



## SHOULD YOU INCLUDE A HOBBIES/INTERESTS/PERSONAL SECTION ON YOUR RESUME?

The Hobbies/Interests/Personal section of the resume is the section that usually sparks the most debate. Some argue that this section generates the most interesting conversations in an interview. Others feel that anything not having to do with professional experience, particularly legal experience, is useless and irrelevant.

There are points to be made for both of these arguments. As far as the true benefit of including this section, however, we see only one: It's possible that the person reading your resume will connect with one of your interests, and in that event, it's possible that he/she will be more likely to call you in for an interview because of that connection.

Yet, this is a notion that has been blown way out of proportion. Perhaps if you have a really unique hobby like glass blowing and the person reading your resume shares that hobby, he/she will take an interest in you. But the majority of interests that appear on resumes—basketball, football, baseball, cooking, jogging, hiking, reading, movies, guitar, etc.—aren't going to strike a major chord with anyone, at least not one powerful enough to get you an interview.

Your resume needs to present you as a qualified candidate for a job. Even if you are fluent in Swahili and a gourmet chef specializing in white truffles and the interviewer happens to have those exact same talents, he/she is not going to give you a job for which you are completely unqualified.

### **But it shows that I'm well rounded!**

A lot of people cite this as a good reason for including interests. They believe that it's important to show employers that they are not just one-dimensional. My response is this:

1) Most people assume you have things you are interested in besides law, whether or not you include those things on your resume.

If an employer sees that Bob has included "Enjoy playing tennis and cooking hamburgers" on his resume, while John has not included anything of a personal nature, the employer is not going to assume that John just sits around and writes legal memoranda for fun on his days off.

2) Employers don't really care if you're well rounded.

This is sad, but true. Employers care about whether or not you will be a good employee. Heck, for their purposes, it would be a good thing if you did sit around writing legal memoranda for fun on your days off.

## But it's a conversation piece!

A notion that mothers and teachers frequently point out is that there is such a thing as "good attention" and "bad attention." Along these same lines, there is such a thing as a "good conversation piece" and a "bad conversation piece."

People frequently argue for including something on their resumes because they have been asked about it at prior interviews. What I always ask in response is this: "Did it get you the job?" Usually, the answer is no.

Just because something on your resume generates a conversation doesn't mean it should be there. In an interview situation, employers will sometimes scan your resume and just ask about everything that they see. Sometimes employers will ask about random things on your resume just to get you talking so that they don't have to. It's easy for an interviewer to glance at a resume and say, "So, you like to jet ski?" and then sit back for a few minutes while the interviewee blathers on about this topic. It doesn't mean the employer is impressed.

In general, we advise against including hobbies or interests on your resume, with a few exceptions. In addition to being fairly irrelevant, this section of the resume also lends itself most easily to ridicule. In the interest of trying to appear "unique," people list some pretty wacky interests that most likely do them more harm than good. Here are some examples of those we've seen:

Parrots	Eraser collecting
Eating food	"Men's" interests
Collecting antique measuring cups	Weather enthusiast
Law	Driving Jeeps

There are a few exceptions. An exception would be something that is a big part of your life and/or shows notable qualities such as perseverance, dedication, or talent. For instance, if you are a triathlete, marathon runner, black belt in karate, successful artist, novelist, or competitive horseback rider, it would be worth including your particular interest/skill in your resume. These activities all show some level of perseverance, dedication, or talent and therefore may make you a more attractive candidate. Be careful, though, that you don't portray any particular interest or hobby as too big a part of your life. If so, employers may worry that your hobby will interfere with your commitment to your legal job.