

Headhunters' MD equates CV fibbing to theft

As the image of SA's public sector continues to take a beating, amid accusations of large-scale CV embroidering on the part of prominent leaders, one of South Africa's top search firms has issued a warning to private sector executive level candidates about CV honesty.



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"There has been a notable decrease in the instances of candidates taking creative licence with their CVs, due to increased and much improved vetting," said Debbie Goodman-Bhyat, MD of Jack Hammer Executive Headhunters.

She said that employers in the private sector take their investment in top leadership positions very seriously, and that claims on CVs are stringently checked across a range of areas.

"We absolutely check all qualifications and other claims made by candidates on their CVs. Doing so is an important part of Headhunters' service to clients who do not have the resources and expertise in-house to do the thorough verification process required.

Checking academic transcripts

"Companies rightly insist on a comprehensive vetting of qualifications prior to extending an offer to candidates. And it is important to note that this takes place irrespective of candidates' seniority. In addition to checking on qualifications, we also go further, by checking the academic transcripts of candidates where relevant."

Also of major importance, is the profile of the institution at which a degree was earned.

"A Master's or Doctorate from a reputable institution is not equivalent to a Master's or Doctorate from an online 'pay for your paper' institution," noted Goodman-Bhyat.

She said that in the past decade, increased vetting, coupled with improved tools and technology for detecting false claims, have exposed the rife nature of fraudulent academic and other false career accolades.

A reputation in tatters

"Whether these claims relate to non-existent institutions or non-existent qualifications from reputable institutions, fraud is picked up as a matter of course. So although their public sector counterparts appear not to be held to full account for academic deception, private sector candidates are likely to leave with a reputation in tatters if they make false claims."

Goodman-Bhyat said it was always unfortunate to discover that professionals, sometimes in very high-profile roles, had attempted to mislead regarding their qualifications or other employment details. But it is essential in terms of standards of ethics and integrity that there was full transparency with the stakeholders regarding the discovery of fraudulent information.

"It is quite simple - claiming qualifications or titles that you are not rightfully able to claim, can be equated to theft. You are appropriating something that is not due to you, and you are seeking personal and financial benefit from this unrightfully appropriated qualities.

"Being discovered - as you are very likely to be - will land you at a professional point of almost no return, and could take a lifetime to rectify. Play it open and honest, and build your career the tough but sustainable way."

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