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Goodbye, Resume? Not so Fast, Experts Say

The Internet -- along with the advent of social-media tools like LinkedIn -- have markedly changed the recruitment landscape. But the resume remains prominent for the vast majority of HR professionals and recruiters, experts say.

By Lin Gensing-Pophal




Jeanne Meister pointed to the death of the resume in her [July 23, 2012 piece](#) for *Forbes*. "Forget the resume," she said, "today, employers pay more attention to candidates' web presence . . ."

She's not the first. This January, [a Wall Street Journal article](#) suggested that more companies were relying on social networks to source candidates, highlighting an example of a venture-capital firm that asked applicants for an investment-analyst position to send links representing their web presence.

While there's no question the Internet and the advent of social media tools like LinkedIn have markedly changed the recruitment landscape, in reality, the role of the resume remains prominent for the vast majority of HR professionals and recruiters.

Matt Kerr is director of executive search and talent at [BPI group](#), a global management and HR consulting firm based in Chicago. "Stating that traditional resumes are passe or outdated would require that something take their place," says Kerr. "What exactly is that?" Social-media platforms are significantly important, he says, but adds: "Once a potential candidate is identified and

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important, he says, but adds: "Once a potential candidate is recruited and contacted and a match and mutual interest is established, it's highly likely a resume will be requested that lists accomplishments."

Others agree.

"As someone who has been placing HR professionals for more than eight years," says Jennifer Hoffman, a principal in [Winter, Wyman's Human Resources Search](#), based in Waltham, Mass., "it is my belief that having a well-crafted resume, drafted as a document to print or to share electronically is imperative for a job seeker's success," says Hoffman.

A resume, she says, "conveys several layers of information about an individual's background as well as being equally important for a hiring manager in learning about an individual's experience and comparing candidates side by side."

"For the actual component of 'hiring,' you still need a resume 100 percent of the time," says Revi Goldwasser, managing partner of [Wall Street Personnel](#), a financial recruitment firm based in Boca Raton, Fla. "When we submit a resume to a client we need a resume -- when the job seeker goes to an interview, we need a resume."

What has changed, though, she says, is the source of how recruiters find job seekers. "It no longer comes from just a resume, but rather from their online profile. I find them versus them finding me," she says.

Even in the technology realm, resumes remain relevant, according to Doug Luce, practice lead with [Aaronsen Group](#), based in Seattle. Luce hires software developers and says: "Everyone still expects a resume to be part of the job-seeking transaction." In fact, he says, he avoids doing online searches related to candidates for fear he might come across something that could serve as the basis of a discrimination claim. "I really worry that their online personal (information) isn't going to tell me how they will do on the job," he says.

And recent data seems to confirm the preferences of recruiters and HR professionals.

[Chequed.com](#), a pre-employment testing and screening software firm located in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., recently conducted a survey of companies across the U.S. and found that 77 percent said they *always* use resumes, while 19 percent said they *sometimes* use resumes and only 4 percent indicated they *never* use resumes

Still, there are some signs that changes may be afoot.

Tom Thomson, a recruiter with [Sanford Rose Associates](#), based in the Nashville area, says he has presented a few candidates to employers without resumes.

Instead of a resume, he says, he has used their LinkedIn profiles. But, he adds: "I prefer to have a resume, primarily to see what jobs the person has held and what they accomplished in those jobs. We don't need all the fluff that goes with many resumes, like their career objective or personal information. A complete LinkedIn profile is as good or better than a resume."

Others have eschewed resumes entirely.

Dayne Shuda, founder of [Ghost Blog Writers](#), in Eau Claire, Wis., says: "My feeling is that resumes are out of date. With any of the writers I work with, there are never any resumes exchanged. I don't even use LinkedIn to learn about them. The only thing I care about is the work they have done in the past.

"It's not about where you went to school, your GPA or how many hours of extra activities you've done," he says.

"In my mind, LinkedIn is the new resume," says Kelsey Meyer, senior vice president with [Digital Talent Agents](#), in Columbia, Mo. "When a prospective employee sends me a resume, I look at it to make sure it isn't extremely lacking, but then I simply type their name into Google, Twitter, Facebook and, most importantly, LinkedIn."

Christian Fisher, "HR-guru" with [Elastic Inc.](#), an on-demand sales-team provider based in Mountain View, Calif., says that "in this fast-moving, always changing space, resumes are truly obsolete.

"Once a job requisition has been established and it's time to now go source and locate the talent," he says, "you quickly learn the importance of dashing through social-media sites including Github, [a web-based hosting service for software development projects, as well as] Twitter, Facebook, Dribbble [a site for designers to share what they're working on]LinkedIn, etc.

"From a recruiter who has worked for some of the latest and greatest companies globally, I would say hold onto your resume and make that extra push -- build a web page."

Sally Haver, senior vice president with [The Ayers Group/Career Partners Intl.](#), based in New York, points out that there are some inherent problems with resumes:

*Resumes are "self-reports" and the reader can't check for accuracy of information,

*They contain only the positive pronouncements about the person's accomplishments,

*Many don't contain the necessary keywords, and are passed over, even though the writer is highly qualified for the job, and

*Information in resumes doesn't lend itself easily to comparison, as there are no formal standards for what to include, how to state it, etc.

"We've seen that a good, comprehensive LinkedIn profile can often be referred to, either in addition to or instead of the traditional resume, for gleaning information about a potential hire."

Still, she cautions, one very important reason to *not* rely too heavily on social-media resources when recruiting is a traditional one: "Hiring managers can easily see a person's age, ethnicity, etc., and consciously or not make screening decisions on these bases."

So, while new options and opportunities are certainly presented by social media and the Internet, HR professionals, recruiters and hiring managers are well advised to exercise caution in terms of *how* they use these tools.

Despite some minority opinions to the contrary, it doesn't appear that the traditional resume is poised to go away anytime soon. It does, however, appear the recruitment process is changing in key ways to leverage the opportunities that technology and social media hold.

Changing Times

"At [Office Depot](#), we still rely pretty heavily on traditional resumes," says Gwyneth Bonasoro, director of talent management, before adding: "We definitely see social media having a strong place in our employment branding strategy." Changes for Office Depot include a move away from traditional job boards "to fund socially integrated job sharing," the integration of video into branding efforts and the exploration of more consistently integrating video into the recruitment process "in an effort to reduce costs, go green and expedite the recruitment process," she says.

Ashley Pare is global HR manager at [Vivaldi Partners](#), a brand-consulting firm

based in New York. Pare says she still believes in a "good old-fashioned resume" and says she feels that most employers still require a resume during the interview process. Social media is an important, but secondary, source of information, she says. But it is an "increasingly important supplement."

LinkedIn, says Pare, has the most potential to eliminate the need for a resume. "It's a tool that allows you to build a complete employment application on one page," she says. However, she adds: "It may still be several years until managers and HR professionals are comfortable and social-media savvy enough to trust a website."

Goldwasser also points to LinkedIn as a powerful resource for sourcing and finding talent for job openings. "These online profiles allow me to do all my investigation before I have ever received a resume," she says. "Only once I like their profile do I then ask to connect and, after discussing the role, we then ask for the resume." It's almost backwards, she notes. "The resume is the last piece we get from a job seeker but, nevertheless, still a required element in the job-hiring process."

At this point, she says, resumes are still an integral part of the hiring process. But, she adds: "Ask me in five years, and it could be a totally different story!"

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