
Fake Resumes in Indian IT Industry- A Study

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Abstract

Fabrications of Resumes are apparently quite widespread. Some surveys suggest that as many as two thirds of all CVs and resumes contain forged data because getting a new job can be highly stressful and some people feel the need to enhance their achievements so as to enter the an industry, and as a result present themselves in a dishonest way. People, in the eyes of most organizations, are merely commodities. Most companies in India, for the bulk of their recruitment are looking for cheap labour, those who can do their work to a reasonable extent. This is especially true at low to middle levels across industries such as IT and ITES. So, while recruiting the resources the IT industry has limitations on fake resumes. Fake resume brings down the quality of the product and leads to bitter results. They are difficult to spot and difficult to avoid too in cases. So to find a more feasible solution for this problem, an empirical study has to be done on this issue. This study is focus on analysing the issues of fake resume and providing suggestions which will provide more feasible solutions.

Keywords: Fabrications, labour, ITES, HR professionals, Business Strategy, Technology

Introduction

A fake resume is one in which a specific alteration of your employment history is made in order to deceive a human resources person or a hiring authority in order to get hired. This means that the fabrication is in the resume itself or in any supporting document that maybe included with the resume viz., cover letters, salary information, references or claiming experiences and false proofs of hefty last drawn salary etc. All of these come under fraud. Fake resumes are not new, Fake resumes have been ruling the job scenario for ages. Some statistics state that if 100 resumes are reviewed, a whopping 75 percent of them would reveal a "fib, fallacy or some outright lie". With more than 420,000 engineers graduating every year, it is important to consider their skill levels. Mass recruiters like Infosys and TCS employ engineers from all discipline, so it's also important to answer whether the IT industry is that skill and talent driven or not. With this the fake resumes put the talent on more question. The report by consultant McKinsey and Indian IT body Nasscom warns that labour market pressures could leave India facing a shortfall of 500,000 IT staff equipped with the skills to work in the offshore outsourcing industry. McKinsey predicts global offshore outsourcing spend to hit \$110 billion by 2010 and tips India to capture more than 50 percent of the market if it overcomes its challenges. So there is

a great demand and lot of opportunity for the Indian IT industry where it has to focus on achieving growth and look in to the issues which it has. The Indian IT industry will have some competition too. There are markets like China, Singapore, and the Philippines which offer lower costs and which can be competitive to Indian IT industry.

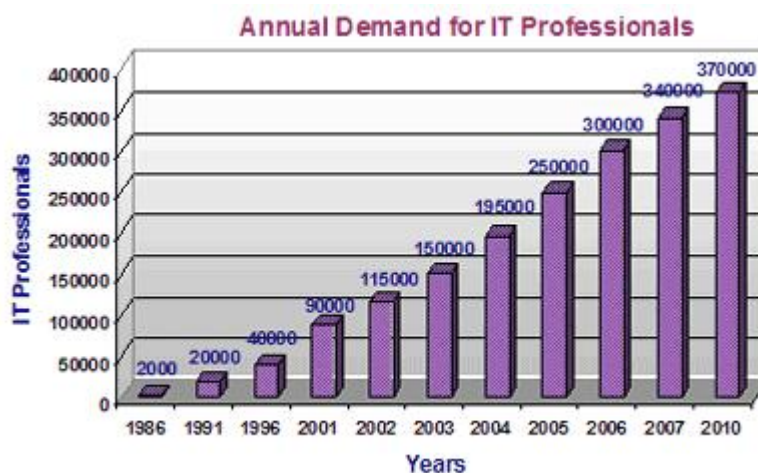
HR Challenges in Indian IT Industry

Software is a wealth and job creating industry, which has in just a few years, grown to US \$ 1 trillion, employing millions of professionals worldwide. The Indian software industry has burgeoned, showing a nearly 50% compounded annual growth rate over the recent years. Being a knowledge-based industry, a high intellectual capital lends competitive advantage to a firm. Intellectual capital comprises human capital and intellectual assets—the latter being any created bit of knowledge or expertise. With a global explosion in market-opportunities in the IT sector, the shortage of manpower both in numbers and skills is a prime challenge for HR professionals.

The various challenges are,

- Workforce Retention and Motivation
- Attracting the Best Talent
- Compensation and Reward
- Integrating HR strategy with Business Strategy
- Encouraging Quality and Customer focus
- Up-gradation of Skills through Re-training
- Coping with the Demand-Supply Gap

According to the NASSCOM estimates the IT/ITES industry is expected to grow by 19 percent during the FY 2012 - 2013.



