



The Amarillo Chapter Newsletter



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February 2006

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How Not to Write a Resume

By Kevin Donlin

You can learn a lot about how to do something right by first learning what NOT to do. Take resumes, for example. I review about 200-300 a month, and most have at least 2-3 mistakes. Yet, all those hundreds of mistakes can be grouped into just a handful of categories, which you would do well to avoid. Read on and learn how to write a better resume by avoiding the mistakes of others, some of them unintentionally hilarious.

Mistake #1: "Golden Retriever Syndrome": Never talk about yourself in terms that could also describe a hunting dog, like the following language, which appears in far too many resumes I see: "Hard-working, self-motivated and dependable individual."

Tired phrases like that mean nothing to employers, because they could apply to almost anyone ... or almost anyone's dog. Instead, dump the empty assertions and back up the claims in your resume with facts, like this: "Proven sales skills. Ranked in top 3 among 78 reps for 5 straight years, exceeding sales quotas for 18 of 20 quarters."

See the difference?

Mistake #2: A Verbal Jungle: To improve your resume (or anything you write), read it out loud. Since writing is just words on paper, reading it aloud will help you write as you would speak. Here's an example of language so dense, you'll need a machete to find any meaning: "Directed assembly of elements from business units in engineering, development, program management, distribution, and legal to effect market research, proposal responses, and contract management into comprehensive, virtual, successful teams ..."

After reading that three times, I'm still baffled. Worse, do you think employers have time to read a resume three times to figure it out? No. As a result, that job seeker is still looking for work, I'll wager.

Solution: read your resume out loud before sending it out. If you find yourself gasping for breath halfway through a sentence, stick a period or dash in there and break it in two.

And if anything you write sounds less than 100% clear when you read it aloud, revise until it would make sense to your mother. Doing so will ensure that your resume resonates with readers at all levels, from HR managers to your future boss.

Mistake #3: Negative Nuance: Just one stray word can derail a whole sentence. You know that. But in a resume, the wrong choice of words can brand you as unprofessional or careless in the eyes of employers.

Here's an example of resume wording that gives off the wrong nuance, even though the facts are clear enough: "Spearheaded use of resources in Vietnam in spite of resistance from senior management ..."

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A Note From Our President . . .



Janet Howe,
CPS/CAP
President

Dear Ladies,

I hope you are planning to attend the February meeting. I'm looking forward to the program on coping with change. I know I can use some help with my coping skills. Don't forget that February is our Sweetheart Dinner, so invite your sweetheart to attend with you. Be sure to RSVP to Emily Garner CPS/CAP if you will be bringing a guest.

I was so sad to hear of Susie Smyer's death. Susie was the first person I met when I walked in the door of my first IAAP meeting. To say the least, she didn't match my preconceived idea of what an IAAP member would look like. She was unique in appearance, but also unique in personality. She made me feel welcome and I soon learned that Susie was the ultimate cheerleader. She encouraged all of us to be our best—professionally and personally. When I was studying for my CPS exam she encouraged me all the way—and even gave me the extra nudge I needed to pursue certification in the first place. I was sad when she decided not to renew her IAAP membership, but professional and personal responsibilities took up her time. She retired from St. Mary's School last year, but unfortunately, didn't get to enjoy retirement very long. People come and go in our life, and if you were fortunate for Susie to have entered your life, you are the one who is blessed. She was unforgettable and one of a kind.

On a happier note, I'd like to welcome a new member. Tammy Norton has moved here from the Dallas area. She has been a Member at Large, but plans to join on the chapter level. She has already volunteered for some committees. We are glad to have her as a part of IAAP and our chapter.

Love is in the air...

Janet Howe CPS/CAP

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I don't know about you, but "Spearheaded," "Vietnam" and "resistance" in the same sentence make me think of a John Wayne movie. Which detracts from what the job seeker is trying to say.

Before sending your resume to employers, send it to at least 2-3 friends whose judgment you trust. Ask them to read it for grammar and punctuation, but also for unintended meanings. Revise as needed.

Mistake #4: Jumbles of Jargon: Some resumes pile on the buzzwords in a vain effort to impress. Like this:

"New-media pioneer working with technical and business professionals to create new ways of presenting content and impactful tools for producing content and organizing workflow."

We'll pass on "impactful" for now -- what does a "new-media pioneer" do, exactly? I've got a picture in my head of covered wagons and HD-TV, but I don't think that's right ...

Again, you can nip most crud in the bud by reading your resume out loud and then sending it to a friend for honest input. Because friends don't let friends embarrass themselves.

Here's hoping that exposing these 4 common resume gaffes will help you avoid them!

Kevin Donlin is the author of "The Last Guide to Cover Letter & Resume Writing You'll Ever Need," a do-it-yourself manual that will help you find a job in 30 days ... or your-money-back.

From JobSeeker Weekly, an email newsletter (www.jobseekerweekly.com)

Information Center

Monthly Networking & Education Session

Sweetheart Dinner

Date: Thursday, February 9, 2006

Time: 5:30 p.m. Networking
6:00 p.m. Dinner
6:30 p.m. Program
7:00 p.m. Business Meeting
7:30 p.m. Adjourn



Location: The Gathering Place
7312 Wallace

Program: Ginny Monk, M.Ed., Licensed Professional Counselor
Amarillo Family Institute
“Change: How We Experience It and Positive Ways to Absorb It”

Menu: Grilled pork tenderloin medallions with raspberry chipolte sauce, grilled vegetable medley, whipped potatoes, salad, rolls, strawberry cheesecake, beverages
Program and meal cost is \$13.00 (\$12.00 + 8.25% tax charged by new owner)

RSVP: Please contact Emily Garner CPS/CAP, 353-7321 or mastersonmgmt@sbcglobal.net by **12 noon, TUESDAY, February 7th** with your reservation for dinner or to cancel your standing reservation.

Please note the increase in the program/meal cost. We had no choice but to increase the fee in order to recoup our actual cost due to the new owner adding tax to our bill.

Surviving That Stupid Mistake

The key numbers you gave your boss for his big client pitch earlier today were flat-out wrong. How do you minimize the damage to your reputation? **Apologize immediately, face to face.** Don't wait or try to smooth things over with a quip. Speak slowly, which will make the apology sound more sincere. **Provide a brief explanation**, then detail how you'll make sure the problem won't recur. *Example:* “I pulled the figures from the most recent report posted on our intranet, but I didn't realize the marketing team had an even more recent report not yet posted. Next time, I'll double-check with Bob in marketing.” **Reassure the boss next time.** Make a point of saying: “These stats are fresh from the marketing team as of this morning.” The fact that you're focused on not falling into the same trap will speak volumes to your manager. Done right, you might actually end up with a better relationship with the boss as a result of the embarrassing moment.

From *AdministrativePROFESSIONAL*, January 2006

On Your Calendar

February 14
Valentine's Day
Flower Delivery Fundraiser

February 15
Deadline to register for
CPS/CAP Exam

April 18
Seminar
“Creating Excellence in Your Life”

April 23-29
Administrative Professionals Week
April 26
Administrative Professionals Day

May 5 & 6
CPS/CAP Exams

Door prize for February will be provided by Barbara Burris. March door prize will be provided by Chris Lyles.

Membership as of 12/31/05: 19

FEBRUARY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

15 Virginia Maples
18 Jade Jennings

IAAP Anniversary

1997 Joy Ralston



Membership Best Practices—Make a list of the reasons you're involved with IAAP; be ready to share some of them when you're talking about our chapter. Submitted by Lisa Thomas