

March 2005 – Drake Webinar Series: Volume 6**Avoid the Counterfeit Candidate.**
Know Who To Hire Through Effective Resume Screening
and Interviewing Skills

Distinguishing between similar candidates is a complex process, especially in this technology driven, highly educated, information rich environment. In today's world, where candidates are coached on how to interview effectively to get the job, how do you select the right candidate to hire?

There are more than 8 million Internet employment sites in North America dedicated to career searching, resume writing, interviewing, employment and work. The Internet has made it very easy to create a resume and then transmit it effortlessly and instantaneously to dozens of companies. A focused jobseeker could probably distribute several hundred copies of their resume in a morning. Commercial websites such as www.wetfeet.com are dedicated to educating job seekers to "get the job". Such websites go above and beyond the traditional 'effective resume writing' and 'acing the case interview' that they will amaze and perhaps even shock you. Information is developed and sold to prospective candidates in the form of 'insider guides'. These guides offer a window into the world of a specific industry or company and are often created by ex-employees or 'insiders' of a company or an industry. They include in-depth detail on the working environment, the various functions and job openings, typical interview questions, glossaries of jargon, profiles of current staff, compensation information and even tips on what to wear.

Employers should be on guard. The counterfeit candidate's mission is to secure a job offer. They are highly coached, well rehearsed candidates who may have studied every aspect of the company and its hiring practices to ensure they are telling the interviewer what they want to hear. Often they are people who simply know how to "sell themselves" in the interview, but are challenged in "walking the talk" when push comes to shove. Counterfeit candidates look good on paper, interview well and will go to great lengths to be a part of your organization whether they have the proper skills, knowledge and behaviours required or not!

So, how do you set your resume screening and interview process up for success to effectively uncover those savvy counterfeit candidates and ensure that you are hiring top performers the first time? The following are a few key stages for building effective recruitment practices that will ensure you get the right candidate while shortening the length of the process.

The first stage of the process should begin with the creation of an Ideal Role Profile that specifically outlines the position in detail and identifies the skills, knowledge and behaviours required of the position. The more specific, detailed and focused the Role Profile, the more time that will be saved in sourcing qualified top performer candidates. Broad generic job advertisements could have your recruiters buried within a thousand resumes and a corresponding need to screen through them. When it comes to the number of resumes that you target for screening, 'bigger is definitely not better'. Your sourcing strategy should envelope a 'proactive screening strategy' within it, acting like a filter that ultimately screens out unqualified applicants. At the end of the day, it is better to have 5 quality candidates rather than 100 applicants with 10-15 quality candidates.

The second stage should eliminate any resumes that have wrongly made it through the first set of filters. Stage two screening methods can use a check-list type system allowing a simple and easy review of the 'fit'. Listing the most important 'must-have' criteria first and the 'nice to have' criteria last helps you to quickly weed out resumes that won't make the final cuts. Many companies have turned to recruitment automation systems or (Applicant Tracking Systems – ATS') to help deal with increasing applicant volumes. Most HR teams are not equipped to deal with the sheer volume of resumes received on a daily basis.

However, resume screening technologies can be configured to the company's specifications allowing hiring managers to receive incoming resumes in a prioritized and ranked order so they can focus on the most qualified applicants first.

The third stage moves away from traditional resume-based recruiting to the more efficient process of online qualifying. A simple online questionnaire makes it easier to obtain skill and knowledge sets from applicants. Technologies, such as Drake's Web@ssessor, allow the recruiter to get this information directly from the applicant without convention-bound traditional resumes acting as the mediator. Instead of the applicant pushing information to the recruiter in a resume document, Web-based pre-screening allows the recruiter to pull information from the applicant. A self-administered web-based survey allows an applicant to record answers to customized questions simply and easily at any computer, anytime. DrakeWIZE is an in-depth testing system that has the ability to quantify a job applicant's computer skills to align them to specific roles. In addition, Drake P3 is a behaviour profiling tool that measures behavioural traits and identifies top performers, allowing you to hire more effectively.

Once the applicant has been qualified, it is at this fourth stage they turn into a candidate. Phone interviews are the initial contact and should verify key 'must-have' criteria and 'nice-to-have' criteria used to prioritize one candidate over others. If the applicant progresses to a personal interview, request that they bring along samples of their work to be discussed during the face-to-face interview. The structure and design of the questions asked in the face-to-face interview provide the foundation of a successful interview. A template of interview questions customized for your company should be created in advance based on the prospective role, their seniority and other relevant circumstances. Building the interview from simple to more in-depth, behaviour description interviewing questions makes it difficult for counterfeit candidates to fake answers.

The fifth stage entails group or panel interviews which are an excellent way to screen out counterfeit candidates. The key to successful panel interviewing is to ensure that all panel participants are active listeners who are qualified to vet the candidates. A cross section of staff on the panel from hiring managers, internal clients, stakeholders, someone who has previously been in the role and even a direct report will help give a 360 degree assessment of a candidate. One of the biggest benefits to panel interviewing is time. All the decision makers are in the same room, hearing the same answers and have the opportunity to de-brief with each other about the candidate immediately after the interview. Group or panel interviews may create better results than one-on-one interviews because they are more objective, relying on the assessment and consideration of more than one individual. Each member of the panel has a chance to consider the candidate's responses, thereby increasing the validity of the process.

Finally, the sixth stage adds a practical element, in the form of a job related exercise which lets skills come to life. Drake often asks their candidates to prepare a written 30-60-90 day plan detailing how they would approach the position upon their start date moving forward three months. Identifying the candidate's true understanding and knowledge of the position and the various tasks that have been discussed throughout the interview process will demonstrate how they will 'attack' the position when they start and their sense of strategic planning and prioritization.

As business leaders, we are responsible for managing the screening and interviewing process by asking the right questions, processing and responding to the right answers and using the information to avoid counterfeit candidates. If implemented properly, an effective recruitment process with the proper checks and filters in place will, from start to finish, decrease position vacancies and reduce attrition rates. In addition, you will lower the time and costs associated with both screening and interviewing applicants.

Learn practical tips for Avoiding Counterfeit Candidates Through Effective Resume Screening and Interviewing Skills, by registering for a complimentary webinar hosted on Wednesday March 23rd, 2005 from 12:00 – 1:00 p.m., EST.

Contact Drake for further information on how our Advanced Profiling and Selection Solutions can ensure the best screening and interviewing practices for your organization. Call 1 800 GO DRAKE or visit: www.drakeintl.com