



ORTHO2

How to Avoid Hiring the Wrong People in Your Practice

by **David Harris**

Much has been written about hiring the right people for orthodontists. Finding a good personality fit and ensuring employees properly project your office's personality are things others know far more about than I do – so there is little that I can contribute to that discussion.

However, my background as a private investigator and the CEO of the world's largest dental embezzlement investigation firm provides some insight into how serial embezzlers – who are the very LAST people you want to hire – successfully conceal unsavory pasts. I'd like to share what I have learned about their tactics.

Let's start by profiling typical embezzlers. They are smart, organized, and have strong computer skills. They present well in interviews, and convey an understanding of the preciousness of your time, and commit to creating an environment where that time can be used most effectively. They present an attractive resume without typos – seemingly a rarity today. And, of course, they have dental/orthodontic experience, although you don't yet fully comprehend the nature of that experience.

You are likely thinking that I have just described a perfect employee. One of the ironies of embezzlement is that thieves superficially resemble that elusive perfect employee. Fortunately, there are areas where embezzlers differ from truly ideal employees, and this article will help you differentiate.

The most obvious area is that many, but certainly not all, serial embezzlers have criminal records. A properly conducted criminal record check will uncover this, and allow some rotten apples to be foregone. Two things should be kept in mind here. Many embezzlers don't have criminal records either because charges were never brought, or because of the agonizing slowness of the justice system. Also, since a criminal record could reside in any of fifty states, a couple of territories, or with the U.S. Government, criminal background checking is complicated

and best contracted out to professionals.

My next advice is when checking with former employers or verifying education eschew any phone number provided by an applicant. We have seen many cases where doctors thought they were speaking to former employers, finding out much later that it was actually a friend of the applicant pretending. So when verifying past experience or a credential, locate the phone number independently so that you know with whom you are speaking.

Now that you are speaking with the right person, let's consider what you should check. What you are seeking is the undisclosed job that the applicant wants to conceal. This job can be hidden either by covering it with non-employment (home with children, traveling through Europe, etc.), or by stretching the dates of other employment to cover what they want to hide.

If an applicant claims a lot of time out of the work force, request a copy of their tax return (IRS 1040). Like any document, a tax return could be forged, but the nature of this form makes the forgery a lot of work, so most applicants trying to hide something will simply move on to another victim.

My other suggestion is to ask each former employer (and you should normally contact all employers from at least the last five years) a few strategic questions:

- Get them to provide exact dates of employment. Don't prompt them with the dates in the resume and ask for verification. Human nature may result in them agreeing without verifying.
- Verify job title and responsibilities.
- Ask who the previous and subsequent employers were

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(most former employers know this).

- Finally, ask each former employer a very specific question, "If this person were available and if you had a suitable opening, would you rehire them?" The attractiveness of this question is that, while former employers are often cautioned by attorneys to avoid derogatory statements, most will find this question, which simply asks about future intent and not about specific actions or characteristics, to be a safe question to answer. And a single word answer, like no (or anything short of an enthusiastic yes), shouts volumes about the applicant.

Compare all answers to the resume, and reject any applicant where dates or job history do not line up exactly with the information you determined independently.

While there is no foolproof means of identifying resume cover-ups, the simple techniques outlined here give you an excellent chance of spotting situations when resumes have been doctored. Also, while the focus of this article is on finding

criminal activity, techniques shown here will also help uncover resume embellishment, which is a definite concern. Published studies suggest that more than 40% of resumes contain some form of lying.

Please feel free to visit our website at www.dentalembzezzlement.com to obtain more resources that will help you detect and mitigate embezzlement. ☺

About the Author



David Harris is a private investigator and CEO of Prosperident, the world's largest dental embezzlement investigation firm. Prosperident has consulted on hundreds of dental embezzlement matters annually.