

You found errors in your resume after sending it to an employer: Now what?

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Mark Bradford was ecstatic when he found a position announcement describing his “dream job” on a Fortune 500 company website. His background and qualifications were a perfect match to the job description, and it seemed the answer to his career search. He wasted no time in responding, since the cutoff date for resumes was imminent. But after hastily emailing his cover letter and resume, his high hopes were dashed when he discovered errors in both documents.

Perhaps this has happened to you or someone you know.

What should you do if you find errors in your resume or cover letter after you’ve already sent the documents to an employer? Do you resend the resume and explain your mistake, or do you hope that the employer won’t notice and do nothing?

Discovering a mistake after you’ve already pushed the “send” button is disheartening, but it’s not the end of the world. If the error is relatively minor (e.g., a misplaced comma or a missing period), it’s probably not necessary to resend your document (but do save a corrected version for the next time).

But if you have found multiple errors, major typos, factual misrepresentations, or a glaring mistake, then resending your resume is a better choice than hoping the employer won’t notice. Simply include a brief cover letter explaining that you’ve recently updated your resume, and due to your strong interest in the company’s opportunity, you want to make available the most current version of your materials. Most companies use automated technology to store resumes, and when they receive a new file the older version is simply deleted. So, there’s a good chance that your errors won’t be seen.

By keeping your resume updated regularly, you can avoid this problem in the future. Even when you’re not anticipating a career move, take the time to update your resume at least once a year. The next time an unexpected opportunity or unanticipated circumstances compel you to seek a new position, you won’t be rushing frantically to meet an application deadline. Instead, you’ll be prepared with a current and thoroughly proofread resume.

MS Word resume design tip: Selecting a font for your resume

Microsoft Word offers many different typeface choices, from the conservative to the whimsical. But what's the best font to use on your resume? There are actually many "right" answers to this question.

Fonts can be categorized into two basic sets: serif and sans serif. Serif fonts contain fine lines finishing off the thicker, main strokes of a letter. (Picture the banner in Time Magazine, as an example.) Serif fonts convey an executive, timeless feel, and they can be an excellent option on resumes for senior-level managers or professionals in more conservative fields such as accounting, banking, and finance. Examples of serif fonts that make excellent choices on a resume include: Garamond, Palatino, Book Antiqua, Bookman Old Style, Century Schoolbook, and Goudy.

When you first open a Word document on your computer, chances are the default font setting will be Times New Roman. This is another example of a serif font. Times New Roman is a very attractive and highly readable font, but because it is the default setting on most word-processing programs, it is used on the majority of resumes today. For that reason, select an alternate font to set your resume apart from the crowd.

Sans serif fonts are typefaces without serifs. The strokes making up each letter are the same width, and there are no smaller "feet," "end-tips," or embellishments to the letters. Sans serif fonts have a clean, modern look, and they can be a great choice for professionals who want to project a similar "cutting-edge" image (such as information technology professionals, marketing managers, or designers). Examples of sans serif fonts that make excellent choices on a resume include: Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, Franklin Gothic, and Century Gothic.

More whimsical fonts, like Fajita, Paisley, Kids, and Litterbox, can be great for advertising headlines, but they are not appropriate for your resume. When selecting a font for your resume, think "readability," "professional image," and "polished presentation."

About the author

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