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CV services do more than dot i's, cross t's

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More Japanese corporate employees seek to switch jobs these days. Some just want varied work experience, while others are forced to do so because their employers want to trim the work force. This trend is particularly noticeable among people working for foreign-owned firms, which are known for high employee turnover.

But few Japanese job seekers seem to be confident of their own ability to write a compelling resume. A growing number of [Web sites](#) offer help in this department. They guide a job seeker around the language barriers and differences in corporate culture when preparing a resume in English.

In April this year, a Turkish resident in Japan, Serdar Basara, set up e-Rirekisho.com, a Web site that provides English resume services. Clients send an e-mail message with basic information, such as his or her career goals, educational background and work history, and then pay a fee based on instructions that are given to the client within 24 hours of receipt of the personal data. Within 24 hours after the payment is confirmed, the client is contacted by the site, which checks the kind of business or specific companies the client wants to work for, the working terms and conditions desired by the client and the client's skills, for example.

After a draft is reviewed by the client and any necessary changes made, the company sends the final version as a [computer](#) file or printed on high-quality paper. Clients can also ask the company to set up a dedicated Web site carrying the resume so that prospective employers can access the site by using a password - a method often chosen by people seeking jobs at IT companies.

Fees for this service rise in proportion to the number of years client has worked. The site operator charges 17,500 yen (for standard delivery within seven days) for clients whose length of service is up to three years, and 40,000 yen for those who have worked for 13 years or longer. Delivery within three days is also possible for an extra 10-30% charge.

The site gets 10 to 20 orders a month, according to Basara. Most clients are in their 20s and 30s, and want to find jobs in foreign-owned financial institutions, consulting firms and marketing companies.

Resume Pro, headed by Megumu Terazawa, who has worked in New York for major trading company Mitsui & Co. for 13 years, is a pioneer Web site for resume writing services. He decided to "specialize in providing services via the Internet because it would make it possible to take orders from across the country." Resume Pro charges 18,000 yen to 28,000 yen for writing a resume based on a Japanese draft and data provided by the client.

Instead of simply translating a draft into English, Resume Pro tries to collect as much information about the client as possible by contacting them via e-mail and other means. Candidates are often unaware of their strong points, Terazawa said, and extensive contact with the client can help draw these points out.

"Unlike ordinary Japanese resumes, which simply list past work experience and other background, resumes written in English should be designed to stress concrete achievements and to try to highlight the characteristic features of the job seeker," Terazawa said.

The process of preparing resumes at Resume Pro also seems to get them better prepared for job interviews if they manage to get to that stage, the company contends.



Resumes prepared by e-Rirekisho.com can be posted on a dedicated Web site for prospective employers to view.

According to JAC Japan Co., a Tokyo outplacement service, the number of workers taking new jobs at foreign-owned firms has increased by 10-15% from five years ago. Running [Web sites](#) for English resume services is still a niche business, with most of them managed personally. Yet demand for this service seems likely to grow at a time when more and more mid-career Japanese are looking to work for foreign-owned businesses.

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