

CareerBuilder Releases Study of Most Outrageous Resume Mistakes and Creative Techniques that Worked

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With millions of people looking for jobs today, how do you make sure your resume successfully captures the attention of employers and doesn't end up in the Deleted Items folder? CareerBuilder's study of 2,298 hiring managers nationwide provides real-life examples of resumes that stood out for the right-and-wrong-reasons, and explores common pitfalls to avoid. The study was conducted online by Harris Interactive from May 14, 2012 to June 4, 2012. When asked to share the most memorable and unusual applications that came across their desk, hiring managers gave the following examples:

Candidate called himself a genius and invited the hiring manager to interview him at his apartment.

Candidate's cover letter talked about her family being in the mob.

Candidate applying for a management job listed "gator hunting" as a skill.

Candidate's resume included phishing as a hobby.

Candidate specified that her resume was set up to be sung to the tune of "The Brady Bunch".

Candidate highlighted the fact that he was "Homecoming Prom Prince" in 1984.

Candidate claimed to be able to speak "Antartican" when applying for a job to work in Antarctica.

Candidate's resume had a photo of the applicant reclining in a hammock under the headline "Hi, I'm _____ and I'm looking for a job".

Candidate's resume was decorated with pink rabbits.

Candidate listed "to make dough" as the objective on the resume.

Candidate applying for an accounting job said he was "detail-oriented" and spelled the company's name incorrectly.

Candidate's cover letter contained "LOL".

Examples of What Worked Other candidates tried a creative approach, made a positive impression on the employer and, in some cases, were ultimately hired:

Candidate sent his resume in the form of an oversized Rubik's Cube, where you had to push the tiles around to align the resume. He was hired.

Candidate who had been a stay-at-home mom listed her skills as nursing, housekeeping, chef, teacher, bio-hazard cleanup, fight referee, taxi driver, secretary, tailor, personal shopping assistant and therapist. She was hired.

Candidate created a marketing brochure promoting herself as the best candidate and was hired.

Candidate listed accomplishments and lessons learned from each position. He gave examples of good customer service he provided as well as situations he wished he would have handled differently. He was hired.

Candidate applying for a food and beverage management position sent a resume in the form of a fine-dining menu and was hired.

Candidate crafted his resume to look like Google search results for the “perfect candidate.” Candidate ultimately wasn’t hired, but was considered.

“one-in-five HR managers reported that they spend less than 30 seconds reviewing applications and around 40 percent spend less than one minute,” said Rosemary Haefner, Vice President of Human Resources at CareerBuilder. “It’s a highly competitive job market and you have to clearly demonstrate how your unique skills and experience are relevant and beneficial to that particular employer. We see more people using infographics, QR codes and visual resumes to package their information in new and interesting ways.”

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

When asked what would make them automatically dismiss a candidate from consideration, employers pointed to the following:

Resumes with typos – 61%

Resumes that copied large amounts of wording from the job posting – 41%

Resume with an inappropriate email address – 35%

Resumes that don’t include a list of skills – 30%

Resumes that are more than two pages long – 22%

Resumes printed on decorative paper - 20%

Resumes that detail more tasks than results for previous positions – 16%

Resumes that include a photo – 13%

Resumes that have large blocks of text with little white space – 13%

Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,298 U.S. hiring managers and human resource professionals (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) ages 18 and over between May 14 and June 4, 2012 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 2,298, one could say with a 95% probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/-2.04% points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

About CareerBuilder

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to recruitment support. More than 10,000 websites, including 140 newspapers and broadband portals such as MSN and AOL, feature CareerBuilder's proprietary job search technology on their career sites. Owned by Gannett Co., Inc. (NYSE: GCI), Tribune Company and the McClatchy Company (NYSE: MNI), CareerBuilder and its subsidiaries operate in the United States, Europe, South America, Canada and Asia. For more information, visit www.careerbuilder.com

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