

Fifty-eight Percent of Employers Have Caught a Lie on a Resume, According to a New CareerBuilder Survey

Employers Share Most Memorable Lies They Discovered

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CHICAGO, Aug. 7, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- The pressure to stand out in a sea of applicants may tempt job seekers to be less than honest on their resumes, but is it worth the risk? Fifty-eight percent of hiring managers said they've caught a lie on a resume; one-third (33 percent) of these employers have seen an increase in resume embellishments post-recession.

Half of employers (51 percent) said that they would automatically dismiss a candidate if they caught a lie on his/her resume, while 40 percent said that it would depend on what the candidate lied about. Seven percent said they'd be willing to overlook a lie if they liked the candidate.

The nationwide survey, which was conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder from May 13 to June 6, 2014, included a representative sample of 2,188 hiring managers and human resource professionals across industries and company sizes.

"Trust is very important in professional relationships, and by lying on your resume, you breach that trust from the very outset," said Rosemary Haefner, vice president of human resources at CareerBuilder. "If you want to enhance your resume, it's better to focus on playing up tangible examples from your actual experience. Your resume doesn't necessarily have to be the perfect fit for an organization, but it needs to be relevant and accurate."

Most Common Resume Lies

There are certain fabrications job seekers may try to slip past employers more frequently than others. According to employers, the most common lies they catch on resumes relate to:

- Embellished skill set - 57 percent
- Embellished responsibilities - 55 percent
- Dates of employment - 42 percent
- Job title - 34 percent
- Academic degree - 33 percent
- Companies worked for - 26 percent
- Accolades/awards - 18 percent

Most Memorable Resume Lies

When asked about the most unusual lie they've ever caught on a resume, employers recalled:

- Applicant included job experience that was actually his father's. Both father and son had the same name (one was Sr., one was Jr.).
- Applicant claimed to be the assistant to the prime minister of a foreign country that doesn't have a prime minister.
- Applicant claimed to have been a high school basketball free throw champion. He admitted it was a lie in the interview.
- Applicant claimed to have been an Olympic medalist.
- Applicant claimed to have been a construction supervisor. The interviewer learned the bulk of his experience was in the completion of a doghouse some years prior.
- Applicant claimed to have 25 years of experience at age 32.
- Applicant claimed to have worked for 20 years as the babysitter of known celebrities such as Tom Cruise, Madonna, etc.
- Applicant listed three jobs over the past several years. Upon contacting the employers, the interviewer learned that the applicant had worked at one for two days, another for one day, and not at all for the third.
- Applicant applied to a position with a company who had just terminated him. He listed the company under previous employment and indicated on his resume that he had quit.
- Applicant applied twice for the same position and provided different work history on each application.

Industries Most Likely to Report Catching Resume Lies

While employers have caught lies on resumes submitted for jobs of all types, levels and industries, some report a higher rate of fibbing than others. The survey found that employers in the following industries catch resume lies more frequently than average:

- Financial Services – 73 percent
- Leisure and Hospitality – 71 percent
- Information Technology – 63 percent
- Health Care (More than 50 employees) – 63 percent
- Retail – 59 percent

The Review Process

Employers may be taking more time looking over individual resumes. Forty-two percent of employers said they spend more than two minutes reviewing each resume, up from 33 percent in December.

Additionally, most employers (86 percent) typically have more than one employee review candidates' resumes, with 65 percent saying two or three people go over each resume. Twenty-one percent say resumes are reviewed by four or more employees before a decision is made.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,188 hiring managers and human resource professionals ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between May 13 and June 6, 2014 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 2,188, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 2.10 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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