

Communicating on the Job

Tips for effective writing, speaking, and listening
from Cos Ferrara

Writing: Punch up your resume



In today's volatile corporate environment, having an up-to-date and polished resume is a must. Here are some hints for polishing your resume.

First, don't view a resume as a record of employment: it is a sales tool. It has to persuade someone to call you for an interview. So tailor the resume to match your strengths to the hiring manager's needs.

Summary, Not Objective

Many resumes begin with the applicant's Objective. That's not a selling point because it focuses on what the applicant is seeking. Instead, write a short Summary of your work and skills showing the reader what you have done and *can do for her company*. Make the Summary compelling for the hiring manager. Note the difference:

Objective (applicant-centered): A position of responsibility in the marketing department, with an eye toward management.

Summary (employer-centered): Self-starter with six years marketing experience. Created successful campaigns. Surpassed department goals every year.

Responsibilities and Accomplishments

In presenting your work experience, be specific about job responsibilities. Use *verbs* to stress that you are a *doer*. Note the difference:

General: Responsible for all training activities.

Specific: Created training materials, conducted workshops, maintained department budget,
hired staff and consultants

Then go beyond responsibilities to **accomplishments**, to illustrate what you've achieved and can achieve for this new employer. For example:

Accomplishments: Doubled number of employees receiving training without increasing budget; influenced 63% reduction in on-the-job injuries; instituted computer-based training

Highlight those accomplishments that best meet the needs of the hiring company or manager. Where possible, quantify. And give details. Don't say simply that you "trained people," but give numbers, types, and results. Don't say you "installed new procedures" without giving the effect. If you "saved the company money," tell how and how much.

Substance not Length

It's not necessary to list every job you've had but give a substantial account of those you list. And more important than length is quality. Cut and edit to make your resume more specific, reader-focused, and persuasive.

Mechanics:

Use the dash (—) for a touch of drama

The dash is a punctuation mark that calls attention to what follows. Use it to highlight in these ways.

1. To Stress Nonessential Modifiers:
Using old-fashioned methods—
perseverance and determination—
they reached their goal.

2. To Introduce—with Emphasis—a Word or Phrase:
The company offered what its
competitors did not—service.

We must dedicate ourselves to one
goal—being the best we can be.

3. To Separate a Summarizing Clause:

Instead of consolidating, she
diversified; instead of cutting back,
she expanded—in short, she took
risks where others played it safe.

Note 1: Don't substitute the
hyphen (-) for the dash (—). The dash
is longer and is not on most keyboards.
In Microsoft Word, go to Insert, then
Symbol. Within Symbol, search for
the dash under Symbols.

Note 2: There should be no space
before or after the dash.

Note 3: Like any dramatic device,
the dash loses its impact if overused.

Customized Workshops

Could your office benefit from a Business Communications Workshop customized to its particular needs? If so, contact Cos Ferrara at 201-391-0178 or drcff@aol.com. For details, visit my Website: <http://www.cosferrara.com>

Watch Your Language: Choose the right word

Substitute the correct word for the misused word in each sentence.

1. We expect a large amount of people to attend. _____
2. Can you site your sources for those statistics? _____
3. Her creative skills compliment his people skills. _____
4. We could of saved the contract if we had tried. _____
5. The project was postponed due to budget cuts. _____
6. Its an unrealistic approach. _____

1. *number*: Use *amount* for bulk or mass; use *number* for countable items.
2. *cite*: *Site* with an *s* means a place; *cite* with a *c* means to quote or mention.
3. *complement*: The word with the *i* in the middle suggests praise; the word with the *e* in the middle means *add to*.
4. *could have*: *Could of* is never a correct substitute for *could have* or the contraction *could've*.
5. *because of*: Do not use *due to* as a preposition meaning *because of*. Use *due to* immediately after *is* or *was* to mean *attributable to*: *The failure was due to system overload*.
6. *It's*: *its* is possessive (*its owner*). *It's*

is a contraction for *it is*.



Answers:

Speaking: Pronounce and enunciate

“It’s *ooaw* and *gawn* that keep her in her place, not her wretched clothes and dirty face.”
Professor Henry Higgins, *My Fair Lady*

You may sometimes hear the word *nuclear* mispronounced as *nuk-u-leer*. If you have formed some careless speech habits, consider these tips for improving pronunciation and enunciation.

1. Pronounce and enunciate the word as it is spelled:
nuclear (nu-kle-er) *several* (3 syllables)
ninety (t not d) *idea* (no r, 3 syllables)
2. Do not pronounce letters that should be silent:
often (o’ fen) *subtle* (sut’ el) *receipt* (ri set’)
3. Accent the proper part of the word:
epitome (i pit’ e me) *banal* (ba’ nal)
comparable (kom’ per e bel)
4. Some letters (c, k, s) might be sounded differently in different words. When you have a doubt, check a dictionary:
facade (fe sad, not fakade) *recoup* (ri kup’, not ri ku’)
accessory (ak ses’ er e, not assessor)
5. Don’t slur your words or run them together.

Slurring : He finely reconize me. (He finally recognized me.)
Running together: Watcha gonna gimme? (What are you going to give me?)

In enunciating, be especially careful of: *ing, ed, t or d, er, th*

You Try It

Pronounce correctly and enunciate clearly the following mis-spoken words and phrases. Use your dictionary where necessary.

yestaday saprise defintly coulda permnent filim dimond
strickly reelize intrested pome prefrable new yawk

verbage jewlery goverment mischevious boundry quantity

Didja heah da way de aksed qeshuns today?

A Reader Asks...

In drawing comparisons, when do I use *like* and when do I use *as* or *as if*?

Like is a preposition placed before an object, usually a noun:
There’s no business **like** *show business*.

As and *as if* are conjunctions, used to connect two clauses (subject/verb).
She speaks **as if** *she knows*.

The son looks **like** *the father*. (object)
The son acts **as** *the father does*. (clause)

To say “*The son acts like the father does*” is grammatically incorrect. So the use of *like* would be just as incorrect if you left off the second verb:

Incorrect: The son acts **like** the father.
Correct: The son acts **as** the father.

If “acts **as** the father” sounds

strange, make it sound less strange by adding the verb in the clause—*as the father does*.

Superior writers apply all the rules, even those that common usage flaunts.

You Try It (*Like* or *As*)

It looks _____ a successful quarter.
Do _____ I say not _____ I do.
They’re behaving _____ a layoff is near.

Communicating on the Job is published for clients and friends of Cos Ferrara <http://www.cosferrara.com>