

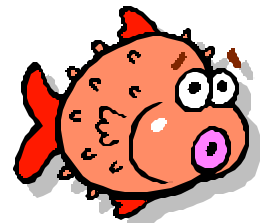
How To Read A Résumé

Go ahead – check your search engines for all of the resources that can help you write the perfect résumé. You'll find over 10,000 of them! Now search all of the websites that will help you READ a resume and you'll likely find NONE! What does that tell you about how well equipped most managers are to begin the hiring process and sift through stacks of resumes? If all of the job-seekers for the position are so well prepared, how will you be equally prepared to separate the contenders from the pretenders?



It is critical for the Hiring Manager to practice discernment when reviewing a résumé! Following are some tips for improving the effectiveness of your evaluation of a candidate's résumé:

- A. *Look for measurable achievements.* Look at what the candidate says about his/her accomplishments. Instead of “greatly increased sales” look for statements that can be substantiated by facts , such as “increased sales by 52%”.
- B. *Does the résumé mirror the ideal candidate?* If you're looking for a graphics-oriented advertising person, does the résumé reflect a creative and imaginative approach? Need a detail-oriented accounting clerk? Look for a résumé that presents all the facts in a clear and straightforward way.
- C. *Start at the end of the résumé.* Most candidates place the least flattering information there, and you may be able to save yourself some time.
- D. *Be cautious of the functional résumé.* These usually have no dates, only descriptions and experiences. They may mask excessive job-hopping, gaps in employment, and progression (or lack of) in positions. Dig deep for the facts, dates, and specifics.
- E. *Mediocre candidates do not always have mediocre résumés.* A recent search of the Internet revealed thousands of books, articles, software packages and services dedicated to writing résumés in ways that “guarantee notice” by prospective employers. Thus a mediocre candidate may have a tremendous résumé.
- F. *Look for profit-mindedness and customer service.* See if you can sense if the candidate understands that businesses survive when both its customers and its bottom line are looked after. Have the candidate's contributions led to efficiencies and customer retention?
- G. *Beware of puffery!* Many résumés contain qualifiers like “knowledge of...”, “assisted with...”, “had exposure to...” which should not be confused with *hands-on experience*. Watch out for résumés filled with trivia placed there to lengthen them.



- H. *Do not be misled by lengthy educational credentials.* The candidate may have listed meaningless seminars and cited every course they ever attended to add 'meat' to their résumé. Ensure that each candidate you bring in to interview has education relevant to the position.
- I. *Do not excuse sloppiness.* In this era of word processors, poor grammar and misspellings are a tip-off that the candidate may be sloppy in their work habits. Conversely, a perfect résumé does not necessarily indicate that the candidate is detail oriented. Much can be learned by the cover letter – how well does the candidate express himself/herself?
- J. *Look for evidence that shows a desire to work.* How much of the candidate's education did they pay for? How busy were they? Are they achievement oriented? Are they a solo performer or were they part of a team? Are these attributes relevant to the job you seek to fill?
- K. *Do not assume!* The words on a résumé may create an image in your mind based on your own experiences but do not necessarily reflect what has actually happened in the life of a candidate. "Promoted to Office Manager" may be very significant, or may mean that the title was given to the person who started the coffee in the morning. Dig into these things in the interview – "tell me – what were the duties of an office manager?"

To learn more about how to hire the best candidates, contact Boyer Management Group at 215-942-0982, visit us on the Internet at www.boyermanagement.com or email Hank Boyer at hank@boyermanagement.com and ask about the management development series entitled *Managing Through People*. This article is excerpted from *Managing Through People I*, copyright ©1999-2002 by Boyer Management Group.