



How to avoid standing out for the wrong reasons

When it comes to working with recruiters, there are plenty of obvious no-no's. Most of us know that sending a 28-page resume, turning up late to an interview or accidentally badmouthing an ex-employer is unlikely to impress.

Similarly, when it comes to making a good impression and successfully landing a job, most of us also know that what you don't do is just as important as what you do.

Here's three candidates who missed the memo and ended up standing out to their recruiters for all the wrong reasons.

1. The aggressive guy

Simon Bennett, Principal Consultant, Glide Outplacement

I was interviewing someone for an accountant role. It sounded like his relationship with his former employer ended badly, so I asked him what they would say about him. Without going into specifics, he said he'd made it clear it would be in their best interest to give him a good reference.

The takeout: When you move on from your job, for whatever reason, try to leave on the best terms possible. If that's not possible, make sure your former employer will give you a positive reference. Otherwise find a better one. You may have a great resume and outstanding interview skills, but negative feedback will jeopardise all your good work so far. And if you're worried your feelings might get the better of you should this question come up, practice your responses beforehand.

2. The fibber

Kerri O'Connor, Founder, Saunders Lynn & Co

I was screening a candidate over the phone for a field based sales executive role, and they boasted they were earning a \$100K package (yet the role they were applying for was up to \$25K less in salary). I knew the type of role he was in doesn't pay six fix figures, and never has. In addition, his online profile only mentioned a TAFE qualification, when he spoke of completing several degrees. Then I checked the resumes he had sent two years apart to our business and there were discrepancies in his work experiences.

The takeout: Never lie to a recruiter. Not even a white lie. They know the market rates for the role you work in. Never lie about qualifications – it is ok to say you got half way through a qualification and quit, or life circumstances changed, and you didn't complete it. But don't suggest you have qualifications that you just don't have. Always make sure your online profile matches your resume, otherwise, alarm bells start to go off and you could easily be looked over because there are inconsistencies.

3. The bad referee provider

Eva Grabner, Managing Director, Elite Executive

I was recruiting staff for a role, and had narrowed it down to two excellent candidates. Both had great skills and seemed like they would be a good cultural fit for this particular business, so it came down to their referees. One candidate had excellent references, however, the other had not advised an ex-employer that they were on their resume as a referee, despite us checking they had done so and letting them know we would be calling them.

Imagine my surprise when I called a very disgruntled ex-employer and was nearly hung up on! Needless to say, this particular candidate missed out on the opportunity to join a great organisation because they didn't take the time to speak with their referees and ask them if they were happy to speak with future employers on their behalf.

The takeout: Always ensure you have two to three professional referees. Include people that you have reported to, not a colleague or a staff member, and speak with them when you commence applying for roles, even if they agreed to be your referee years before.