

10 Resume Tips

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Does your resume reflect your accomplishments and show your career progression - or hide the lack thereof? Take a close look at your language, and ask: how many clichés do you have in there? Here are 10 phrases you should ban from your resume, and new, fresh ways to showcase your skills to put your resume at the top of the applicant pile.

1. "I'm a Team-Player."

This is one of the most over-used clichés, so try to find a way you can show that you are this team player. Did you collaborate with someone or with a department to meet an objective? Put that on your resume instead of a vague, clichéd expression. Be detailed about your achievement.

2. "I Have Great Communication Skills."

Communication skills can mean so many things, which is why using this term on your resume only makes you lose your recruiter's interest. What communication skills did you use to contribute to your employer? Did you create a presentation, a press release or lead a conference call? State your specific achievement.

3. "I Have a Proven Track-Record."

So prove it! What did you do to give you this track record? Be specific, and try to quantify your impact; "I brought in 10 new customers, adding \$50k profit for 2009" or "reduced expenditures by 12% by cost reductions" sounds far more impressive than some vague statement, and will help you stand out among the dozens of resumes.

4. "I'm a Problem Solver."

Everybody loves a problem solver, which is why so many resumes state this skill with pride. You can do better: tell your prospective company or organization what problem you solved. Did you optimize a troubling schedule, did you solve an employee dispute or did you iron out a problem with a customer? Again, be specific to be memorable.

5. "I Assisted In X Task."

Maybe you weren't the lead on a particular project, but saying you "assisted" is the kiss of death for your resume. What was it that you did? Did you write sales report or keep inventory or facilitated a complex problem? Write that on your resume with pride, and lose the "assisted" - you're better than that.

6. "I Have a Strong Work Ethic."

A strong work ethic - that sounds great, right? You're not the only one using this cliché, so freshen up your resume by stating how you go that extra mile. Did you take a class to improve your skills? Did you meet some really tough deadline? Show the hiring official what makes you this person with a strong work ethic, instead of using another cliché like your fellow applicants.

7. "I'm Bottom-Line Focused."

Another hollow term that is overused and now means nothing - so show what you did that added to the bottom-line of your company or organization. It's very important to quantify for this skill: list amounts of money, time, or resources you saved or added to the business.

8. "I'm Responsible for X."

We're all responsible for something when we go to work, whether a janitor or a CEO. Drop this expression and just state what your job title is and what you added to the company's success. Cutting these clutter words will make your resume stronger and more to-the-point.

9. "I'm Self-Motivated."

What you're really trying to say is that you're not that slacker who clocks out at three every day, but this cliché is not going to help you get your point across. Find a way to show that you're self-motivated: did you overhaul a broken accounting system, find a new way to expand your sales territory, or develop results orientated performance system? Self-motivated employees find innovative ways to improve on what they've been handed - put what you actually did on your resume.

10. "I'm Accustomed to a Fast-Paced Environment."

What does this mean, exactly? Fast-paced work environments are the norm in our work environments, where most people do more work for less money. To be specific, look at one of your busiest days in your (former) job. What did you accomplish, and how did you adapt to the obstacles thrown your way? Put that achievement on your resume to prove that you can adapt when challenged - a quality employers look for.

Show, Don't Tell

Avoid these clichés, because they're umbrella terms everyone uses, so your resume gets lost in the shuffle. In this competitive job market, your resume really needs to stand out and be memorable for you to get that interview. Find ways to be detailed about your achievements, and quantify how you've added to the company's or organizations bottom line (quantified). Show who you are and what you've done - these details will make you stand out as the memorable candidate you are.