VMC RESUME WRITING GUIDE

MYTHS, FACTS, & QUICK FIXES TO SOME OF THE BIGGEST MISTAKES

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Introduction:

Resumes have long been a pain point among jobseekers. However, now as jobseekers have more options than ever before to apply for a role, technology becomes more prevalent in HR. This is making writing resumes even that much more complicated. In turn, organizations are becoming more reliant on technology to help do the job.

Many jobseekers are petrified of this technology because they have no idea how it works, how it can help, or how it can hinder their job search. An ATS system, or Applicant Tracking System, is an automated system that scans resumes that have been received for a position and filters them based on how well they match the description for the role. In this way, when an organization or an HR department received hundreds or thousands of resumes, the hiring team can still read through resumes to find the most suitable candidate for the role.

Let us break down some myths and talk about some ways to simplify applying with an ATS.

MYTH #1: All ATS software is the same:

This simply is NOT true. There are hundreds (if not more!) of them on the market and they all were not created equally. For example, some of the older systems can be fussier and more difficult in comparison to some of the newer versions. Like any other software, they do not all have the same capabilities and are not all suitable for small or large businesses.

MYTH #2: ATS Dehumanizes the Recruiting & Hiring Process:

Think of ATS like doing laundry- you have a machine or system to help you to do the job. No one wants to beat their clothes on a rock or have the process take days or weeks. It merely speeds up the process and helps recruiters get the job done more efficiently and quickly with less error. The truth is, you are still in control and can change how the process works at any time. An ATS will ease the process but it is the job of the HR staff to put the human touch on the process.

MYTH #3: Keywords are Buzzwords:

These are NOT the same thing! Buzzwords are overused words and keywords are terms that are pertinent to each role. ATS is a necessary tool and function for organizations receiving applications across multiple job openings. Instead of manually reviewing each resume, recruiters and hiring managers can choose to sort, filter, or rank candidates through their company's ATS. If a resume does not contain the right search terms or is not optimally formatted, it could get "lost" in the system, seemingly ending up in a black hole. Even if a candidate is highly qualified for the job, if they do not have the right keywords on their resume, they might not be found.

MYTH #4: Keyword Stuffing is an Acceptable Practice:

No... never!! Please do not ever do this (or follow the advice of a professional who says that it is acceptable). Keyword stuffing is using an invisible font or invisible keyword stuffing that matches the background of the resume. This is done by creating a list of keywords you think that an ATS is looking for and append to the end of the resume as white text – or text that matches the background.

The theoretical result of this is that the ATS scans all those keywords bumping up your resume in the system, and the evidence of the keyword hacking is invisible to the human reader.

The problem with this is that while it may have gotten your resume past the ATS, it will not make it past the next step. While the ATS is programmed to look for specific keywords, the hiring manager is also looking at it for those same keywords. So, if your resume only succeeds because the keywords were hidden, it will not succeed once it is in front of the hiring team.

MYTH #5: Jobseekers only need one resume:

Generic resumes that were acceptable many years ago are no longer sufficient. A resume used to be a record of work and a reflection of achievements. A resume is not a legal document, but rather, a personal branding and marketing mechanism with the objective to help a jobseeker land a new role. A resume is now a document that needs to be optimized with sufficient keywords to past an ATS while also maintaining the maximum readability for humans waiting on the other side.

It is now about maximizing your experience, accomplishments, and using metrics to SHOW (not just tell) a recruiter or hiring manager what you can do and why you are the best candidate.

Ready? Let us dive in and look at some of the most common, biggest resume mistakes and how to fix them.

COMMON RESUME MISTAKES:

Resume Mistake #1: Writing a Duty-Driven Resume with Responsibilities
Quick Fix: Do not think about the day-to-day work; think about the major projects and accomplishments that have achieved big goals. Then break that down. What did you achieve? Add in metrics, i.e. financials, percentages, etc. as it applies. By the same token, you also cannot make claims without measurable evidence. So, if you are going to say that you increased sales or improved efficiency, then you must include real statistics and details how you accomplished it.

Resume Mistake #2: Using Passive Voice
Quick Fix: Use only active voice because it makes a resume clearer, more concise, and more impactful.

Resume Mistake #3: Using Filler Words
Quick Fix: Filler words, such as "successfully" or filler adverbs just take up space and can usually be replaced with more specific metrics or removed altogether. Keep the fluff out of your job descriptions. It makes a resume look like it is full of a lot of hot air and low on practicality.

Resume Mistake #4: Using a Template
(In case anyone does not know what I mean by the term template, it means pre-formatted.)
Quick Fix: Type your resume! Stay away from all the pre-formatted documents with boxes, color fonting, different size and types of fonts. Remember, not all ATS were created equally and can parse these documents. Also, do not forget that employers look at hundreds to thousands of resumes so there is no need to use something that has already been overused by other applicants. Your best bet is to stick with a clean, neat, and simple to read layout to make a good first impression and help employers quickly find what they are looking for.

