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Four Steps a Recruiter Takes to Trash CVs and Resumes

By Dr. Amjad Rafiq

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Having 200–300 CVs or resumes to analyse, a tight schedule, and probably working late, an employer's or recruiting manager's approach is to scan the huge pile quickly and look for any little reason to trash your CV or resume. Learn how to avoid your CV or resume being trashed and how to almost guarantee that it gets noticed and shortlisted.

The scenario described above of a recruiting manager or employer is fairly typical. With hundreds of CVs or resumes, little time, and the pressure of identifying the best person for the job, the strategy a recruiter takes is to first eliminate all those who show any little sign of being worthy of elimination. And the basis of that is your CV and resume, highlighting the great importance attached to this one or two page document.

So what happens when the pile of 300 CVs and resumes are put in front of the recruitment manager? Well there are three main steps, which are taken to filter the pile. Filtering is needed to choose appropriate candidates for the interview stage. So those not worthy of being interviewed have their CVs or resumes trashed. Let's take a look at them one by one.

The first stage: The 5–10 second glance

The recruitment manager is not going to spend minutes going through each CV or resume to find what he is looking for. Rather, his first step is to spend at the most 10 seconds to take a quick glance at mainly the first page and the following page(s) if the first page interests him. So the process of elimination begins with the following:

* Any CV or resume which is longer than 4 pages will be trashed. This is generally the case, unless the employer requires a detailed career history. But most CVs are no longer than three pages, and as for resumes they should be shorter. So the recruitment manager will not be bothered reading anything over 4 pages.

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* Any CV or resume that does not have a profile, or objective or similar paragraph and an easy discernible list of skills on the front page will get trashed. The recruitment manager does not want to start scanning your CV or resume to see if he can find where your skills and achievements are, or what you are qualified to do. You are supposed to present that to the recruitment manager using your career marketing tool, the CV or resume.

* Any CV or resume which is written in long sentences and lengthy paragraphs and where a quick glance does not allow the identification of relevant information, such as skills and achievements will get trashed. The recruitment manager is not there to read essays or novels.

* Any CV or resume which is annoying. This is mainly due to bad formatting. Things such as using many different fonts and font sizes, cluttering the information with little white space, making it harder to read. Also the use of excessive underlining, bold and italics, in combination. All of these matters make

the CV or resume difficult to read and follow and annoys the recruitment manager.

By now the recruitment manager has gladly trashed 70% of all the pile and is left with around 80–90 CVs or resumes. Happy with the time he has saved, he or she can now spend a little more quality time scanning what remains.

The second stage: 10–15 second glance at the first page

At this point, the recruitment manager is looking for what is specifically relevant. This requires a match between the skills required for the job and the skills and achievements presented by you. So without really looking at your CV or resume in too much detail, he simply wants to identify what have you got to offer and does it match his or her organisation's requirements. He or she will be looking to identify this on the first page and without having to try hard to locate this information. The match could be general or it could be specific. But because the recruitment manager is only interested in a general match, spending a relatively small amount of time (10–15 seconds) in gauging this, he will include CVs or resumes at this stage which will still be filtered later. By now there around 40 CVs or resumes that remain, about half from the first stage of filtering.

The third stage: Short listing for the interview stage

Here the recruitment manager spends a little more time, and picks out those CVs and resumes that have a specific match, or a very close match to the job requirements, and these are considered potential candidates. Here, the method of the recruitment manager has changed from elimination of irrelevant CVs and resumes to picking out highly relevant and quality matches. So after this stage, about two-thirds of the remaining pile will be discarded and we have around 15 CVs or resumes that remain.

The fourth stage: Picking candidates from the short list

It is only at this point that the recruitment manager will now look in more detail and go beyond the first page of the CV or resume to pick candidates from the short list. There are a number of factors that the

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recruitment manager will be focusing upon:

- * Is the candidate's latest work experience related to the job being offered
- * Does the candidate have a strong academic background
- * What type of companies has the candidate worked for
- * What achievements has the candidate demonstrated from previous jobs
- * What non-technical and job-specific skills does the candidate possess

After looking at these factors, the final interview list will be prepared which can be less than 5 candidates. So, have you got a CV or resume that will survive these four steps? The reality of the recruitment process shows that you need a targeted and focused CV or resume that not only grabs attention by showing a skills match, but is also crafted, worded and formatted to give you an edge over other candidates.

Dr. Amjad Rafiq is a careers consultant who has provided online solutions for International recruitment agencies. He is also the developer of <http://www.mycvbuilder.com> which is an online CV building service that combines all the various elements to creating winning CVs and resumes.

How to Ensure Your Resume is Read by Recruiters

By Laura Adams

Even the most qualified candidates with the strongest qualifications sometimes get bypassed by recruiters when they are looking to fill an open position. Why is this? Don't recruiters want to interview and hire and the best of the best?

The answer to this question is, of course, yes! Recruiters are reviewing the resumes of submitted candidates to determine which individuals appear, on paper, to be a potential match for the position. But considering that a recruiter may get dozens, if not hundreds, of resumes for a single job opening, there is little time to carefully dig through each individual resume to see if a candidate has the "special something" the employer is seeking.

As disappointing as this fact is for many job seekers, most recruiters will decide the fate of your resume in less than 15 seconds. If a recruiter cannot match your qualifications to that of the open position in that time frame, your resume is headed to the "File for Future Reference" stack, otherwise known as the Black Hole of Resumes. This means that you need to sell yourself very quickly and capture the recruiter's attention from the start.

So what do you need to do to stand out in the crowd? First off, your resume needs to be results-oriented and concise, and quickly summarize your qualifications for the target position. Grab

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the reader's attention with strong selling points at the very top of your resume on why your accomplishments, skills, and experience match the position you are seeking. Doing research on the company at which you are applying and the specific open position will provide you with the information you need to ensure you are focusing in on the right skill areas.

The next step is to demonstrate the value you will contribute to the company. Recruiters are going to be looking for ways in which you will be an asset to the company. An easy way to ensure that your resume gets a more thorough review is to specifically address this topic in a summary of qualifications at the top of your resume. Don't leave it up to the recruiter to deduce how (and if) you will be an asset - tell them directly!

Finally, with so many incoming resumes for a single position, recruiters are eager to reject and screen out individuals down to a more manageable level. Any little mistake or error of judgment may be enough to disqualify you before your qualification summary is even reviewed.

To ensure that your resume is even more than just a cursory glance, avoid the following top recruiter pet peeves:

Spelling errors and typos

Poor grammar / Failure to use proper English

Missing or inaccurate contact information

Missing or inaccurate dates of employment

Poor or distracting resume formatting

Use of unusual resume paper such as bright colors or patterned paper. Scented paper is also a no-no.

Position accomplishments read more like a company-developed formal job description than an outline of your skills, key outcomes, and results. Recruiters don't want to know what your employer says someone in your position should be doing - they want to know what you actually do!

Long, tedious resumes - more than 1 page for new graduates or inexperienced professionals, more than 2-3 pages for experienced professionals

Grossly unqualified candidates

And last, but not least:

Inclusion of personal information that is unrelated to the job. Recruiters don't want to know about your family life, your religion, your extracurricular activities, your weight and height, or anything else that does not directly qualify you for the position. Never attach your picture to your resume!

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– Resources, News, Tips and Views to help Truck Drivers find their next jobs.

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