

Recruitment Fraud

Employers are increasingly at risk from so-called serial job-seekers who are hoping to trigger legal claims for discrimination. Legal experts have warned of the threat to organisations that are unaware of the subtle differences to multiple job applications from the same candidate who is hoping to catch them out. But proper utilisation of hiring management technology, coupled with a robust, well documented and communicated, recruitment workflow process, could help identify this threat from "serial saboteurs" and ensure that organisations are not caught out by these bogus CVs.

Organisations are having to tread very carefully when it comes to the possibility of perceived discrimination with regards to diversity. The national press have highlighted stories of the serial saboteurs who prey on many organisations' inability to effectively track, monitor and objectively hire candidates regardless of race, physical ability, age and sex.

Legal sources have stated that hundred of job seekers who have a genuine disability or who are from a racial minority group, are posting multiple applications with slightly differentiated identities to try and ensnare unaware employers. They then go on to make legal claims for discrimination with low sums - mostly between £1,000 to £1,500 - so that companies are unwilling to take the cases to employment tribunals. Local Authorities have been identified as a group that have been particularly targeted by the perpetrators of this ploy.

These serial saboteurs post multiple applications with the same work experience and education but change the personal information on their CV while creating a unique online email address for each application. If the organisation selects one of the false applications - which has different details about race, sex or physical ability to the genuine one - the applicant then makes a claim that they have been discriminated against under the Disability Discrimination Act or the Race Relations Act.

Given the onus on discrimination within the employment market, employers are justifiably nervous when such a case is brought against them. Therefore this desire for minimum publicity and the small sums involved mean that the knee jerk reaction is to settle the matter away from the public glare of a tribunal. An out of court settlement allows the serial saboteur to remain anonymous and to use this potent sting on another unsuspecting HR department in the future.

One of the key reasons that organisations are helpless against this threat is that they lack the tools to ensure that candidate selection is not made using personal details, either explicitly or implicitly. But technology can be utilised for this purpose and can go a long way towards promoting the robustness of the recruitment workflow process.

If an organisation was confident that their recruitment process, and the tools they used to support it, did not allow candidate selection processes to incorporate data that could result in discrimination claim then they would not immediately settle out of court. Instead, they could provide evidence, with a full audit trail, to a tribunal that the decision was not based on these criteria.

To protect against these claims of discrimination from serial saboteurs, organisations need to have an effective recruitment tool coupled with a well documented and regimented workflow process. Organisations can guarantee protection against serial saboteurs by ensuring that the people making the decisions on candidate selection cannot see any of the personal details on the CVs in front of them. This can then be verified and tracked using an applicant tracking system that has the screening functionality.

Hiring management software enables typically small recruitment teams to manage volume recruitment. Effective screening and ranking tools ensure that HR departments can oversee large recruitment projects and receive automated reporting on every aspect of the application process. This in itself allows HR more time to counter any potential recruitment fraud that arises.

Crucially, ATS technology enables an organisation to mask all personal details from a hiring manager. This means that when they make their selection of candidates that are to progress to the next stage of the recruitment process, they can only make that decision based on work experience and education. Furthermore with the ATS' ability to produce an audit trail on every single action, an organisation that is using this technology then has the confidence to take on the serial saboteur in the courts. Technology cannot provide the end to end solution per se, it can only support and deliver a comprehensive recruitment workflow process.

As the HR market evolves - and internet applications increase - threats to the integrity of recruitment systems, such as serial saboteurs, will become increasingly prevalent. It is therefore crucial that organisations are aware of the technology that can ensure their HR processes are adjusting at the same pace as the market around them and the possibilities to exploit it.