

Examining practical HR issues business owners and managers encounter every day

The Whole Truth and Nothing But the Truth

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Truth Telling Tips :

- If your employees drive company vehicles or drive routinely for your organization, have you checked their driving record? Do you require a valid copy of their driver's license?

- If your employees are working with your money in the financial side of your business -- payroll, accounts payable

RadioShack Flak

I was driving in my car Friday evening, listening to news on NPR and learned that RadioShack is closing 400-700 stores due to its poor 2005 financial results. And oh, by the way, their CEO is being investigated for falsifying his resume.

And the news stopped there. So I went to the web and "googled" the CEO's name and all the words I could think of to find more information on this interesting bit of news. I only found one site with a sentence or two on the CEO's resume issue.

In the 4 days since then I have learned that the CEO

accounts payable, accounting, cash, etc. -- do you check their financial background? Do you check their criminal background for fraud or embezzlement?

- If your employees are serving a sensitive population, do you follow state guidelines on background checks, sexual offenses, violent acts, etc.?
- If a candidate tells you they are skilled in performing XYZ job function, do you ask them to describe or show you how they accomplish that function?
- Have you ever hired someone who claimed to have skills and wondered how the skills magically disappeared between ..

resigned -- but only when RadioShack was forced to do an investigation to seek out the truth. This time I heard the news on ABC TV. I googled again, and with no general response, I turned to ABC for a little more information.

So, in 1994, the not-yet CEO decided to add two college degrees to his resume. Now, what harm could that really bring -- obviously he proved himself strong enough in 11 years to get promoted to CEO in May of 2005. And I can't imagine that the 2005 4th quarter's 62% decline in RadioShack's net income could be blamed on two imaginary degrees after 7 months as CEO.

But why isn't this more shocking to us? Most likely it's because we are becoming more and more jaded by and accepting of people and actions that are out of integrity. While this isn't a major scandal, it is increasingly the state of our workplace and most of us don't care for that "state."

So, the real question is: What are we doing in our organizations to make sure we are not experiencing the same issues and concerns?

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Bringing It Closer To Home

the time they interviewed and they appeared on the job?

- Consider various ways to test for knowledge, skills and abilities -- if not to assess their honesty, then to assess their skill level and training needs.

- Call references provided and ask tough questions. Call supervisors and others not recommended (except for current employers if requested not to do so) and see what you can find out on the candidate. I'm amazed by how many more people are truthful when giving references and share both the candidate's strengths and growth areas.

Out of general curiosity as to what percentage of stores RadioShack may close (6-10%), I briefly visited their web site. Here's how they described themselves:

" Fort Worth, Texas-based RadioShack Corporation (NYSE: RSH) is the nation's most trusted consumer electronics specialty retailer..."

Since my sense of humor is a little warped, I found the irony pretty humorous. They were so trusting, they didn't check their CEO's credentials. But then, do you?

Some of you don't do any background or reference checks when you hire new employees. The person looks good on paper and presents well during interviews, and you assume no one is going to tell you anything honestly negative in a reference, so why check?

Some of you are legally required to check credentials, licenses and backgrounds, especially in the health and child services industries. But what about the rest of us? Do you call previous employers or just the references provided? Do you check colleges for degrees? Do you check actual length of service, discuss the depth of the jobs they performed?

"No-- I don't have enough time." That's the answer I expect. But perhaps it's time to rethink the liability, integrity and ethics in your organization. Who do you

- If you've run out of time to accomplish any of the items above, call me and we can brainstorm, identify and/or create solutions to help you avoid becoming a victim of resume falsification.

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want working in your organization and is it worth an extra 30 minutes to find out if they are truly who and what they say they are? Are you a *trusting* organization or a *trusted* organization?

I've seen statistics that state that up to 60% of resumes are falsified at various levels. That means that you are likely affected by this phenomenon. For some job applicants, it's more important to get the job, than to be honest in how they get it. So, beware. And consider setting up new methods to get the real scoop on the employees you're entrusting in your organization.

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About Arlene Vernon

Arlene Vernon, PHR, partners with small businesses as their Human Resource Xpert to create their HR systems and solve their HR problems.

If you have gaps in your HR operation, have an employee problem to solve, or want to enhance your managers' skills, call Arlene today. Learn how HRx can save you time and help you avoid costly HR mistakes. HRx, Inc., Eden Prairie, MN 55344, 952-996-0975, www.HRxcellence.com.

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