

Keep your resume free of clutter, common pitfalls

BY KAITLIN MADDEN • CAREERBUILDER • FEBRUARY 13, 2011

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Appropriate resume length is a pretty consistent subject of debate among human resources professionals. While only you can decide what is important enough for your resume, there are a few things that definitely don't belong there.

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1. Your interests: Your resume is a professional document, bottom line. "While I always find it amusing that you like rollerblading and good red wine, please don't tell me this (on your resume)," says Elizabeth Lions, author of "Recession Proof Yourself." "I want work-related experience only."

2. An objective statement: Objective statements that outline what you're looking for in a job or employer are a waste of space. "As a career coach I'm constantly counseling clients to remove this paragraph because it takes up critical real estate on your resume and (this information is) better discussed in your cover letter," says Lisa Quast, president of Seattle-based career coaching firm Career Woman Inc.

3. Salary history: Including a salary history on your resume will turn any employer off, since you'll give off the impression that money is your main concern. Plus, if the employer sees that you're "too expensive" they may disqualify you, and if your salary is on the low side, you may end up with a lowball offer should you get the job.

4. An unprofessional e-mail address: "Don't include an overly personalized e-mail address such as 'atthousewife2@gmail.com' or 'ilovecats24@yahoo.com,'" Murray advises. "This can make recruiters take your resume less seriously."

5. Your references: "These are personal to you and you should control when an employer calls them," Lions says. "Don't give me your power." There is also no need to specify that "references

are available upon request."

6. Activities with religious or political affiliations: These topics are polarizing, and while recruiters shouldn't take them into account, it's better to be on the safe side.

7. Your picture: This isn't the Miss America pageant. Employers aren't going to be more inclined to hire you because you included a glamour shot. In fact, they may even be more prone to not contact you.

Kaitlin Madden is a writer and blogger for CareerBuilder.com and its job blog, The Work Buzz.