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Mar. 22, 2023



By Donna Svei, Fast Company (TNS)

Have you ever been tempted to stretch the truth on your résumé? Surveys show that up to 80% of people have lied on their résumés. But I have good news: You don't have to do that to look impressive.

I was a retained search consultant for more than 25 years and have held C-level corporate executive positions. These days, I write executive and board résumés and I

have found that there are many techniques applicants can use to help make their

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Many design executives engage me to write their résumés. They recognize reader-centric design when they see it. And they don't confuse narrative résumés with visual creative portfolios. They know that narratives and visuals have different design requirements.

2. Less hyperbole, more facts

Next, check your résumé's headline and branding statement. I have found that when job seekers don't understand their value, they describe themselves with overused, hyperbolic words. Recruiters immediately recognize these types of claims and aren't impressed.

Some hyperbolic descriptor nouns include "disruptor," "expert," "guru," "thought leader," and "visionary." Check the definitions of those words. If you don't match up, delete them from your résumé. Then, invest in better understanding your value. Trust me: It's there, waiting to be discovered.

Beyond nouns, be wary of exaggerated adjectives. Recruiters often aren't impressed by adjectives because they're typically opinions, not facts. Some hyperbolic adjectives include "distinguished," "outstanding," and "unique."

These lists aren't comprehensive. However, these examples demonstrate the types of words that can seem impressive to job seekers but don't pass recruiters' scrutiny. Recruiters' private reactions are often, "Show me, don't tell me." If any of your descriptors might make a recruiter think that, delete them.

3. Persuasively frame your experience

Third, look at your experience and frame it to persuade your target employers to talk with you. Applicants can do this by highlighting the elements of your experience

that interest potential employers and delete irrelevant (or potentially negative)

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clutter.

You should never lie on your résumé. To make sure you stay true to yourself, ask yourself the following: “Would I be comfortable posting this résumé on LinkedIn?” “How would my colleagues react if they read this on LinkedIn?” “Would I be confident discussing this information in an interview?”

4. Show off who you've worked with

Instead of being tempted to resort to hyperbole and lies, share your accomplishments and their impact.

One technique I like to use on résumés is something I call “affiliative branding.” An early-career client I once worked with wanted a specific job but couldn't land an interview. We analyzed the posting and saw that the job involved working with well-known artists. My client had that impressive experience but hadn't mentioned it in their résumé. We wrote a bullet that named a few of the top artists they had worked for (affiliative branding) and described my client's wins. They got the job three weeks later.

5. Eliminate or update outdated information

I once worked with a client who was a top executive in a startup that was acquired by a well-known company—a successful exit. But then the acquirer failed months later in the dot-com crash. We thought that linking my client to that company's almost-forgotten name would generate age bias, so we eliminated it and consolidated their experience from that point back.

In another case, a client pioneered a billion-dollar product category for their company. The first product became a household name, but newer products have

followed it. We featured the product in an earlier version of my client's résumé. In the

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Donna Over writes executive and board resumes. She is a frequent writer and speaker on résumé and LinkedIn topics. Previously, she was a retained search consultant for 25-plus years and a C-level corporate executive.

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