

### Lionel Updates His Resume

After seven years of work and on the eve of his twenty-ninth birthday Lionel found himself being declared, in the company's terms, redundant: His services were simply no longer needed, he was being sent home early, laid off, fired. Ever the optimist, Lionel took his unemployment as a blessing and used this now--extra time to update his dust-collecting resume, which had been dormant--short of an address change here and a new phone number there--for, well, the previous seven years.

Lionel began by adding his date of departure, updating his accomplishments, changing his list of hobbies. He tried a variety of formats, moving from chronological to topical and back again. Lionel began spending so much of his time updating his resume, in fact, that the majority of his life revolved around simply keeping his resume up-to-date.

Eventually he began writing resumes for jobs that he had no intention of pursuing, even exaggerating his experiences to fulfill job requirements—for example, he nicknamed his 1991 Chevy Cavalier "Big Rigs," complete with a custom back-windshield decal, and then made reference to his excursions "trucking" throughout the greater metro area. On his desktop computer he had custom resume templates saved in different styles for different opportunities—a "contemporary" design for office jobs, or a "loud" design in response to a shortage of party planners. He even bought an air-tight cabinet to host a variety of heavy paper stock, all shades from eggshell to seashell and, for special occasions, a supply of mauve taupe.

Come New Year's Eve Lionel made a resolution—and kept it, for the first time ever—to spend part of every day scanning the local newspaper's classified ads and writing at least two new resumes in response. Though he never formally applied for the positions, he had resumes for careers ranging from Medieval Studies Specialist to pilot and head research scientist. Considering himself a person of upstanding moral values he never lied—as far as he was concerned—but instead made use of a series of rhetorical techniques to make himself sound more impressive than he perhaps actually was. For example, he declared himself a "Roads Scholar" [sic] after reading an encyclopedia entry on asphalt, and on several occasions attempted sarcasm to mask disqualifying confessions, using phrases like "I'm totally unqualified for this position—so why would I even apply?"

Lionel, in the world he had created for himself on paper, had the attitude and experience necessary to complete any task with both gusto and panache or—if the position called for it—with an unmatched level of docility. He was an everyman and a leader, a person to bring home to mother on his days off from being a pirate. And yet, as he was very soon to discover and despite what many of his resumes declared, he was a terrible bore at parties.