

Read on

There's never a good reason to lie on a résumé.

A good budget strategy is not painful.

Being prepared for the interview helps get job.

CAREER FOCUS

A little white lie on your résumé can cause big trouble

By Joy Buchanan
KRT WIRE SERVICE

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. People at the pinnacle of their careers still might not be safe from lies — big or small — that they told on a résumé. Many people, including top-level executives, embellish their résumés. Usually, the lies are added early in their careers, when people are least experienced and looking for a boost.

Executive-search firms and career consultants say the fiction tends to come back to bite people the higher up the corporate ladder they climb. If the employer doesn't catch the fibs, it's increasingly likely that news reporters, disgruntled employees or other job candidates will check a person's credentials and expose any inaccuracies.

Why do people continue to lie if it can get them in so

much trouble? They simply don't think that they'll be caught, said Ronald Simms, a professor of business ethics and leadership at the College of William and Mary's Mason School of Business. Over time, the lie snowballs as the person lies again to cover up the original fabrication.

"I've seen people who forgot what they put on their résumés. Some people actually convince themselves that they earned degrees they lied about before," he said.

Many companies automatically do background checks. Some hire outside security firms to confirm the claims that people print on their résumés.

"If the checks aren't done, then that's a mistake," said Peter Felix, president of the Association of Executive Search Consultants in New York City. "You can't afford

to take the risk with officer-level positions in public companies."

Despite that, some companies estimate that half of all résumés have significant falsehoods on them, though there are no widely used statistics about how much embellishment goes on.

"There has probably been more résumé deception in the last 10 years than I would dare imagine," Felix said. "But I don't think it's going to change."

Most experts say young people trying to make themselves stand out in an extremely competitive job market are most likely to lie on their résumés. The trouble is those lies follow them forever, and they're harder to live down later.

Education is probably the No. 1 thing that people embellish because it's important early in a person's career.

Former Notre Dame football coach George O'Leary was forced to resign in 2001 — six days after he got the job — after it was learned that he invented a university and said he earned a master's degree there.

Ken Lonchar, former chief financial officer of Veritas Software (which merged with Symantec Corp. in 2004) lied about earning an MBA from Stanford University in California. He resigned in 2002.

Aside from imaginary colleges and degrees, education credentials are very easy to check. That includes grade-point averages, which many people tend to round up. Career consultants say that's a mistake.

"Everything that's on the résumé should be true," said Vivian David, career counseling director at Hampton University. "You should be able to defend what's on it."

Instead of bumping up the GPA, David said, include detailed descriptions of your coursework and projects that you completed.

People fudge employment dates to hide a short stint at a job or even jail time. It's deceitful to put on your résumé that you worked at a job from 2005 to 2006 if you were there from December 2005 to January 2006. If there are any gaps in employment, you'll have to explain them, either in a cover letter or an interview, but don't try to hide it on your résumé.

Job seekers also lie about duties, titles and licenses. "If you were responsible for taking out the trash, you were not 'manager of garbage disposal,'" David said. The title that you put on the résumé should be the same title on file with your employer's human resources department.

Some people say lying is

rampant, but others say they think it's rare. Dennis Barden, a consultant for Chicago search firm Witt Kieffer, said that he didn't think many people lied on their résumés but that when they did, it can be catastrophic.

"When these people fall, they fall hard," Barden said. "One of the reasons they fall so hard is because they fall so far."

Barden, who recently completed a search for the vice president of development at William and Mary, said it's unfortunate that good people were sabotaged by their own fibs. "A person doesn't get that much rope when it comes to this," he said.

"While I don't believe zero-tolerance policies are always a sensible way to make judgments, it doesn't take very much to be disqualified from a search or job consideration."

With a good game plan, test taking doesn't have to be stressful

By Michaela Siegrist
ARGUS REPORTER

With mid-terms completed, most students are already beginning to feel the pressure of finals. Phyllis N. Smith of the University Counseling center helps alleviate some of that stress. "Do you get to class on time? Have your book? Try to study?" asks Smith of the students looking for help with test-taking skills.

