

Beware that bloated résumé: Extra skills don't necessarily mean better qualified

Employees who want a promotion sometimes get upset when they aren't selected, especially if the job winds up going to someone they perceive as less skilled or talented.

But if the spurned employee's extra skills or training weren't necessary, they aren't particularly relevant. And they're certainly no proof that the promotion process was tainted by bias.

Recent case: Kelly Hobbs, who is black, claimed she was passed over for a promotion to foreman in favor of a less qualified white male.

Hobbs said she was much better qualified. How so? She had earned a college degree and had computer skills, while the chosen candidate said he was "computer illiterate" and didn't have a degree.

The court tossed out Hobbs' claim. It concluded that the foreman job description required neither computer skills nor a college degree. Hobbs' advanced "qualifications" needn't have played any role in the promotion decision. (*Hobbs v. City of Chicago*, No. 07-3591, 7th Cir., 2009)

Advice: Make sure your job descriptions include minimum education, experience and skill requirements. If you desire additional skills, include them, too. But don't add requirements that really aren't needed to perform the job. All that does is encourage overqualified applicants and discourage perfectly qualified applicants from applying. Remember, overqualified employees are likely to become disappointed and will soon be looking for other opportunities elsewhere. Then you have to start the whole process again.