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Interview Fraud

HOW JOB CANDIDATES MIGHT CHEAT & HOW HIRING MANAGERS CAN PREPARE

CHICAGO, September 20, 2018 – Employers are currently attempting to attract talent in a tight labor market with a significant skills shortage. While jobs are abundant, employers need to be vigilant during the interview process as some job candidates may not be who they seem during phone interviews or online skills assessments, especially for jobs that require advanced technical skills.

“Pre-selection is especially helpful when hiring for positions that require intense technical skills or a highly analytical mindset. For instance, it is a waste of resources to interview someone with only rudimentary coding skills when advanced coding skills are required,” said Andrew Challenger, Vice President of Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

“While these pre-screening elimination techniques are helpful when winnowing down large applicant pools, it seems candidates have started to look for ways to cheat the system, and recruiters have started to notice,” he added.

A quick Google search revealed numerous posts about cheating on technical phone interviews, with varying levels of support from commenters who responded.

While some candidates use the Internet to look up answers, others may use plagiarized work, claiming code or design that they did not create as their own, in order to get to the next stage of the interview process. Even in jobs that do not require high levels of technical knowledge, job seekers may lie about their achievements and abilities.

“Obviously, these instances have ethical implications, but practically speaking, candidates who lie in this manner will be discovered pretty quickly. When the hiring authority meets you in person to assess your abilities or gives you your first assignment, he or she will clearly see you misrepresented yourself,” said Challenger.

“Being prepared for an interview is different from cheating. Wise candidates will commit their skills and professional achievements to memory for the initial interview. It is also beneficial to look up sample interview questions on sites like Glassdoor to ready yourself for a phone screening. The most important thing is that candidates are truthful,” said Challenger.

Pre-screening tests are generally how companies are able to weed out people who do not have the technical skills necessary to succeed in the role. One [Reddit user](#) posted about their experience with looking up answers to one company’s skills test.

“Applicants may use the Internet to find practice tests and look up how to solve algorithms or logic problems. This demonstrates that they are able to use the tools available to them to solve problems more than it proves cheating,” said Challenger.

“The problem comes when companies send these skills assessments to a candidate as a screening tool, and someone more experienced completes them instead or online tools are used when the instructions clearly stated not to do so,” he added.

How to Prevent Cheating:

“There is no sure-fire way to prevent cheating in pre-screening interviews. As technology progresses, candidates are becoming more innovative in how they get themselves past the computer and into an interview with a real person. But there are ways to minimize the cheating,” said Challenger.

Require pre-screening interviews be filmed or conducted over video conferencing software. That way, hiring managers will know exactly with whom they are speaking and ensure all rules are followed.

Consider requiring pre-screening tests be done in person to ensure accuracy.

Include someone with the same or similar skills desired for the candidate during the interview process. For example, if you are hiring for a front-end developer, include someone in your organization who also has some of those skills to ensure the hiring authority understands the technical jargon and accomplishments presented.

Examine how candidates are recruited. “Recruitment is a top concern for most companies and their HR departments. Candidates who come with a referral from someone who currently works at the company are highly regarded. Other hiring authorities use trusted sources, like alumni departments or placement companies,” said Challenger.

“For hiring managers who are casting a wide net to attract talent, they may need to use extra care during the hiring process. The cost of turnover can be as much as six –to-nine months of the candidate’s salary, so recruiters want to get it right the first time,” he added.

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