If the answer is "yes" to all of the above questions, Smith will gladly share her three most valuable secrets. "The first key in successful test-taking is review time," Smith said. Review is essential in letting information settle in. There are three specific times to review Smith said, "daily, weekly and

monthly." Daily involves pre- and post-class review. Reviewing just-learned information helps students retain information more easily. Smith advises students to do a weekly review as well. "One hour per subject, every week," she said. A helpful tool in weekly review is creating questions and answers to pertinent information about the subject.

As for monthly reviews, these should be done before big tests, especially mid-terms and finals. This should provide students with a complete, easy to apply, understanding of all of the material. One key piece of advice Smith added is, "Don't do a 10-hour marathon for studying for tests."

Freshman Whitney Maddox agrees. "Don't wait till the last minute to study,"

she said. "This will hurt you more than help you."

Smith said correct studying is another important point. There are three basic steps in effective studying: pre-study, post-study and the style of studying. Smith said she asks students to prepare before they actually sit down to study. Create a good, quiet environment, and ask yourself if you have everything you need to begin studying, meaning books, computer, paper, flashcards, etc. During the actual study session, use all available material to create success. Take good notes in class, use the book as a guide, especially if it uses Internet tools, and any old tests, quizzes and paper that might be helpful to know for the test.

Sophomore Lashonda Harris said "when you study, be comfortable with the materials."

The last step in effective test-taking occurs during the actual test. Smith advised the following: Be on time. This assures that you don't miss anything. How awful would it be to find out five minutes after the test is about to end that it was open notes? Secondly, scan the test before you do anything. Answer the easiest questions first. Last but not least, write so the instructor can actually read what you've written.

"By doing these steps it will ease your mind, increase your knowledge and make you much more prepared to take the big test," Smith said.

Take steps now to learn how to overcome procrastination

By Asheleigh Neal and
Ivan Jones
ARGUS REPORTERS

How do you tackle procrastination? Step by step. This is the advice that Todd Davis, a lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, gives students in his Mass Media Management class.

"It all about the deadlines," Davis said. "What is most impor-

tant is to be done first. 'WHAT'S DUE, DO FIRST.' Make a to-do list, then prioritize the to-do list."

Kiayana Hamilton, a senior mass communication major, admits that she's a big procrastinator. "I wait to the last minute," she said. "The reason why I do this is because I have anxiety about doing something, and that's why I wait so late to do things."

With final exams and commencement less than a month

away, it is especially important for students to pace themselves and avoid putting off things to the last minute. Cramming and other such behaviors can lead to new problems, such as sleep deprivation. It's not uncommon to either lose sleep or sleep restlessly when outstanding tasks are left undone.

And lack of sleep, of course, can lead to difficulties absorbing information for classes, as well as insomnia and other sleep abnor-

malities. Cameron Davis, a junior marketing major, said he often suffered from sleep deprivation until he reduced his class load. Instead of taking 18 semester hours, he said he dropped down to 12. Plus, Davis said he works part-time to cover car payments and rent. The job plus full class load proved more than he could handle.

Here are a few ways that students can tackle the problem of procrastination and, hopefully,

eliminate associated sleep problems:

1. Breakdown tasks into multiple, smaller and more manageable tasks.
2. Finish one task at a time — start with one project and finish it completely, before starting another.
3. Set aside a specific period of time to work on the task, so that you will not be distracted or interrupted. Repeated interruptions can easily cause you to lose focus.

School offers help with résumés

By Kiayana Hamilton
ARGUS REPORTER

Is your résumé ready to win? If not, you need to see Arthur Hardin, coordinator of community services in the Office of Career Services.

Hardin heads up project G.I.V.E (Getting Involved through Volunteer Experiences). This project allows students who do not have work experience, the opportunity to volunteer and gain on-the-job knowledge. Hardin discussed some of the crucial mistakes students make when preparing their résumés.

