

First Friday Fraud Facts+

January 2, 2015



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The Idaho State Controller's Office distributes this newsletter as a cost-effective method of increasing awareness about ways to detect and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse in government.

Welcome to First Friday Fraud Facts+ (F4+). This edition will discuss resume fraud and ways to catch it.

Resume Fraud

Resume Fraud is becoming more and more common, due to the downturn in the economy and as job seekers are competing for a limited number of jobs. According to Smart Recruiters, two out of three employers have encountered an applicant lying on their resume⁴.

10 Resume Lies and Ways to Catch Them¹

1. Stretching Dates of Employment—Request months as well as years on applications, and confirm those dates with previous employers.
2. Inflating Past Accomplishments and Skills—Require applicants to take a skills test as part of the application process.
3. Enhancing Job Titles and Responsibilities—Confirm the positions held and responsibilities of the applicant with previous employers.
4. Education Exaggeration and Fabricating Degrees—Ask applicants to have their official transcripts sent.
5. Unexplained Gaps and Periods of Self Employment—Have applicant explain what happened during this period of time.
6. Omitting Past Employment—Research candidate's employment history.
7. Faking Credentials—Contact crediting agency and ask if they will confirm the candidate has received this credential.



8. Fabricating Reasons for Leaving Previous Job—Contact previous employer and confirm the story, or ask if the candidate is considered for rehire.
9. Providing Fraudulent References—Do a search on the references to confirm information.
10. Misrepresenting Military Record—Hire conditionally upon verification of military service because requests for military service are time consuming.

Employers should do their due diligence throughout the interview process to find fraudulent activity. Even if these measures seem time consuming, the company can save time and money in the long run².

The internet is an important resource during the hiring process. A simple search can confirm or expose a candidate's credentials. Another important way to filter out candidates is to take time to get to know the people you will hire. The more time spent with someone, the better picture of their character you will obtain; if something looks/sounds too good to be true, be sure to investigate.

FRAUD CASE

This month's fraud case is one that involves a high level of forgery to get accepted into a prestigious law pupillage in London.

Soma was admitted to a British law firm's training program based on the impressive merits written in her resume. Soma stated that she graduated from Georgetown Law School with honors, had been a prosecutor for the district attorney of Manhattan, and was a staff lawyer for the Legal Aid Society. Soma's resume was accompanied with great reference letters.

The law firm didn't notice any of the lies on Soma's resume and awarded her a spot in the program. Soma kept putting off beginning the program, because in order to start, a series of tests had to be passed, in which she failed multiple times. Instead of telling the firm she failed, Soma said she couldn't begin due to injuries suffered in a car accident, and eventually appealed to have the tests waived.

Over the course of the next 6 months, Soma was assigned to handle minor cases. The firm was reluctant to assign anything more challenging because what they saw from her work and what was presented in her resume did not seem to match. The firm continued to overlook that she could have lied on her resume, that is until a clerk at the law firm noticed a document stating Soma was 29, when in fact she was in her late 40s.

The firm began examining her documents, more seriously realized Soma was lying about more than her age. It was discovered, she was never a prosecutor for the district attorney, but was a paralegal. Soma was also never a staff lawyer for the Legal Aid Society, but volunteered there twice a week. Finally, they discovered she did graduate from Georgetown Law, but did so without receiving honors.

Instead of owning up to the fact she lied, she created a fake diploma and wrote false reference letters confirming her version of the resume. When the firm contacted these references, they denied ever writing the letters.

Soma was arrested and the case is still ongoing³.

¹ Resume Fraud the top 10 lies <http://www.marquetinternational.com/pdf/Resume%20Fraud-Top%20Ten%20Lies.pdf> accessed on February 12, 2014

² Resume Fraud: Little white lies aren't so little anymore <http://lansingbusinessnews.com/law-at-work/1325-resume-fraud-little-white-lies-arent-so-little-anymore.html> accessed on February 12, 2014

³ Falling Far Short of the Whole Truth http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/14/nyregion/falling-far-short-of-the-whole-truth.html?ref=world&_r=0 accessed on February 13, 2014

⁴ The top 5 ways to fight resume fraud <http://www.smartrecruiters.com/blog/top-5-ways-to-fight-resume-fraud/> accessed on February 13, 2014

