



Liar, liar, resume on fire

Employers are using internet forums to dig up digital dirt on candidates.

Ever been tempted to add that little bit extra to your resume? Thought a tweak here or there wouldn't hurt your job prospects? Gilded the lily of your CV?

Don't - it's dangerous. Getting caught can be catastrophic to your career, warns professional resume writer Jill Kelly.

Kelly, from Career Edge, says a recent media sensation that revealed the lobby group representing overseas trained doctors thought it was OK to pad out a resume was a frightening trend that other applicants shouldn't follow.



Telling lies can be catastrophic; Picture by Getty Images

"While defending sacked Gold Coast doctor Mohammed Asif Ali, who was found with stamps capable of forging medical documents, the Australian Doctors Trained Overseas Association said exaggerating resumes was common practice," she says.

"Many people agree with this, feeling that 'a little puffery' - as apart from outright lying - is not only acceptable in a resume but expected.

"In fact, a good resume today is quite the opposite. Today's resume should be an evidence-based document that makes no unsubstantiated claims and is based on statements of fact that qualifies and quantifies an individual's career and contributions.

"So when asked by my clients 'is a little lie or puffery ever acceptable?', my answer is always simply, 'No. And if you think you won't be caught out - think again'."

She says technology allows employers who do check career information to do so more thoroughly than ever before. High costs of hiring people are compelling employers to do extensive checks.

"Surveys such as CareerBuilders.com indicate more than 50 per cent of hiring managers surveyed have reported catching a lie on a resume, so employers are now going to greater extremes than ever to catch candidates out," she says.

"Career Directors International's latest Career Sector Megatrends Report stated that employers are now using Google, Facebook and other internet forums to dig up digital dirt on candidates. They also highlight credit checks, reference checks and even handwriting checks as techniques used to assess potential candidates.

"From this it's clear that candidates today need to do more to ensure their career and online identity is squeaky clean."

Lying in a resume could score you an interview, but getting caught out is, at the very least, embarrassing.

"Today's interviews are based on sophisticated behavioural interviewing techniques that demand a depth of detail not easily fudged.

"Nothing is more telling of a resume lie than a blank look as someone stumbles to put together feasible responses to what they wrote," she says.

"Even if you manage to get through the interview - what then? Most employers check references and some now use professional pre-screening companies that are experts in hounding out resume lies and inaccuracies.

"And of course, what if you do get the job? You've painted yourself as an expert in your field and now you are expected to deliver. It's highly likely that you'll struggle to deliver performance at the levels they will expect.

"Instead of having this great new job, you will have a failure leaving you rocked with poor morale and a terrible hole in your resume that you will now be again enticed to lie about to cover what happened. It's a vicious circle and a place you don't want to be."

Facts

Build yourself a resume that really sells you on your merits. A good resume writer will be able to structure your background to show achievements on any level.

Use your cover letter to address any gaps in experience you may have for the job through highlighting your transferable skills, and your capacity to adapt these skills to differing environments.

Build passion into your resume for why you want the role, as employers will often be swayed by an individual's energy and determination. More often than not, employers recognise that it is harder to find a person with the right qualities, than it is to teach job skills.

Finally, build a career based on integrity. Let your achievements speak for themselves and have confidence in yourself.

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