



CAREER COACH

BY LORNA GAREY

DEAR CAREER COACH:

I recently ran an ad for an open IT position, and now I'm being deluged with resumes. How can I separate the cream from the rest of the crop?

DROWNING IN DENVER

DEAR DROWNING:

You're not alone. The Shelter Group, a Baltimore-based real estate developer, recently advertised for helpdesk candidates and was similarly overwhelmed. Based on that experience, Kelly Leerman, the company's HR director, developed this list of screening suggestions:

- » Check the e-mail address: Discard résumés with inappropriate names like hotmama@aol.com—anyone who doesn't take the time to create a new screen name for professional purposes is unlikely to be a quality hire.
- » Check the home address: Unless you have a relocation budget or can drum one up for the right candidate, eliminate out-of-towners. If you can't find an appropriate local applicant, you can always go back.
- » Check the job title: If the posting asks for a helpdesk tech, why does the résumé say "Director of Finance"? Don't dignify the spam approach with a response.
- » Check grammar: E-mail etiquette leans toward the informal, but a résumé should represent the candidate's best effort. Misspellings, incomplete sentences and conflicting information are all bad omens.



» Check length: A two-page resume is OK, though one-page résumés are in vogue. An extra page for references is fine, and a cover letter is a must, especially if you've requested one in your ad. But a nine-page resume that tells you about 10 years of experience should be trashed immediately.

Now go ahead and read what's left, but don't waffle—if you feel lukewarm, pass. With any luck, the cream will have risen to the top, and you'll have just a few very strong candidates to interview.

I'm a Web developer at a large retailer. I get to work early, I don't chat around the water cooler, and I often do extra work at home, but I have young children so I usually have to leave the office on time. A co-worker recently

scheduled an important meeting for 6 p.m., which made me miss my daughter's basketball game, and I'm the coach. I'm still steaming. What should I do if this happens again?

DAD WITH A LIFE

DEAR LIFE:

As long as your boss is happy with your work, don't let a co-worker's pettiness get you down. In the future, you could ask that the meeting be rescheduled, but if you have to miss it, just be sure your boss understands the situation, and ask someone to fill you in afterward. The Families and Work Institute (www.familiesandwork.org) offers strategies for balancing careers and kids. **NWC**

Send your questions to careercoach@nwc.com

ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL GUIDERA

GAME PLAN

If you like to travel and have a yen for altruism, check out Geekcorps. Founded in 2000 by Ethan Zuckerman, who helped found Tripod, this nonprofit technology volunteer organization based in North Adams, Mass., matches technologists from U.S. and European companies with businesses in Armenia, Ghana, Mongolia and Rwanda for three-month volunteer stints. Find out more at www.geekcorps.org.