Resume Mistake #5: Trying to Keep it to One Page

Quick Fix: Let your talents and accomplishments shine. One page is perfect for a new college graduate or a professional who is incredibly young in their career. However, once a professional has 10+ years of experience it is impossible to keep it so short. Besides, you would be doing yourself a disservice! Remember that this is a document that should highlight your value proposition.

Resume Mistake #6: Inconsistencies

Quick Fix: Inconsistencies can be language, dates, or even punctuation. Before starting your resume, make some decisions. Do you want to use periods at the end of each bullet point? What date format do you prefer to use- just the year or the month and year? Be sure to have all accurate information. Also, be sure your verbs are all in the proper tense.

Resume Mistake #7: Weak Action Verbs

Quick Fix: Swap with strong, compelling language to create a powerful resume. Also, avoid using redundant language and verbs.

Resume Mistake #8: Using an Outdated Objective

Quick Fix: Since resumes are no longer one-size-fits-all, the objective no longer works, either. Swap this out for a Summary, which provides a higher-level overview of your achievements and what you bring to the role.

Resume Mistake #9: No Keywords

Quick Fix: Time to do some brainstorming! Think about industry terminology. What terms apply to the role? Hard Skills? Soft Skills? Software? Do not lump these all into the Skills section (or any one section for that matter) but rather spread them throughout the resume.

Resume Mistake #10: Failing to identify and delete irrelevant work experience

Quick Fix: Most people treat a resume like it is a legal document and they think that they must list absolutely everything they have done since college. Part-time roles that

have nothing to do with your degree, your industry, or your current career path do not need to be listed on your resume.

Resume Mistake #11: Including Obvious Skills

Quick Fix: It is no longer necessary to call out Microsoft Office skills on your resume. It is best to use that space to highlight skills and experience in more advanced technical tools in your industry. These skills can be quite compelling to employers and help you to stand out from other applicants.

Resume Mistake #12: Failing to Explain a Career Change

Quick Fix: Be sure to have a strong job search strategy for starters. Also, if you are making a career change be sure to explain it. Otherwise, it could look sloppy and like it is the byproduct of a bad job search approach founded in keeping your options open and applying to practically anything, forcing the hiring manager to wonder why when your experience and talents are not aligned with the role.

Resume Mistake #13: Listing Education at the Top of Your Resume

Quick Fix: Once beyond entry-level, your experience should speak for itself and the education section should be moved to the bottom of your resume.

Resume Mistake #14: Including personal hobbies, awards, and absolutely everything!

Quick Fix: Move the pertinent information, like awards and accomplishments to your LinkedIn profile. Personal hobbies are not important and should be left out.

Resume Mistake #15: Using a Tiny Font

Quick Fix: Size 10 is generally the smallest that should be used, depending on the font.

Resume Mistake #16: Saving Your Resume in an Outdated File Format

Quick Fix: Be sure your Microsoft Office Suite is updated as using dated systems can make the document come through unreadable or even unaligned, making it look sloppy.

Resume Mistake #17: Choosing a Bad File Name
Quick Fix: Just name the file by your first and last name. That is, it!

Resume Mistake #18: Including a Photo
Quick Fix: This is just a waste of space and with the availability of social media sites, it also is not necessary.

Resume Mistake #19: Ignoring Application Instructions
Quick Fix: Read the posting thoroughly and do exactly what it says! Otherwise, this will disqualify you from the process from the very beginning no matter how qualified you are.

Resume Mistake #20: Leaving off Your LinkedIn URL
Quick Fix: Be sure it is personalized and add it to your header with your contact information.

The Biggest Mistake: Lying on Your Resume
There is a big difference between a typo, a careless mistake, and a blatant lie. Do not ever blatantly lie on your resume. It will haunt you and harm your career. A lie will not create a compelling case for employment, however, lying about a skill is deemed more harmless than lying about education and/ or employment. Just be honest!

ATS INFORMATION:

- 75% of large companies use ATS to review and rank resumes before a recruiter sees them.

- 60% of mid-sized companies use an ATS .
- Large companies such as Google receive up to 75,000 applications per week.

- 98% of Fortune 500 companies use ATS to filter candidates.

- Nearly 70% of resumes never see human eyes.

To Get Resume Views:

1. Rare keywords are your secret weapon in beating the ATS.
2. Resume length doesn't matter to the ATS.
3. Skip abbreviations and include written-out acronyms.

- 76% of job seekers prefer to apply through a career site.

- It is estimated that online job board postings represent only 15%-20% of employment opportunities.

- 20% of companies experience a reduced hiring time.

- ATS thins the qualified candidate pool by 75%.

"I don't understand. Didn't you get the résumé I texted?"

- Companies receive an average of 250 applications per job opening.

- 40% of mobile candidates abandon the application process when the ATS is not mobile friendly.