It would be of no use to talk about the entire above if a wrong guy is put on the job. Fakes just give a false impression that the guy would be able to do, while in actuality it would not be so. A lot of time, there exists a certain hesitancy in laying them off because it acts negatively on

morals of other team members. The work of an unskilled person brings down the quality and finally the IT companies end up with a bad business which is not a good sign for the industry.

Fake CV's ruining IT Industry

IT industry is quickly becoming filled with fake resumes. Several industry experts have expressed their concerns over this. It recently appeared in the papers that many companies have taken actions.

"Satyam computers have terminated 500 of its employees because they had fudged with their documents"

"Mind Tree terminated 80 employees out of 1000 recruited during 2005-'06 after it found they had filed false information, according to Subroto Bagchi, chief operating officer, Mind Tree"

"January and March of 2008, Wipro Technologies terminated the services of 200 of its employees for producing fake resumes and certificates"

"The Business Standard reports that Tata Consultancy Service (TCS) has terminated services of almost 20 employees at its Kolkata centre after a background check revealed these employees had faked their resumes"

The companies also blamed some of the recruitment agencies which had recruited the dismissed employees, for helping they fake their CV's. Police complaints were lodged against some of these recruitment agencies, and they were even asked to refund the expenditure incurred by the companies in hiring the dismissed employees.

These charges and allegations highlighted the growing problem of fake CVs in the Indian job market. The phenomenon of fake CVs was not just restricted to the software industry. It was also prevalent in other sectors like ITES, financial services, retail etc. It was estimated that Rs 400 corers was spent by Indian companies for filling 200,000 jobs a year in these sectors and 10-12% of the selected candidates had submitted false information in their CVs. A KPMG study — India Fraud Survey Report 2006 — which covered over a thousand organizations across India, said that 15-24 % of CVs in India are fake and one out of three CVs misrepresent facts. The study found that the IT, financial, entertainment and telecom sectors face the highest risk. However, the extent of falsification was believed to be much higher in the IT and ITeS sectors as they accounted for 50% of the 200,000 jobs and were highly attractive to job seekers due to their high salary packages and other benefits.

Why Fake Resumes?

Why job seekers fake? The candidate has an eye on that dream job, but he/she doesn't quite have the skills or qualifications for the position. No matter how many times a resume is submitted, nothing is got but a form letter rejection. Maybe the resume needs a few tweaks to make him/her a viable candidate. Or maybe it needs a creative overhaul. So the candidate gets ready to fake his/her resume. Over 53% of job seekers fake their resumes. Over 70% of college graduates admit to forging their resumes to get hired.

Normally job seekers provide untruths on the below areas,

- Experience
- Technology
- Education
- Salary

Unskilled Fresher's

The challenge for Indian educational institutions will be to produce quality graduates to fuel this growth rather than creating thousands of engineers whose knowledge and skill levels are, at best, mediocre. In India, there is an employability factor. There are engineers who pass from second string institutions, whose quality is low, and that is a problem. There are hundreds of engineering colleges with very poor infrastructure which results in poor engineers. Many of these engineers wish to enter in to IT industry because of the salary, life style and opportunities. But they lack in communication skills, technical skills, aptitude skills etc making them less competitive in the job market. The industry have seen a flurry of stories about the poor qualifications of Indian tech-school grads. India's Infosys says it only hires 2% of the one million or so people who apply for jobs there each year. Less than 50% of fresher's get jobs in campus and off-campus interviews immediately after completion of their education that focuses in IT industry. What will happen to the rest of the students? These students lack in communication skills, technical skills, aptitude skills etc making them less competitive in the job market. Who is to be blamed for this? Graduates? Colleges? Government who give approval for the colleges which have poor infrastructure? Educational system? The IT industry? Finding who is to be blamed is not going to solve these issues. But the industry can help itself to solve these issues.

Skilled Fresher's

If a student with good stuff in technologies is getting hired after putting fake experience means they have stuff but they were not hired as part of fresher's. Finally they are forced to fake their resumes. Normally software companies are ready to hire mechanical , civil and all other non -IT streams students to venture in IT but they are not ready to hire students who have less than 60% in academics with highly skilled. Many of the students who come from second string colleges lack in communication skills.

The students who have less than 60% or lack in communication or aptitude skills are unable to join in any organisation where they fail to meet the organisations standards. But they still can't give up! They need to survive, and then they need to think of achieving. They keep on searching for a job up to 1 year. Now the industry would not look upon them as fresher's. The students who had completed 12 months after their education would no longer be considered as fresher. Now they start studying some technologies like Java, DOTNET, SAP, Mainframe etc. They put a fake experience that they have worked in some xyz company. Year by year their fake experience grows to 1+yrs exp, 2+ yrs exp,3+ yrs exp ,4+ years of experience until they enter in to a real software company.

