

Correct Mistakes: Because it might matter someday

Written by By Julie Desmond
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In 1847, archaeologists uncovered a King's library of more than 23,000 clay tablets dating to about 707BC, containing information on everything from business deals to reports from border patrols. On one of these tablets was written, "The Earth is degenerating today. Bribery and corruption abound. Children no longer obey their parents... It is evident that the end of the world is fast approaching."

Almost three thousand years later, that world hasn't changed, corruption still abounds, but the world hasn't ended, either. Everyone makes mistakes; everyone has moments of less than stellar judgment.

When a mistake comes to light, it is ethical to ask, how did that happen? And what happens next? Let's ask Scott Thompson, decidedly former Yahoo! CEO, who was fired for padding the education section of his resume.

How did it happen? Thompson had to have known from the day he donned his graduation cap and gown that his degree was in Accounting. Maybe (I'm speculating) he added the Computer Science degree to his application in order to get his foot in a door early on in his career. Maybe he had enough credits in Computer Science that he felt it was reasonable to list this on his resume.

Maybe it happened a long time ago.

Maybe, as Thompson's career progressed, he just left the extra degree on there, or forgot about it. Apparently, he had the knowledge and skills to succeed in the jobs he took on, regardless of the degree. Maybe someone advised him to add the extra degree to add credibility to his portfolio. Maybe, as he became more prominent in the business world, quietly removing that extra line from his bio would have seemed too embarrassing.

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What Thompson learned was, we all make innocent mistakes, and we all get caught. Sooner or later, the truth inevitably leaks out. According to a Findlaw.com survey, 25 percent of job applicants pad their resumes with extras: extra degrees, extra responsibilities, extra qualifications or titles. 75 percent of those who do will go on to lose a job because of it.

Whether a person is just starting a career or is balancing high on the corporate ladder, the key is to correct mistakes when you discover them. Remember, Decca Records rejected signing The Beatles in 1962 because, "Guitar groups are on the way out." Ten years later, how they must have wished they could reverse that decision.

Take a lesson from Thompson and decide that now is a good time to reverse bad decisions and freshen up your facts. Revise your resume and online profile. A good recruiter can poke holes in questionable titles, degrees and qualifications. Send your info to me if you want an objective fact checker to look it over. Do it today, because it just might matter, someday.

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