

Watch What You Write In A Resumé

By Alan Davis

One of the tricks of resume writing is to put yourself behind the reviewer's desk and look at your own accomplishments through his or her eyes.

So we thought we would pass along some tips. Knowing corporate hirers as well as we do, we can give you some valuable insight as to what the reviewer is really thinking when he or she reads your submission.

For example, you might think you are impressing a future employer when you list skydiving as a pastime. In fact, the reviewer is just as likely to be thinking: "My God, why would anyone jump out of a perfectly good airplane. This person's insane!"

If you are wiling away the hours on the dock updating your CV this summer, watch out for these reactions:

You: "My interests are gardening and auto mechanics, I fix my own car"

Reviewer: "He must be on the rocks. Or he's too cheap to pay someone."

You: "I'm a keen golfer. My handicap is under 5"

Reviewer: "Not this guy. He's never going to be at work"

You: "I'm a keen golfer but my handicap is north of 21"

Reviewer: "Not this guy. We'll have to go out looking for him at the company tournament"

You (female): "My favorite hobby is ballroom dancing."

Reviewer: "Good. She's probably well coordinated with good social skills"

You (male): "My favorite hobby is ballroom dancing."

Reviewer: "OK."

You: "My interests include stamp collecting."

Reviewer: "Must be really anti-social"

You: "I love to ski."



Reviewer: “You’re normal”
You: “I love to heli-ski.”
Reviewer: “You are anything but normal”

Suppose you are a keen wine taster but you want to avoid giving the impression of being a lush. So you add in your description that, of course, you always spit it out. Know what the reviewer writes in the margin? “Doesn’t happen”

And so the list goes on.

As we have seen, whatever you put in your resume is open to interpretation (or misinterpretation). The safe bet is that you don’t include anything to do with hobbies and interests.

There is a serious side to this. The key thing to remember is that the reviewer is looking for simply relevant experience: where you worked and for whom. Contrary to the advice of many Career Transition specialists, all the accompanying “soft” skills and abilities in a wordy resume can do more harm than good.

The more complex and “innovative” you make your resume, the more you run a risk of drawing attention for all the wrong reasons. Many recruiters and hirers are weary of obtuse documents after finding that on many occasions; it is just to cover up weakness in the career path.

So keep it clean, keep it simple, keep it pertinent. A good resume is always targeted at a specific job opportunity, which means prioritizing your experience for maximum impact.

Remember, the sole purpose of the resume is to get you the interview. You can tell the recruiter your life story when you get into the room

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