

PITFALLS TO AVOID ON YOUR RESUME

1. **Writing an Ineffective “Objective” Section**

Avoid writing an “Objective” section at the top of the resume that exactly matches the wording in the job posting. (There is one exception to this rule: if you are applying for a government job, matching words in your resume to the job posting is an excellent strategy because many government agencies employ an automated process that selects resumes based on whether their keywords match the posting criteria.) In most cases, writing an “Objective” section that precisely matches the job posting will just earn you an eye-roll.

Instead, use that space to write a “Summary of Qualifications” section highlighting your best skills and experiences, then explain how they can benefit your target company. Remember, hiring managers don’t really care about helping you meet *your* objectives—they are more interested in finding out what you can do for their business.

2. **Using Outdated Resume Trends**

Ten years ago, the reverse chronological order resume style was in vogue. But now, particularly if you are a Baby Boomer or older Generation Xer with a lot of job experience, sticking with that old format can actually work against you. Because recruiters tend to read the top of the resume more closely than the bottom, simply highlighting your work experience in a long reverse chronological string can effectively bury the skills you most want to promote. Instead, use a hybrid functional-reverse chronological style which contains a short summary of your personal characteristics, skills, and accomplishments at the top. Then, follow the summary with a listing of your previous work experience.

3. **Improper Naming of your Resume File**

These days, the majority of resumes are submitted online or via email as a Microsoft Word or PDF document. For this reason, you should always, *always* name your resume file like this: `firstname_lastname_resume.doc`. Naming your resume files in this manner helps ensure your resume doesn’t get lost in a hiring manager’s digital slush pile. You want to make your resume as easy to find as possible and avoid situations that leave a hiring manager wondering what on earth is inside the randomly-named Word file sitting on their desktop.

4. **Questionable Contact Information**

Generation Xers and Millennials are more likely than any other generation to include an inappropriate email address in the contact information section of their resume. If your primary email address is something like drunkenfratboy@gmail.com or kinkysexkitten@yahoo.com, do not include that in your resume. Instead create an email address that is a variation of your name and place that in your contact section instead. (And don’t forget to check it!)

Sherri Elliott is the founder and CEO of human resources consulting companies Optimance Workforce Strategies and Gen InsYght, as well as the author of Ties to Tattoos: Turning Generational Differences into a Competitive Advantage. She has over 15 years experience as a trusted advisor and human resources consultant to companies ranging from small startups to large international corporations. She is a Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) and holds an Associate designation in Risk Management (ARM).

To learn more, visit: <http://www.geninsyght.com>.