

Do you believe that Fake CRAs really exist? If you are a hiring manager, I can guarantee more CRA candidates are lying to you than you realize. My goal is to provide Interviewers and Hiring Managers with a checklist of things to keep in mind when evaluating resumes.

When we first started noticing the trend of fraudulence, we identified that approximately 21% of our candidate pool had falsified all or part of their credentials. Currently (2023), my team estimates that over 40% of applicants who apply to our open positions are fraudulent.

I should note that I am speaking about true applicant fraudulence...not just the mere embellishment of qualifications. We classify CRA fraudulence as a CRA candidate who has completely falsified all or part of their credentials. This may include the falsification of their employment history, stating they have a degree they haven't actually earned, or even providing fake references.

Today we will be revealing some tips on how to Identify Fake CRA Resumes

Career Builder has a published survey showing that [75% of Hiring Managers have caught a candidate lying on a resume](#). This was almost a 20% increase from their previous report showing [58% candidates had been caught in a lie](#).

Along those lines, the SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) published results from a survey where they stated [85% of the 4,000 hiring managers surveyed](#) uncovered a lie on a candidate's resume or job application during the screening process.

Some of the trends we have identified are easy to spot...but others are more difficult to quantify. Here are some things to carefully consider when reviewing CRA candidate resumes and job applications.

Trend	Tips and Insights
<p>The companies listed on the resume may not be real.</p>	<p>Don't assume that the company is real just because there is a website or a location listed on Google. As of today (February 14, 2023), we have identified 71 fake companies being used by CRA candidates on their resumes. While these companies aren't real, several of them have presence on Google.</p> <p>If you aren't familiar with a company being used on a resume, research it. While my team has various sources to confirm that a company actually exists (or existed), my favorite is OpenCorporates. You can also check state registrars and Manta, but OpenCorporates scrapes all of the various state registrars as well as corporation listings in other countries.</p>
<p>Candidates have listed multiple companies on their resume which did exist but are either deceased, been acquired, have merged with another company, or otherwise have rebranded.</p>	<p>In all cases, know the dates the company existed.</p> <p>Deceased Companies: Let's address those companies that have gone out of business first. When a company is deceased, your chances of confirming employment is next to nothing. While having one or two deceased companies on your resume may not point to fraudulence, having several may.</p> <p>Acquired Companies: Conducting employment verification with companies that are acquired is much easier than with deceased companies (although can still be tricky). The key is to note when the company was acquired and compare that date to the date(s) represented on the candidate's resume. For example, a company named Beryllium was</p>

	<p>founded in 2009 and was acquired by UCB Pharma in June of 2017. If a candidate states he/she worked with Beryllium prior to 2009, it is safe to say that fraudulence has been committed. If the candidate states they worked for Beryllium after June 2017, make sure you poke...you must dig. If the candidate left for any other reason than the acquisition, (or if the candidate wasn't even aware of the acquisition), you may have fraudulence on your hands.</p> <p>Merged and/or Rebranded Companies: similar to acquisitions, make sure you are clear on the dates of companies that have Merged or Rebranded. For illustration purposes, let's look at Syneos and how easy it would be for fraudulent candidates to mislead others. If our notes are correct, foundational organizations for Syneos included (but were not limited to): SFBC International was founded in 1984 and rebranded to PharmaNet in December of 2004; Ingenix was a clinical business that consisted of inVentiv, Medfocus, and Smith Hanley and eventually became i3; inVentiv acquired Essential group in February of 2010; PharmaNet was acquired by i3 somewhere around mid to late 2011 and became known as PharmaNet/i3; inVentiv also purchased the clinical division of Kforce with the acquisition completing in April of 2012; PharmaNet/i3 rebranded to inVentiv in early 2013; inVentiv merged with INC Research in 2017...and became Syneos Health in January 2018.</p> <p>If you want to protect yourself from fraudulence, you have to know these dates. Someone stating they worked with PharmaNet prior to 2004 or the clinical division of Kforce after 2012 are likely misrepresenting themselves.</p>
<p>The candidate has asked for a below-market rate or salary.</p>	<p>When a CRA candidate's compensation expectations are much less than industry standard, this could be a flag.</p> <p>Although this action alone doesn't necessarily point to fraudulence, if you do progress this candidate to an interview, make sure you poke at the candidate's understanding of the position's responsibilities and expectations.</p> <p>What we have found: It has been our experience that a candidate who asks for a below market rate or salary is either desperate, fraudulent, or underprepared. We largely find these individuals come from non-industry and are therefore not clear as it relates to current market rate.</p> <p>The reality: Our firm lives in a world of Senior CRAs and clinical research professionals at this level know what the market will support in terms of rate and salary range. Always dig further if the candidate asks for a below-market rate or salary.</p>
<p>The resume contains a lot of self-employment or consulting with no clients listed.</p>	<p>Before anyone gets upset with me, I do want to state that we work with many Consultant CRAs who don't list all of the clients they have worked with on their resume.</p> <p>But the ones we represent are those contract CRAs who are open to discussing their clients and project with us. We feel that an honest professional will be transparent regarding the projects they have worked on. When a CRA candidate refuses to list clients or discuss the type of studies, the therapeutics involved, the start/end dates of the projects, or the primary responsibilities...it is a huge flag.</p>

	<p>What we have found: When a candidate is purposely vague, they are typically purposely hiding something. The details we expect (clients, studies, therapeutics, start/end dates, etc) ...isn't this information the point of a resume? Shouldn't an applicant expect to share this information?</p> <p>The reality: When a Contract CRA refuses to list and/or discuss their clients, we usually steer clear. This refusal to provide information may mean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate may NOT actually have clients. Anyone can have an active LLC or Corporation but that doesn't mean they have active clients. • The projects could have ended badly...either because the contract CRA left before his/her committed contractual term or because the client ended the contract due to cause. <p>Either way, missing information on a resume forces me to use my imagination (which is never a good thing for the candidate). While this alone doesn't necessarily point to fraudulence, it is one of many grey areas you should poke at and consider when looking at the candidate's qualifications as a whole.</p>
<p>The CRA Candidate has no supporting digital footprint</p>	<p>In our industry, it is extremely unusual for CRAs to have NO LinkedIn profile or supporting digital footprint.</p> <p>If you are unable to find any digital footprint, be sure to dig deeper. We often find digital footprints of fraudulent candidates which show they are truck drivers, work at Verizon, or do other jobs outside of the industry.</p> <p>As a side note, even when a candidate has a supporting LinkedIn profile, make sure you compare that LinkedIn profile to their resume. Also conduct a deeper digital dive to see if you can find other supporting information.</p> <p>For example, MD Anderson employees are often still in the MDA employee directory. If the individual was a researcher, it is likely they are cited somewhere. If they were a coordinator, they may be listed on clinicaltrials.gov. A true senior level clinical researcher typically has a broad and deep digital footprint, so be sure to look for one.</p>
<p>If you are able, compare historical data</p>	<p>We keep every version of a candidate's resume. We also keep every copy of their digital footprint that we come across.</p> <p>And we compare them every time we consider working with them. Often, we see where employment changes...history is good. If you are able to maintain history on your applicants, I highly recommend you do.</p>

My last thought...

As you review CRA resumes and job applications with the above checklist in hand, remember that you are looking for trends. There are a lot of gray areas and truthfully, honest CRAs can make some of these mistakes. For example, a lack of supporting digital footprint will not necessarily keep us from progressing a candidate, but finding a fake company listed on their resume will.

Need help? [Contact us](#) – we are here to help!