved, and I sequester the cultivation essential for yielded efficiencies.”

Resolution #3: I will eliminate unnecessary information.

Certain pieces of personal information don't belong on a resume. There is no reason to include your date of birth or marital status, for example. In fact, doing so puts potential employers in an awkward position because they are not supposed to take information like this into account when making hiring decisions. In addition, omit details about your hobbies, reasons for leaving previous positions, and non-work-related achievements that have no bearing on your career. While these accomplishments, like the one provided below by a nostalgic job hunter, may be treasured, a prospective manager probably won't be as impressed.

“HONORS: I won an award for an essay in first grade and got my picture taken with the principal. That was a big win. My parents took me for ice cream.”

Resolution #4: I will make no mention of money.

Never cite your salary requirements unless an employer specifically requests that information. Mentioning money in your resume, or cover letter, can come across as presumptuous. Wait until you've secured an interview and the employer has expressed interest in hiring you before broaching the subject. Consider this off-putting statement:

“REQUIREMENTS: I'll need \$50K to start, full medical, three weeks' vacation, stock options and, ideally, a European sedan.”

Resolution #5: I will develop a proofreading procedure.

Nothing damages a job candidate's chances like a careless typo, which calls into question the person's attention to detail. Steer clear of grammatical goofs and spelling blunders by

establishing a step-by-step proofreading system. In addition to running your computer's spell-check function, read your resume several times on screen and on paper. It's also wise to ask trusted friends or family members for editing suggestions. Don't ruin your chances by making a silly mistake like this candidate did:

“EDUCATION: Attended collage courses.”

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