Employers: Check Applicants' Résumés

In a tight job market and in the age of internet-based "diploma mills" résumé fraud is an increasing concern among employers. On the other hand, with today's internet-enabled easy and cost-effective access to information, employers can easily verify résumé facts with a few clicks of the mouse.

It is bewildering why candidates continue to misrepresent the facts on résumés, knowing that employers will check and that any misrepresentation, lie or fraud on an application or résumé is grounds for immediate dismissal – no matter how long an employee has been with an employer or how far up the organizational chart the employee has climbed. The following examples show how seriously résumé fraud is taken.

David J. Edmondson, Radio Shack CEO, resigned under pressure after it was learned that nearly a decade before, he had claimed on his résumé that he held two degrees from a Bible college. The company learned that the school had no record of Edmondson graduating.

Notre Dame football coach George O'Leary was forced to resign just five days after stepping into the coach position after it was revealed that he lied about his academic and athletic achievements.

NASA press liaison George Deutsch resigned after it was found that he falsely claimed he graduated from Texas A&M.

Such is the growing concern of résumé fraud within employers' ranks that the Washington State legislature is debating a bill that would create civil and criminal penalties for lying on résumés or failing to disclose that a degrees if from an unaccredited institution. According to news reports, heightened awareness or résumé fraud stems from high-profile examples (such as those mentioned above), enhanced fact-checking capabilities (mostly via the Internet), and the proliferation of "diploma mills" (which offer diplomas from non-accredited universities based on a person's present knowledge or personal experience).