

# A RÉSUMÉ THAT REFLECTS THE REAL YOU



**THE JOB SOUNDS PERFECT. ALL THE REQUIREMENTS ARE A SNAP, EXCEPT FOR ONE: FLUENCY IN SPANISH. ALTHOUGH YOU TOOK COLLEGE-LEVEL SPANISH, FLUENCY IS A MERE GOAL. SHOULD YOU REVISE YOUR RÉSUMÉ TO SAY THAT YOU MEET EVERY REQUIREMENT?**

No. Although fraudulent and misleading résumés might seem so pervasive as to be normal, adding your name to the statistics is not only dishonest but also unwise; you might get caught. Ethical issues with résumés can span from entry-level applicants to upper management. Several executives, including former Yahoo CEO Scott Thompson, have learned this lesson the hard way.

Veteran résumé reviewers and career counselors at Baylor say they rarely, if ever, see dishonesty among the student population they advise.

"I don't know that I have ever seen, in the six years that I have been in this job, anybody that misrepresented a degree or

a grade," said Ken Buckley, who views hundreds of résumés in his job as director of Career Management at the Hankamer School of Business.

by Barbara Elmore

Kevin Nall, associate director of Career Services at Baylor, added, "The conventional wisdom is that in times of slower economies, you see more résumé fraud or inflation. In terms of undergraduate students, I don't see it that much. In fact, I see students who are reluctant to brag on themselves."

Instead of spotting misleading statements, the counselors often find themselves insisting that résumés should be appealing enough to stand out in a crowd. They show students how to make the documents sparkle even without years of work experience, and many of their suggestions apply to professionals as well.

## THE "WHAT TO DO" LIST

### MATCH YOUR RÉSUMÉ TO THE JOB YOU ARE SEEKING

This might seem obvious, but some job seekers still do not do it. "If it does not show a strong fit to the opportunity, the résumé won't help you gain an interview," Buckley said. To achieve a strong match, do a word search of your résumé to make sure that key words in the job description are in the résumé.

### INCLUDE A COVER LETTER IF ONE IS ALLOWED

This snapshot should fill one-third to half a page and tell the recruiter why the candidate is a strong fit for the job. Use short paragraphs or bullets. Buckley suggests a format that shows core requirements of the job on one side and a candidate's qualifications on the other.

### BRAG ON YOURSELF

Nall said this is possible to do within ethical bounds. He coaches students to think of their résumés as sales documents. "Present what you have done in a way that's going to be recognized or stand out to employers," he said.

### HIGHLIGHT SKILLS OR ACHIEVEMENTS THAT SEPARATE YOU FROM THE CROWD

Kat Evans, Baylor career adviser, said this includes honors and awards. "We often see things that are very brief, but then we ask the student to describe something," Evans said. Those conversations bring forth specifics that recruiters would want to read. "Show that you made a difference and established a history of achievement," Nall added. "If employers realize that you were successful in your past, they know you can be successful in the future."

### ADD QUANTIFIABLE DATA

Instead of saying on a résumé, "I was a newspaper writer in college," reword it to show numbers. For example, "Wrote more than 25 articles about the music department for a student newspaper that was available to more than 14,000 students." Evans said the numbers add depth.

### NETWORK

After a student has a résumé, Evans initiates the subject of networking to gain insight into an industry. Social media outlets and relationship-building both are useful here.

**IF YOU NEED A RÉSUMÉ BUT HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO GET STARTED, DON'T THROW UP YOUR HANDS.** "We have packets that show how you do it, and then you can come back and see us," Evans said. "If you keep track of everything you have done, it's pretty easy to piece it all together. And start your résumé as early as possible. Students sometimes come in frantic because someone wants it the next day. Start early and plan ahead, so you're ready to submit it."

## THE "DON'T DO THIS" LIST

### A LIST OF JOB DUTIES

"Most recruiters want to see how you are going to provide a positive impact for their firm and their window to this is gaining an understanding of how you did your job, not what you did," Buckley said. "Recruiters want to know how you performed and how that transfers to their current job opportunity. Listing your job descriptions instead of detailing your performance and the measurable results from your actions is a shortcoming of many résumés. So tell how you did your job."

### A ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL RÉSUMÉ BLASTED TO 500 EMPLOYERS

Nall said to avoid telling everything you have done. Instead, connect the dots for a busy recruiter. "Make it clear on the résumé that you possess the skills they are looking for," he said.

### OVER-GENERALIZED QUALIFICATIONS

Take credit for the things you have accomplished, but don't exaggerate, Nall said. "You have to be able to defend whatever is on your resume," he explained. "If the job requires Spanish fluency, and you are a beginner at best but say you are fluent on your résumé, be prepared to demonstrate it. If the recruiter begins the interview in Spanish, and you can't understand him, the interview is pretty much over."

### UNATTRACTIVE FORMATTING

Scan the résumé for appearance. If it has clumps of information and no spacing, it looks cluttered. "Use bullets. Indent. Separate sections," Evans said. She also combs résumés for misspelled words, typos and misused punctuation.

### SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES AND VOICEMAIL MESSAGES THAT PROMOTE A LESS-THAN-PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

Evans said the topic of social media always comes up in résumé sessions. "We tell students to make sure their résumé is consistent with Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, reflecting them in a positive manner," she said. "If it is online, make it reflect positively on you."

### A FOCUS ONLY ON YOU

Instead, emphasize what you can bring to the job, the value you would add to a position, and how you can assist the employer.

