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Résumé Failures and Feats

Each year CareerBuilder conducts a “Most Outrageous Résumé Mistakes” survey, which captures memorable—and jaw-dropping—examples of real-life, stand-out résumés. The 2012 survey of 3,000 hiring managers provides comical insights into what résumé pitfalls to avoid, as well as some innovative cases to help job seekers push their creativity.

First, the blunders:

- Candidate called himself a genius and invited the hiring manager to interview him at his apartment.
- Candidate’s cover letter talked about her family being in the mob.
- Candidate specified that her résumé was set up to be sung to the tune of “The Brady Bunch.”
- Candidate claimed to be able to speak “Antartican” when applying for a job to work in Antarctica.
- Candidate’s résumé had a photo of the applicant reclining in a hammock, with the caption, “Hi, I’m John, and I’m looking for a job.”
- Candidate’s résumé was decorated with pink rabbits.
- Candidate listed “to make dough” as the objective on the résumé.
- Candidate’s cover letter contained “LOL.”



Candidate highlighted the fact that he was “Homecoming Prom Prince” in 1984.

There are, however, offbeat—yet appropriate—ways to stand out when introducing oneself in writing. These creative résumé approaches made a positive impression on employers and resulted in their hiring the candidates:

- Candidate who had been a stay-at-home mom listed her skills as nursing, house-keeping, chef, teacher, bio-hazard cleanup, fight referee, taxi driver, secretary, tailor, personal shopping assistant, and therapist.
- Candidate created a marketing brochure promoting herself as the best candidate.
- Candidate listed accomplishments and lessons learned from previous positions. For instance, he gave examples of times he provided good customer service as well as situations he wished he would have handled differently.
- Candidate applying for a food and beverage management position sent a résumé in the form of a fine-dining menu.

Candidate sent his résumé in the form of an oversized Rubik’s Cube, requiring the employer to push the tiles around to align the résumé.



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