

You have a lead on what sounds like a terrific job and are anxious to submit your resume. Your submission is ready, you send it in, and you get no response. When you follow up with the potential employer, you are told that you were not selected for an interview.

How is this possible? The job looked like a perfect fit, you have all of the right qualifications, yet you did not make it past the initial screening and into the interview process. Something went wrong but you have no idea what it might be.

Let's take a look at some common mistakes that may have contributed to your resume being screened out of consideration.

Spelling and/or grammar errors

By far the most common mistakes that will cause your resume to be eliminated are spelling and grammatical errors. Most employers will automatically screen out a resume with mistakes like this because it shows a lack of attention to detail and carelessness.

There is really no excuse for sending out a resume with these kinds of mistakes in it. Use spell check, use grammar check, and then use your own eyes to proofread. Print out your resume and read it backwards, one word at a time, to spot spelling errors. Ask a trusted friend or peer to read it, or hire a professional proofreader to check it. Do whatever it takes to ensure your resume is mistake-free before it goes out to any potential employer.

Key information is hard to find

Another reason why resumes are screened out is that the reader is not able to quickly and easily find the key information they need. It is not unusual for them to literally have a hundred or more resumes in the pile for a single job opening, so if you do not make it easy for a screener to spot your qualifications then you will be screened out.

Tailor your resume for the job posting, paying close attention to the requirements and qualifications for the position. Emphasize the qualities you possess that match their needs, making it easy for the screener to see them at a glance. Move this information to the beginning of the resume, use bold or italic type, use bullet points - decide what type of emphasis will work best and use it judiciously to enhance your prospects.

Too long or unfocused

It is very easy to write a long, drawn out resume. After all, you have a lot of accomplishments to communicate and you want to make sure a potential employer knows all there is to know about you. Right? Wrong!

Remember that your resume is supposed to be focused and concise, communicating essential information about you and enticing the potential employer to bring you in for an interview. Moreover, the interview is your opportunity to expand on key points and further sell yourself and your qualifications.

A resume that is too long or not focused on communicating key points is likely to be screened out very early in the process. A resume screener does not have the time or the inclination to wade through long documents; instead, he or she wants to see key points that are concise, to the point, and focused on the qualifications and requirements needed for the job.