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Employers get the CV jeebies

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EMPLOYERS are about to change dramatically the way they check and evaluate the CVs of those applying for jobs - particularly white collar jobs.

In turn that will change the way people must craft their applications for employment.

The driver of this change is an amazing report, and a consequent set of recommendations, issued in December by the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

It will trigger a boom in organisations checking the qualifications and other claims in CVs.

The amazing exploits of former mortician's assistant Glen Oakley have done to Australian employment what Enron in the US and HIH in Australia have done to corporate governance.

Oakley had very few tertiary qualifications - two subjects at both the University of New England and the University of Newcastle - but he wanted a more exciting life and knew there were government bodies that did not check academic qualifications.

So he put on his CV that he had obtained a Bachelor of Science (Hons) and a Diploma of Education from the University of Newcastle: an MBA from the University of NSW and a Doctorate of Philosophy from the University of New England.

It was easy to fake the documentation. Those "degrees" transformed the job outlook for the mortician's assistant and he was appointed a regional manager for the Maritime Services Board in NSW with capital and operating budgets exceeding \$70 million.

Then he became general manager of Ramsay Health Care and from there a deputy regional director of NSW Health. Then the NSW cabinet approved his appointment as director general of the Department of Regional Development.

The clearly talented mortician's assistant later became the conjoint professor to the Graduate School of Business, University of Newcastle.

But when he applied for a post with toll road operator Transurban, he met a board member who had attended the same MBA class that Oakley claimed to have completed, and the game began to unravel.

ICAC recommends that all public sector bodies should undertake careful checking of qualifications and that candidates be required to give permission.

The ICAC report comes at a time when financial services regulations are being tightened - checking processes are set to extend far beyond academic checks.

Past salary and position claims will be checked with former employers. Recruiters will try to locate any gaps in which the job applicants omit experience they don't want prospective employers to see.

Currently, the final checking of applicants is not undertaken until there are only one or two people left on the list.

By that time, employers and the recruiting company have made a big investment in terms of time in the final two candidates.

In the future, most organisations will check before they spend the time. Already universities and police departments are being flooded with checking applications and are falling behind.

In time they will understand they can make a profit from this type of service - the business of preparing a CV is being transformed and a whole new skill set will develop.

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