

Putting wheels on your resume



Photo courtesy Newmans Holidays and Harvey World Travel

“Do you have anything to show for your time overseas other than drinking cocktails on a beach?”

Will travel drag out your time at university, having wasted a year getting drunk on a bus that drives through a different European city every two days or will you return refreshed and mature, ready to launch into your chosen career path?

More importantly, will future employers look at your resume with disapproval, thinking, “He’s just another gap student.”

Or will they be impressed with how mature and independent you have become after travelling to Japan and working as an English teacher?

These are all questions that bounce up and down inside the head of someone contemplating travel as a young adult. This could be a

very important stage in your career so give the decision some serious thought.

Most of us look to build our resumes in the hope it will increase our chances of getting the perfect first job to kick-start our career.

The question is, what type of travel is worthy of being included in a resume, if at all. While a weekend trip to Sydney is not resume-building material, those completing a gap year overseas, participating in volunteer work in developing countries, working for six months as a ski instructor in Aspen, or even travelling for an extended period of time, should consider adding those details to their resume.

Does the person interviewing you at your next job take any interest in the Contiki tour that took you

around Europe? Ultimately the answer is yes and no. Essentially it depends on which job you are applying for. Do you have anything to show for your time overseas other than drinking cocktails on a beach while working on your tan?

Lloyd Morgan Recruitment Agency’s Claire Gittings says, “While I do look at a resume to get some notion of an applicant’s character, a list of your personal growth travel would strike me as though someone thought a little too highly of their recreation. I’d leave it out, unless of course the job description calls for experience in foreign countries.”

But if your experience abroad has anything to do with the job, you should add it to your resume artillery.

Dixon Advisory employee,

Chris Carron says adding travel to his resume gave him the edge over his competitors.

“When I applied for a job at Dixon Advisory I was up against other people who had similar qualifications and the same amount of experience. Travelling to the Philippines and doing some voluntary work set me apart from the rest. The woman interviewing me spent most of her time asking about my time in the Philippines.”

However, Carron had not always included travel on his resume believing it had nothing to do with the jobs he was applying for.

“Yet when I met with a recruitment agent I was advised to include my experiences in the Philippines because it might be something that will lift me

above the pack.”

Extensive travel gives a resume a boost if it includes experiences that show maturity, independence and interesting work experiences.

Flight Centre travel consultant, Nicole O’Sullivan, says travel gives you an edge in a nerve-wrecking job application process.

“Travelling gives you confidence and presents life challenging experiences as many young people travel alone and this gives them the chance to see how they cope with situations by themselves.”


O’Sullivan does not include her impressive list of overseas destinations, yet does list her work experience abroad.

“I think people who have not travelled tend to be interested in where other people have been. It

also depends on how you present it to people. If you tend to go on about your experiences, it may bore the interviewer who may become disinterested in what you are saying.”

Self-reliance, organization and experience within a variety of cultures are attributes which may appeal to a potential employer.

Essentially it depends on the kind of employment you are seeking and whether travel is relevant to that specific position.

So if you are thinking of ways to best benefit your career opportunities, travelling with a purpose may just be the thing that gives you the edge. 

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