

RESUME BLOOPERS TO AVOID

By Beverley Neil, **CRW, CERW**

You've been sending your résumé out to every position that seems vaguely compatible or interesting. Sometimes you were even sure it was the perfect job for you, but time after time the frustration builds as you hear nothing, nothing and more nothing.

Especially if you have applied for a position you are sure is as ideal for you as you are for it, when there is no response you are left wondering what you have to do to get a look in.

It might be that you need some résumé tips not only on what you need to do, but also what you have to stop doing when writing a résumé.

Though requirements vary from country to country, for Australia and the U.S. this résumé writing advice holds good:

1. **Including the Wrong Kind of Personal Information:** Don't include your date of birth as, on paper, it could put you out of the running, while in life you could be ideal for the job. Sadly, age does impact on your application, though the way we care for ourselves these days few of us look our age anyhow. Stating your date of birth or age can be regarded as discriminatory and should only be included if you need to prove you are old enough to apply.

Other areas that could be regarded as discriminatory and which no longer have a valid place on a résumé include marital status, number of children and nationality – these points have nothing to do with your ability to perform the job.

Photos are also unnecessary and could go against you unless they are absolutely relevant – such as for a fashion model or TV presenter. If you

do include a photo for a mainstream position, make sure it is an utterly professional head and shoulders shot with no other people in the photo.

In the cover letter, never include personal family matters or berate your current or past employer. It doesn't matter what the justification is, you never criticise another person or company. Be discrete.

2. **Including Risky or Irrelevant Hobbies and Interests:** This depends a great deal on the position description of the job you are applying for.

Yachting, golf, cricket and tennis are invariably very positive interests to highlight for many mid to senior management and sales representative roles. Needlecraft could be totally irrelevant for a swim school instructor but ideal for an art and craft shop. Canyon swinging could be regarded as too high risk for many professions but could be perfect for an adventure tour guide.

When stating your interest or hobby, with a bit of thought you can turn it into a key selling point. For example, if you play rugby try stating it this way - Rugby: teamwork, responsiveness, fair play.

3. **Don't Neglect Attention to Detail:** You have no idea how many applications are binned because the cover letter was addressed to the wrong person, the name was misspelt, it was addressed to Mr when the recipient was clearly a Ms, even because it was entirely the wrong company.

I wrote two résumés for a client each tailored to a different company. I then wrote two cover letters tailored to each different position. You guessed it. The client didn't double check when sending them out and mixed up the résumés and letters. You can also guess what happened to those applications.

It was only by accident she discovered what she had done. If she hadn't found out it would have been a case of not hearing anything back and wondering why – wasn't she suitable – was the résumé no good????

Always double check, triple check and then check again. Even get someone else to check if necessary, but don't do anything that could ruin your chance of receiving that magic phone call.

About The Author:

Beverley Neil is the owner of *d'Scriptive Words*, a freelance writing business. She has dual international résumé accreditation, is a multiple award winning résumé writer and author of the [online resume writer's course](http://onlineresumewriterscourse.com/) suitable for both beginners wanting to learn professional resume writing and individuals wanting to write for themselves, friends and family. For more information visit <http://onlineresumewriterscourse.com/>