1. Not being specific enough about their objective. Don't write, "I need a job in the objective statement area," said Hardin. This is a sure way to loose the attention of perspective employers.

2. Failing to attach a cover letter.

3. Not proofreading. Don't let spelling errors cost you a job. "Students have their very own professional résumé service right here on campus; it's called Career Services," Hardin said.

4. Too many pages. Keep

your résumé to one page.

5. Inappropriate e-mail address. Open a new account or use your college address.

6. Music on voicemail. Show that you are mature and that getting the job is most important.

7. Not being specific about education background. If you have a 3.0 grade-point average or better, let it be seen; likewise, if you have a 3.0 in your major courses, let that be seen. Also if you haven't graduated, put your anticipated graduation date. Don't forget to list school organizations that emphasize leadership skills.

8. Use action words. You want to give the impression that you're professional, educated and well-rounded. Don't go overboard, but use words such as responsible for, aided, contributed, documented, edited, etc.

"Come and see us as a freshman, so we can get to know you," Hardin said. Knowing you needs and goals early-on is the only way you can really benefit from the service.

Developing a spending plan helps you see where you money goes

By Argus reporter Travis Stinson
and Andrea Coombes of
MarketWatch (KRT)

Brandon Roland knows what it means to live within a budget. A 21-year-old junior from Charlotte, Roland lives off-campus, does his grocery shopping, prepares his meals and washes his clothes. And, more often than not, he buys no-name brand goods when he goes to the grocery store, because they cost less than brand-name items.

Living within a budget is not easy, but he does it. After all, Roland said, you never know when money will run short.

Budget. Was there ever a word less likely to incite excitement, even among those eager to get their personal

finances in order? We all know we should tally our expenses for a few months to plug the holes down which our hard-earned loot is disappearing, but planners say budgeting is a common area of financial failure.

Deprivation — having to resist that spur-of-the-moment handbag or electronic-gadget purchase — doesn't motivate consumers to stick to their budget homework.

To top it off, tallying expenses is boring, said Jane Bryant Quinn, a columnist with *Newsweek* magazine, and author of *Smart and Simple Financial Strategies for Busy People*.

Consumers "start with a big bang and then they don't keep it up," she said.

While we all know one person who religiously jots down every expendi-

ture, most people are unsuccessful at daily financial record-keeping. To ease the pain, avoid the word "budget," and use "spending plan" instead. That phrase creates a different attitude, said James Gottfurcht, a clinical psychologist and president of Psychology of Money Consultants, a Los Angeles firm that counsels individuals on financial issues. "I'm allowed to spend. I'm entitled to spend."

Another idea Gottfurcht employs with clients: Break the budget process into small bites. "Start by just keeping track of your credit card" expenses, he said, organizing them into different categories such as auto, books, restaurants. After finishing that task, tackle expenses that flow through your checking account.

Competition for jobs is fierce, be prepared for interview

By Kiayana Hamilton
ARGUS REPORTER

Your suit fits just right, your hair is one color rather than five, your nails trimmed, tattoos hidden and clothes crisp and clean. Now you're ready to interview and get that job.

But do you know what to say to win that desired position. Here are a few tips from Arthur Hardin.

1. Do some research on the company. Be knowledgeable about the company, as well as the position you're applying for. The more you know, the more confidence you'll exude.

2. Demonstrate confidence. For entry-level positions, in particular, a show of confidence in your ability to contribute to the company is critical.

3. Show the interviewer that you can and will do the job.

4. Be sure to have at least five to six questions ready for your interview. The interviewer probably will answer three or four through the course of the interview.

5. When asked about salary, let it be known that you know what the industry is paying, but try to highlight that your main objective is the position you are interviewing for.

6. At the end of the interview be sure to thank the interviewer for his or her time, express interest and enthusiasm, and shake hands.

Hardin said the biggest problem students have from HBCUs is their lack of confidence in the school from which they've graduated.

"Students from HBCUs do not need to feel less prepared than someone who graduated from Chapel Hill," he said.