Experience Professionals

Experience professionals fake their technologies, salary, experience, issues with previous organizations etc. But in few cases organizations would not be able to identify fake experience details. Few cases explaining how difficult to handle a fake resume has been given below,

Case 1: A person gives 2 years of experience in some "XYZ" company in some technology. He says it is a very small company of 5 to 10 employees. The third party firm will call the number and

somebody will pick-up the phone and say “yes! Mr. X worked in my company and he was a very good...”. That’s it! The cross verification is over.

Case 2: Another person says his company was a small company and for few reason it got closed. So he is looking for a job and he will even perform very well in the job.

Case 3: An engineer who has 4 years of experience in Java/J2ee technology joined in a software company as fresher. He was in to swings and ebb technology. As his project is getting completed he has to prepare his resume to get in to a project in his own company or try in other organizations also. When he hosted his resume in job sites he got few calls from consultants and from HR's from other companies. It was a very poor response. The current market asks for struts, springs, Ajax, hibernate, xml technology and more. Even though he says he has knowledge the organizations ask for real time experience. Now the engineer broke his projects and added another project with the new technologies. He started getting lot of calls from consultants and HR's. Couple of interviews he failed but soon he got a very good offer in another MNC. If he had not done like that he would have been fired by his own company and if he had been in a long period in bench. How many people are pushed like this? Few companies take care of their resources by training them in different technologies. These types of fake resumes are unavoidable and organizations have very few limitations on controlling that. As these engineers have original experience they can adapt with other environments and this is not going to have a big impact on quality of the products.

Case 4 : Another person will have a company, website, HR number etc. But he does not have a real experience. Then, how did he do it? There are some organizations that give away fake certificates or experience letters for money and if one such person is caught from such a company - others are easier to be caught.

Last year a TV news channel from Kerala has exposed a firm making fake certificates in an investigative sting operation. The journalist acted as youth trying for job abroad and got a class X certificate. The frauds did a high quality of workmanship .They even did some special effects on the certificates to look it older. Later raids from police revealed fake certificates of Engineering , Medicine and Law from almost all universities in Kerala.

Case 5: There is some person who says “it is a small marketing firm, I was supporting their software’s”, or “It is a training institute and they were doing some projects”, it is a small BPO firm and there is a small software division...” etc. Again these cases are difficult to track.

Case 6: There are few cases where the company is not interested in spending time to examine resumes. The challenge in India is that our ecosystem doesn’t support the growth that industry is experiencing. It has not matured enough to create a large body of people with high quality domain skills and leadership capability. As a result there is a shortage of people who have managed large industries, or have the domain expertise of complex systems. There is a demand, projects are coming and they are not able to find resources.

As soon as they get the resumes, they go for the interview process and assess the person’s attitude, technical and communication skills and confidence. If the company’s interview

or client interview is over they do not care much about cross verification. They think the person can somehow manage his work. But the truth is fake resumes has its own impact.

Case 7: There is some anonymous information that some HR People motivate the consultancy people to send the fake candidates and share backdoor money. In some cases the organizations had taken actions on these cases. But these are very rare cases.

NASSCOMM's NSR

The problem is being attacked in war footing; NASSCOMM launched the National Skill Registry program last year so that every company can keep a record of its employees in a database accessible to the whole industry. NSR contains personal, academic and employment details of individuals employed/ to be employed in the IT and ITeS industry; this background information would be checked by a professional agency.

NSR will be helpful to some extent on tackling the issue of forged resume. The problems however are more deep rooted.

School them yourself or Help Schooling!

Mr Phaneesh Murthy of iGATE quoted that Indian IT companies has to re-adjust their model and capacity. He said that Indian IT industry currently absorbs 150,000 engineers of about 420,000 gradating annually. This means that the hiring ratio is 1:3 If the industry wants good tech grads, why not train them? It recently appeared in the papers that few companies are offering training.

Symbio, started in Maryland in 1994 by two dozen Taiwanese who got their start in off shoring when they established a programming center for IBM in Taipei in 1987. The company established operations in Beijing in 1997, expanded dramatically in 2003, and moved its headquarters there in 2004. It concentrates on writing software applications for the likes of Microsoft, IBM, CA, AOL, and BMC. With 1100 employees in China, it is now one of the largest outsourcers there. Jacob Hsu, president of a Chinese tech outsourcing company and his colleagues decided they needed a feeder program to prepare college students to work for them, so they recently established software institutes in the Harbin Institute of Technology and Shandong University, both in the coastal city of Weihai. That's where Symbio is about to establish a new development center. Says Hsu, who grew up in San Francisco: "Other companies have university partnerships; they run the university departments."

