

10 phrases you should ban from your resume



1. "I'm a Team-Player."

This is one of the most over-used cliches, so try to find a way you can show that you are this team player. Did you collaborate with someone or with a department to meet an objective? Put that on your resume instead of a vague, cliched expression. Be detailed about your achievement.

2. "I Have Great Communication Skills."

Communication skills can mean so many things, which is why using this term on your resume only makes you lose your recruiter's interest. What communication skills did you use to contribute to your employer? Did you create a presentation, a press release or lead a conference call? State your specific achievement.

3. "I Have a Proven Track-Record."

So prove it! What did you do to give you this track record? Be specific, and try to quantify your impact; "I brought in 10 new customers, adding \$50k profit for 2009" sounds far more impressive than some vague statement, and will help you stand out among the dozens of resumes.

4. "I'm a Problem Solver."

Everybody loves a problem solver, which is why so many resumes state this skill with pride. You can do better: tell your prospective company what problem you solved. Did you optimize a troubling schedule, did you solve an employee dispute or did you iron out a problem with a customer? Again, be specific to be memorable.

5. "I Assisted In X Task."

Maybe you weren't the lead on a particular project, but saying you "assisted" is the kiss of death for your resume. What was it that you did? Did you write a sales report or keep inventory? Write that on your resume with pride, and lose the "assisted" - you're better than that.

6. "I Have a Strong Work Ethic."

A strong work ethic - that sounds great, right? You're not the only one using this cliché, so freshen up your resume by stating how you go that extra mile. Did you take a class to improve your skills? Did you meet some really tough deadline? Show the hiring official what makes you this person with a strong work ethic, instead of using another cliché like your fellow applicants.

7. "I'm Bottom-Line Focused."

Another hollow term that is overused and now means nothing - so show what you did that added to the bottom-line of your company. It's very important to quantify for this skill: list amounts of money, time, or resources you saved or added to the business.

8. "I'm Responsible For X."

We're all responsible for something when we go to work, whether a janitor or a CEO. Drop this expression and just state what your job title is and what you added to the company's success. Cutting these clutter words will make your resume stronger and more to-the-point.

9. "I'm Self-Motivated."

What you're really trying to say is that you're not that slacker who clocks out at three every day, but this cliché is not going to help you get your point across. Find a way to show that you're self-motivated: did you overhaul a broken inventory system, or find a new way to expand your sales territory? Self-motivated employees find innovative ways to improve on what they've been handed - put what you actually did on your resume.

10. "I'm Accustomed to a Fast-Paced Environment."

What does this mean, exactly? Fast-paced work environments are the norm in this recession, where most people do more work for less money. To be specific, look at one of your busiest days in your (former) job. What did you accomplish, and how did you adapt to the obstacles thrown your way? Put that achievement on your resume to prove that you can adapt when challenged - a quality employers look for.