

WHY YOUR RESUME MAY GET TOSSED ASIDE

By MATT MURRAY

Resumes are flooding recruiting offices, but many are immediately rejected because of bad grammar, sketchy details or other problems.

ResumeDoctor.com, an online service of staffing agency Personnel Department Inc., in South Burlington, Vt., recently surveyed more than 2,500 recruiters and came up with a list of resume mistakes that cost candidates dearly. They include giving incomplete dates and job information; structuring the resume around what tasks the applicant can handle rather than chronologically; and embellishing academic or other credentials.

Recruiters are especially wary of any flourishes -- such as fancy typefaces or fonts -- that seem more designed to stand out from the pile than to detail, simply and concisely, what an applicant has achieved.

When we can't scan it and tell what a person has done in less than 10 seconds, we toss it, cautions Charlene Turczyn, a senior principal at CMW & Associates Inc., a technical recruiting firm in Springfield, Ill. We're looking for a resume that says something about their latest job, how long they've been there, their title and what they did, she says. I like bullet points, so I can scan them quicker. I want to be able to glance very quickly and know what they're doing.

Mary Kier, an executive vice president at executive recruiter Cook Associates Inc. in Chicago, says it's worth including special skills, such as a foreign language, but dislikes seeing candidates list every course or seminar they ever attended. Another bugaboo: listing too many hobbies. One guy listed his favorite TV shows, she says.

In the end, the best resumes simply lay out in concise detail where an applicant has worked, what titles he or she has held and what they have accomplished. There's no substitute for substance. If you have any doubts about your own resume, you might want to see a consultant for some help in putting it together.