The most common mistakes on CVs/ resumes

**[[](https://www.linkedin.com/in/yunitaong/)](https://www.linkedin.com/in/yunitaong/)**

[By Yunita Ong,](https://www.linkedin.com/in/yunitaong/) **[Editor at LinkedIn News](https://www.linkedin.com/in/yunitaong/)**[, June 2021](https://www.linkedin.com/in/yunitaong/)

Hiring managers have short attention spans, and what they really want to see are **results.** Use **numbers** in your CV to **quantify** what you've been able to achieve to add scale and context to your past work. Emphasize **results**, instead of just describing what you did on a day-to-day basis. Think profit margins, engagement rate, and more.

We all do great things at work - the question is, how can we tell **the story of our achievements** to get our next job opportunity? Using numbers to quantify your work results is one way to help give your CV a lift and get a recruiter interested in calling you back for an interview.   
Think about how you may have made a difference in other ways. For example, did you help to save money with a purchase, or create a tool that saved time for your teammates?  
  
The key to writing a good resume isn't just what you put on the paper. It's what you DON'T put that's equally important. Biggest misconception: Resumes shouldn't be talking about what you used to do (the past), but what you want to do (the future) ... unless what you want to do is exactly what you're doing today.

**REMOVE everything else that's not relevant**. Telling me things that you've done but not relevant to the job only reminds me that you're not the perfect fit. It might be unrealistic, but this is the mindset of most.

**#1 goal of every resume: Get an interview/call back, nothing more**. You're not trying to get the offer. You don't need to tell me EVERYTHING, just things that are interesting to me that make me want to meet you and find out more. Once you get to the interviewer, it's a totally different game.

It’s important to master the technique of hitting the sweet spot (finding the right positioning/ balance) in CV writing - being able to **create a high-value CV with a good storyline that markets the applicant well and highlights relevant achievements and strengths** that can **create an impact** and **add value** to the company. Common mistakes involve lengthy description of day-to-day work and every single task which makes the CV look long-winded and not only will the recruiter find it hard to envision how these can contribute meaningfully to the new role, he is unlikely going to read through the whole CV in detail. It’s important to analyze the job description and be cognizant about what the organization is looking for and do a self-assessment if one actually owns these skills. If so, best to highlight them at the beginning of the CV (in an honest and sincere way of course and not fictitious).

Big 4 things that truly make a difference:

1) Cover letter: if emailing, **insert text in the body of the email**. There are many recruiters who say that cover letters are not necessary. My opinion is that it is an additional touch point to make a stellar impression. It is not so much whether it is necessary or not. The question is whether it grabs attention or not. For example, have you mentioned an industry trend or a problem you know the company is facing? Or who referred you? Well-written cover letters make the reader go wow! The cover letter is the wrapper. The resume is the present.

2) **Short summary** of your resume at the top of the page: this is the elevator pitch because it highlights your unique value proposition and why you are a good fit for the role.

3) **Quantify your achievements**: include dollar amount, time saved, quantity, percentage, volume, ratings.

4) **Tailor your resume for different companies**: even when applying for the same job title in different companies, you should only emphasize relevant aspects of your experience that fit the role.

Summary of the most common mistakes in a CV:

1) Not including **metrics** (figures are important, they add scale/context).

2) Not including **achievements** (these show you don't just 'do' your job, you're AWESOME at it!).

3) Not including a **brief summary** (many recruiters will make an initial decision in less than 10 seconds - you should make sure they can get as much information in that time as possible).

4) Including EVERYTHING (if you've got 15 years' experience, no one needs to know what you were doing in your 1st ever role in detail).

5) Going beyond 2 pages, 3 MAX (Hiring Managers don't enjoy long CVs, chances are they're low impact and hard to get through).

6) Getting too caught up on the idea of ATS Scanners (an ATS [or Applicant Tracking System] is a software that manages your entire hiring and recruitment process), and writing a resume that only a computer will like (a human will still always read it, they need to like it too!).

7) Including a photo (not all agree on this, but I strongly recommend not to include a photo - it may introduce potential for bias, and unless you're a model or an actor, physical appearance should have no bearing on your job application!).