

CV Fibbers

One quarter of employers in the UK withdrew at least one job offer in the last year after discovering someone had lied or otherwise misrepresented their application. And 23 per cent of companies said they had dismissed someone who was already in post for the same offence, according to the annual survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). These figures would appear to show that the ousting of CV fibbers is happening on a regular basis in companies up and down the land.

As a major employer, Norwich Union has to have a very rigorous procedure on checking candidates. Paul Awcock, head of recruitment at Norwich Union, said: "Fabricated CVs do not have a major impact on our business as we have rigorous assessment processes in place followed by referencing and document checking. Obviously there is sometimes embellishment on CVs when people 'sell' themselves but this is fully tested through interviews and selection tools, where evidence of a candidate's experience and capability is explored. However very occasionally a case comes to light - examples include a candidate for a solicitor role who claimed to have a law degree and didn't!"

The Risk Advisory Group, an employee screening service, surveyed more than 3,700 CVs last year and found one in five contained significant lies, on topics such as court judgements and qualifications.

One company director retold how "many moons ago I had a salesman who worked for me and proved to have about four different personalities and his CV was a complete pack of lies. He said he had travelled extensively in South Africa and didn't prove to even hold a UK passport. His list of hobbies included being a qualified helicopter pilot but he had an unbelievable fear of heights and had never flown. He didn't last long because it came out in the wash and he was an absolute disaster. He had a brilliant, huge personality - or at least one of them was - the Jekyll side came out when he was fired and he tried to smash the office up."

Rebecca Clarke, recruitment adviser at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, said: "A CV is not the best place for modesty." But lies or deliberate distortions could leave you out of a job, and limit your chances of getting a new one. Employers need to be careful. A strong economy and low unemployment means many employers are struggling to find applicants.

Survey data suggests that 23% of companies rarely if ever take up references, 20% rarely check absenteeism records, 24% never check academic qualifications; and only 6% check the applicant's most recent employment history.

Questions

1. Explain what is meant by the term adverse selection.
2. Explain why in the labour market an adverse selection can occur.
3. Why might some companies use probationary periods of employment?