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## Resume myths that can cost you the job

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**N**avigating the unwritten rules of resumes can seem like a daunting task. No one wants to break a rule and lose out on a great job. But who made these rules to begin with? Why are they so pervasive? Are they even relevant anymore?

In many cases the answer is no. These rules aren't rules; they're outdated myths. Read on to learn what you should really do with your resume.

► **It's all about you:** Everyone wants a resume that shows off their skills and experience. Unfortunately, many "job seekers rush off and immediately list all of the wonderful things they have done, many of which may fail to focus on critical aspects of what employers are looking for," says author and business executive Bill Holland.

"Successful job seekers first find out what that is and describe their background in those terms,"

Holland explains. "That catches the eye of the hiring manager and improves their chances of getting to the next level."

► **It can only be one length:** Your resume absolutely can't be longer than one page. No wait, it's one page for every five years of experience. Or was it 10 years?

Forget all of that. Instead, focus including the most important information as clearly and concisely as possible.

"When I hire for an entry-level position, I expect to see one-page resumes because the candidates shouldn't have very much experience, so in this case, the myth is absolutely true. When I'm hiring for a mid-level position, though, it's common and acceptable to see two-page resumes," says FlexJobs founder and CEO Sara Sutton Fell.

"The key is that all of the information needs to be relevant to the job for which you're applying," she explains. "[T]he last thing I want to do is try to sort through all of that info to find what's relevant to me."

► **It can't contain any gaps in employment:** This may have been true before the Great Recession, but it's definitely a myth now, says career consultant Tiffani Murray.

"Gaps between employment are much more common these days than 20 years ago," she explains. "Employers and recruiters almost expect to see gaps on resumes, particularly in younger applicants. Don't let a block of unemployed time on your resume deter you from applying for a job that is right for you."

► **It's a one-size-fits-all document:** When you're applying to different jobs and different employers, you need different resumes to fit each one.

"Job seekers in the 2014 workforce are encouraged to target their resumes based on their career fields, job duties and relevant keywords within a job description," says Debra Ann Matthews, a professional resume writer and job coach.

► **It should only include paid experience:** If you're young and inexperienced or you've been out of work for a while, showcasing relevant coursework, volunteer experience and community participation can help beef up your resume. Doing so can demonstrate valuable skills, passion and drive.

Another benefit, says career coach Torski Dobson-Arnold, is showing a fit with company culture. Many companies support charities and community organizations "and knowing that an applicant has that same type of philosophy shows a match between the company culture and the applicant's beliefs to a certain degree," she explains. "If you are able to show value in your volunteer experience and/or show value from fundraising efforts, then that's even better to have on your resume."

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