

Nearly Half of Employers Have Caught a Lie on a Resume, CareerBuilder.com Survey Shows

Hiring Managers Share Top Ten Most Unusual Resume Fibs

Expert Shares Tips on Making Your Resume Stand Out

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Is your resume more fiction than fact? Experts warn bending the truth can cost you the job. Although only 8 percent of workers admitted to stretching the truth on their resumes, nearly half (49 percent) of hiring managers reported they caught a candidate lying on their resume. Of these employers, 57 percent said they automatically dismissed the applicant. This is according to CareerBuilder.com's latest survey of more than 3,100 hiring managers and over 8,700 workers nationwide conducted from May 22 to June 13, 2008.

Thirty-six percent of employers who received falsified applications said they still considered the candidate, but did not hire him/her. A small percentage (6 percent) ended up hiring the applicant.

The most common lies discovered on a resume, according to the survey, include:

- Embellished responsibilities -- 38 percent
- Skill set -- 18 percent
- Dates of employment -- 12 percent
- Academic degree -- 10 percent
- Companies worked for -- 7 percent
- Job title -- 5 percent

Industries experiencing higher incidences of resume fabrications included Hospitality, Transportation/Utilities and Information Technology. Sixty-percent of employers in Hospitality, 59 percent in Transportation/Utilities and 57 percent in IT reported they found lies on resumes. Government had the lowest incident at 45 percent.

"Even the slightest embellishment can come back to haunt you and ruin your credibility," said Rosemary Haefner, Vice President of Human Resources at CareerBuilder.com. "If you're concerned about gaps in employment, your academic background or skill sets, invention is not the answer. Use your cover letter strategically to tell your story, focusing on your strengths and accomplishments and explaining any areas of concern if needed."

CareerBuilder.com asked hiring managers to share the most memorable or outrageous lies they came across on resumes. Examples include:

- 1) Claimed to be a member of the Kennedy family
- 2) Invented a school that did not exist
- 3) Submitted a resume with someone else's photo inserted into the document
- 4) Claimed to be a member of Mensa
- 5) Claimed to have worked for the hiring manager before, but never had
- 6) Claimed to be the CEO of a company when the candidate was an hourly employee
- 7) Listed military experience dating back to before he was born
- 8) Included samples of work, which the interviewer actually did
- 9) Claimed to be Hispanic when he was 100 percent Caucasian
- 10) Claimed to have been a professional baseball player

Haefner recommends the following tips to make your resume memorable for the right reasons:

Apply early. Nearly one-in-ten employers receive more than 50 applications for open positions on average and one-in-five said they are receiving more resumes than last year. Get your foot in the door before other candidates by signing up for job alerts that automatically email job listings to you as they become available.

Stand out from the crowd. Forty-three percent of hiring managers said they spend one minute or less looking at a resume when first reviewing applications; 14 percent spend less than 30 seconds. Make sure you are highlighting specific accomplishments, quantifying results whenever possible, to showcase how you put your skills into action and benefitted previous employers.

Use keywords. Hiring managers often use electronic scanners to rank candidates based on a keyword search of applications, so make sure to pepper keywords from the job posting into your resume as they apply to your experience. The terms employers search for most often are:

- problem-solving and decision-making skills (50 percent)
- oral and written communications (44 percent)
- customer service or retention (34 percent)
- performance and productivity improvement (32 percent)
- leadership (30 percent)
- technology (27 percent)
- team-building (26 percent)
- project management (20 percent)
- bilingual (14 percent)

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 3,169 hiring managers and human resource professionals (employed full-time; not self-employed; with at least significant involvement in hiring decisions); and 8,785 U.S. employees (employed full-time; not self-employed) ages 18 and over between May 22 and June 13, 2008, respectively (percentages for some questions are based on a subset U.S. employers or employees, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 3,169 and 8,785, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.74 percentage points and +/- 1.05 percentage points, respectively. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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