



YOUR CATALYST TO
SUCCESS

Unemployment...to lie or not to lie...

You have found the perfect position, however are faced with one slight problem – you have been unemployed for the last 10 months and now want to hide this fact on your resume.

So what would you do? Believe it or not jobseekers each and every day have to make choices about whether or not to lie on their resumes with one of the most common lies being the fabrication of credentials and educational qualifications. Some other “lie tactics” include:

- enhancing position titles to a status that was not the level in which you were hired;
- fabricating accountabilities and accomplishments;
- making up employers or positions that never existed;
- exaggerating your abilities and claiming expertise in areas you either know nothing about or have very little experience in;
- stretching dates to cover-up periods of unemployment.

Unfortunately stretching of the truth and blatant lying seems to be an easy thing to do when developing a resume with many people believing that their untruths will never be discovered. I caution people considering the idea to incorporate similar falsifications in their resume to take into account the possible consequences that this may have.

While a resume is not a legal document, a job application is, which is often required to be completed at the time you attend an interview. To cover themselves legally, employers may insert a clause on the job application form stating that the information the candidate provides is both true and accurate. Armed with an untruthful resume, when questioned or challenged at an interview about the information, you will be forced to tell another lie, and then perhaps another, and another, until finally you have caused a snowball effect that is now completely out of your control.

If an employer discovers false claims during an interview or when performing the reference checks, more than likely you will not be hired. However, if discovered at a later stage after you were able to secure employment (based on the foundations of your lies), chances are you will be terminated. Not only could this mean job loss, embarrassment among your peers, and diminished credibility in your industry, but could also seriously jeopardize any chances of securing another position in the short-term, particularly if you will be targeting companies within the industry, as negative news travels fast.

Before you find yourself tangled in the web of your own deception there are some strategies you can follow that will ensure you can position yourself as a contender for a role, in particular if you are faced with the situation of employment gaps. Following these initiatives should assist you in transforming a potential employment gap into a

learning experience, and provide you with marketable solutions for use in your resume without having to resort to fabricating information.

- ◆ Enhance your knowledge by taking a class or a professional development course. This may lead you to develop new skills that can open doors to a new and more challenging career path.
- ◆ Become a member of a professional association within your field and be proactive. This is another way of keeping current with industry trends, and a great opportunity to grow your network; meet and develop relationships with potential employers; and even generate/source some great job leads from other members of the group.
- ◆ Remain current with industry trends through reading publications, periodicals or trade journals, or even researching the internet.
- ◆ Provide advice in your line of expertise through consulting or projects/assignment work performed as part of your own business. You'll be able to develop strategic relationships with other companies, which could possibly lead to full-time employment, and/or allow you to continue developing your network of contacts.
- ◆ Ensure your skills remain up-to-date by offering your services within family/associates' businesses either on a voluntary or paid basis.
- ◆ Volunteer your knowledge/services; just because this is on a non-paid basis does not discredit any great results or contributions you may have made within an organization.
- ◆ Mentor or support someone else's knowledge growth. Facilitating or contributing to another person's journey of knowledge enhancement can be extremely rewarding.
- ◆ Raise your credibility and profile among your peers by writing articles for a publication in your industry – a great way to portray your expertise.

There are also various strategies you can use when developing your resume in order to draw attention away from potential gaps.

- To demonstrate at the outset what you can contribute to the position, use the combination or functional formats, which list your transferable skills, competencies and accomplishments relevant to the position at the forefront, rather than presenting your resume in a reverse chronological format. (The reverse chronological format is the most common format, which provides contact details and professional experience with the most recent at the forefront).
- Omit the months when providing dates, so that instead of stating 10/1997 – 5/2002, you would just write 1997 – 2002. This is not lying; you can be more specific about the dates in an interview situation, however don't dwell on this, but rather mention it casually if you are asked – then go on to portray your accomplishments within the position.

- Place education or professional development courses at the forefront as this will demonstrate your initiative and commitment to expanding your knowledge.
- Don't discredit consulting, assignments, or self-employment as professional experience, or voluntary work performed within the community or even for the family business. There is no need to disclose that this was unpaid, nor even the fact that you were related to the manager; only concentrate on your accountabilities and accomplishments.

Following and incorporating the above strategies ensures that the information you provide is both true and accurate, therefore alleviating the possibility of being caught out in a lie.

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