

NEWS

Information & Insights from **RICK JOHNSON Private Investigators**
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Resume For Fraud

Tricks of the Trade

A recent survey cited in **CFO Magazine** reported that 17% of men and 7% of women admitted to lying on resumes to secure jobs paying up to \$100,000. In fact, the higher the pay rate, the more likely it is that applicants will lie, to some degree, to obtain a job.

There are three primary forms of resume abuse:



Often called Shading or Reaching, This tactic can be both innocuous and significant, but it always involves **stretching the truth**.

- *An intern at a television station during college, who often accompanied crews on reporting assignments, prepares a resume line identifying himself as an assistant field producer.*

This is an innocuous stretch, because the title is likely to be questioned by any news executive with slightly more experience than the applicant.

Not so innocuous is *The Wall Street Journal's* exposure of Jeffrey Papows, the President of Lotus, a division of IBM, who, among other things, translated a U.S. Marine Air

This is particularly true **where false references** are established and presented as part of the fraudulent package or where a **false identity** or key elements of a false identity, such as a **date of birth** or **Social Security Number** are presented.

Whether the fabrications amount to a criminal offence may depend in part on the intent of the fabricator and the consequences.

- *Someone who lies in order to obtain a position from which a crime can be perpetrated; e.g., a felon who lies in order to obtain an armored truck job.*
- *Someone who lies in order to obtain a position that places others in physical danger; e.g., a medical school dropout posing as a nurse.*

Resume For Fraud

Self Defense the Only Defense

The only real defense against resume liars is a comprehensive pre-employment screening process. The more responsible the job, the more rigorous the screening process must be.

- **Arrest and Criminal Court Records** are important, but so are **Civil Court Records** that may reveal a pattern of conduct that runs counter to the responsibilities of the job.

At issue are such civil matters as



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- **Broad knowledge of criminal & civil law, insurance regulations, and common sense acquired through 25 years of investigative experience.**
- **One of the few investigative firms in Colorado to carry \$1 million in liability insurance.**
- **More than 22,000 civil and criminal cases investigated.**
- **Member:**
 - **World Association of Detectives**
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Traffic Controller position into his being an F-4 Phantom Pilot.

Omissions

This is a critical problem that may or may not be detected as easily as mere tuning problems.

It usually is indicated by significant gaps... a resume that jumps from the end of one job in, say, **March, 1997**, to the start of another in **June, 1999**. Such gaps always demand an explanation.

But it also may be the result of material misrepresentations. A Vermont Supreme Court case decided in **March, 2001** is on point.

A man applied for a job with the **Community College of Vermont**. His resume constituted a partial disclosure of a past work history and references in order to limit an inquiry into his past.

What he was hiding was a Federal conviction for bank fraud.

When the subterfuge was discovered and he was fired, the man filed an action under Title VII for employment discrimination, The Vermont decision rejected the claim, clearly stating that "*a misrepresentation... can be a basis for rescission of an employment contract.*"

Fraud

Outright fraud, as opposed to tuning or omissions, can take on many forms. Principally, it can include significant embellishments, material omissions, and other shortcomings such that the totality rises to a critical level.

lawsuits for money, bankruptcies, child support, restraining orders, breach of contract, etc.

- A key to the validity of civil and criminal records checks is a full and complete personal history.

We have national resources that can identify a national address history going back almost 20 years that then may be used for civil and criminal records checks well beyond the limits of a resume.

- **References** other than those presented by the applicant.

No applicant for a job is likely to identify coworkers or managers who might be critical. The coworkers who aren't listed can be a good source. Neighbors also shouldn't be overlooked.

- **Educational Credentials** seem to be fudged most often and will need critical attention.

Older educational credentials may be stored on microfiche or even as deteriorating paper records offsite. Some schools can't verify attendance or graduation without specific dates to search, course of study, even graduation date.

This identifies a **critical shortcoming** of resumes and of pre-employment screening in general... a serious lack of detailed information and the **failure to ask for it**, including explanations of gaps that suggest missing information.

Hiring a network administrator who turns out to have "enhanced" his credentials and who needs extra training on the job costs time and money... but hiring a driver with a history of drunk driving can mean the most dire consequences.

Nobody wants the equivalent of an air traffic controller flying a jet plane. Farfetched? Of course, but then nobody thought that people

Network

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- **National Council of Investigation and Security Services**
- **California Association of Legal Investigators**
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with phony credentials would be working in airport security after 9-11, either.

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