Infosys Technologies, the country's second-largest IT services company is in negotiation with leading IT firms to jointly offer training courses in hope to produce more industry-ready graduates. Presently, various IT companies are running training programs on their own. A program run by Infosys which is known as Campus Connect covers over 500 engineering colleges and apart from assistance for industry-oriented curriculum, it also includes faculty and student training.

There must be a bridge to reduce the gap between our educational system and industry requirements. NASSCOMM can support some institutes like NIIT who are making hay while the college system of education is failing. These institutes should be monitored and guided by

NASSCOMM. The students who fail to join as fresher's can join these institutes. They can choose a particular technology or even do diploma for 6 months or more. These institutes should not try to filter the students while accommodating them. The only restriction can be the student should have completed any degree. Our objective here is to avoid fresher's putting fake and to bring quality among these fresher's who lag in aptitude skills or who come from second string colleges who are less competitive. These institutes should be financially supported and monitored by NASSCOMM. Very less amount of fees should be charged from these students as this is not to run a profitable business but as contribute to the industry and society. Students after their completion of their degree and who are not able join as freshers should have an alternative to enter in to the industry without putting fake by joining these institutes. NASSCOMM with the help of it companies can also provide infrastructure support.

Tests and interview should be kept for the graduates who get training from these third party institutes. A minimum duration should be 4 to 6 months on a particular course. For the fresher's up to 1 year it should be opened for them as fresher's category. This will be for 12 months from their graduation. If it is after 1 year they can come from the third party institutes training. The interview process should be similar to a 1 year of experience professional who looks for a job change. This will avoid graduates putting 1 year fake, 2 year fake experience and will make them equip to their jobs.

Graduates who come from top universities and colleges which are having good placement history will not be dependent on these institutes. Again the focus is on less competitive people to make them more competitive and to be fit in the industry. This bridge can be extended to support the people who wish to changes their profession to IT from other profession.

Indian top software companies like TCS, Wipro, Infosys, HCL, Satyam, IBM, CTS etc recruit Non-IT fresher's and train them for 2 to 3 months and put them in to projects. That means they believe more on their training than their educational background. If that is the case why is it that the students who get trained from a third party institute can't be recognized.

This does not mean that all the graduates should be somehow employed at the cost of IT companies. After all IT companies are not charity organizations and they are meant to make business profits. If they recruit unskilled people, it will pull down the quality and make the Indian IT industry less competitive among other competitive worlds. So there must be no compromise on recruiting skilled people. A platform should be built to make less skilled person to be a more skilled professional. Our objective should be eliminating the fake resumes and fill the demand supply gap. A new framework should be defined by NASSCOMM just like NAC.

NAC (NASSCOM Assessment of Competence) is an Assessment and Certification framework to ensure a steady supply of quality professionals to meet the present and future requirements of the IT-BPO industry. NAC aims to create a robust and continuous pipeline of talent through a standard assessment and certification. It also helps to provide insights into the training and development needs of talent and helps Governments and Universities develop

customized talent development initiatives and programs. This framework is available for IT industry (NAC-Tech) and BPO (NAC).

So more study should be made on third party institutes training which will be under the guidance of NASSCOMM. The methods applied for training in the institutes are also to be researched and should be defined by NASSCOMM. Literally NASSCOMM with the support of the IT companies should run these institutes.

If the research yields successful results the industry will have the below advantages,

- This will eliminate fake resumes to a large extent.
- This will improve the quality
- The Indian IT can sell them to their clients on terms of honesty
- The industry will know our professionals well
- This is a great contribution to the society and the software industry
- To fill the demand supply gap
- This will make us more competitive in industry

Conclusion

Making small alterations and playing with word jargons in resumes when you know you can do the job well and to sell yourself in a better way can be tolerated to some extent. But forging any supporting documents that you include with the resume, cover letters, salary information, references or claiming experiences, false proofs and providing false educational certificates all comes under fraud. A choice should be open for the fresher's to avoid this sham. The discussion of "School them yourself or Help schooling" should be researched more. This will be eliminating the reason for fake resumes to a large extent in the industry. If these kind of feasible solutions are found then the NASSCOMM'S NSR will be more effective.

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