THE RISE OF AI-ENABLED CANDIDATE FRAUD

Executive insights from
The HireRight 'Global Benchmark Report 2026'
and senior Talent leaders on navigating AI-driven hiring risk.

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Executive Summary

AI is transforming the recruitment process.

It enables organisations to hire faster, screen candidates more efficiently and improve the hiring experience for candidates. However, the same technology is also making it easier for fraudulent candidates to slip through the net.

To better understand how organisations are responding, we recently partnered with HireRight to bring together senior Talent leaders for an executive roundtable focused on hiring risk and trust.

This report combines insights from that discussion with findings from the HireRight Global Benchmark Report 2026 to explore:

- Why AI-enabled candidate fraud is increasing.
- Where organisations remain most vulnerable.
- The practical steps Talent leaders are taking to reduce risk.

Five key findings

1

AI has fundamentally changed candidate fraud.

2

More than half of organisations experienced identity fraud in 2025.

3

Fraud is increasingly discovered after the hiring decision has been made.

4

Trust can no longer rely on interviews alone.

5

Leading organisations are embedding verification through candidate and employment tenure.

Why This Matters

If you look back just 10 years ago, candidate fraud usually meant an overexaggerated CV.

Now, AI is enabling individuals to generate realistic employment histories, create ‘expert-like’ portfolios, prepare and manipulate interview responses, and even alter their identity.

However, the risk doesn’t stop once someone is hired. AI is making it easier for bad actors to extract data on scale, impersonate colleagues to gain access to information they shouldn’t have and create fraudulent documents.

As the hiring process becomes increasingly digital, trust and fraud-prevention is becoming one of Talent Acquisition’s biggest strategic responsibilities.

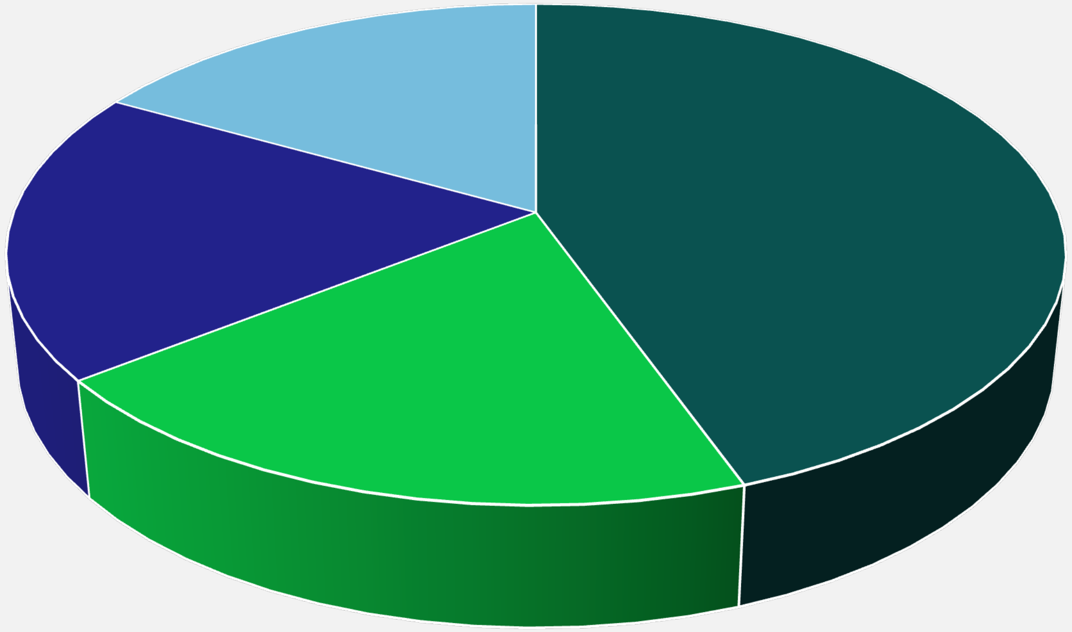
55%

of EMEA organisations experienced some form of identity fraud during 2025.*

**HireRight Global Benchmark Report 2026*

Identity Fraud is No Longer a Rarity

'Has your organisations experienced identity fraud among your candidates or employees in 2025?'.



45% No

20% Yes, pre-hire during recruitment process

19% Yes, post-hire during rescreening or monitoring

17% Yes, post-hire after theft or fraudulent activities were detected

Nearly one in five organisations only identified fraudulent candidates after the risk became tangible.

How AI Has Changed Candidate Fraud

Believing false information

AI-generated CVs, false employment histories and fake documents look increasingly real, leaving less room for recruitment teams to initially suspect fraud.

CV prompts altering decision-making

Fraudulent individuals are aware of the software used by many organisations to filter. They are using this to their advantage by adding prompts to their CV to get the tool to behave differently.

Increased application volume

More applications, especially AI-generated ones, make anomalies harder to spot. The higher the volume, the less likely fraudulent applications are going to be spotted.

AI personas

AI tools can create highly convincing candidate personas, allowing individuals to appear far more qualified than they actually are. This results in bad actors having direct access to sensitive information.

Where Fraud Happens

Application

Fake CVs, exaggerated profiles, virus filled documents.

Assessment

AI-assisted responses, stolen work samples.

Interview

False identities, coached answers.

Background Checks

Fake documents and references.

Employment

Bad actors, theft, policy breaking.

Identity fraud can take place at any stage.

What Talent Leaders Are Saying

In May 2026, we brought together 19 senior Talent Acquisition and People leaders together for a discussion on ‘The Evolving Talent Landscape: Hiring Risk & The Role of Trust’

The conversation delivered some profound insights:

- **AI-generated candidate fraud is now sophisticated enough to deceive experienced recruiters.**
- **Hiring risk is shifting from a one-off background check to continuous workforce risk.**
- **Talent Acquisition, Security and Compliance teams must share the responsibility of identifying AI candidate fraud to protect the organisation.**
- **Recruiters are now the first line of defence against workforce fraud, therefore require adequate training.**
- **The biggest challenge is strengthening security without compromising the candidate experience.**

"

I'm now spending more time with my **security team** than I am with my own **recruitment team.**

Vice President, Talent Acquisition at an S&P 100 Financial Bank

"Perhaps the biggest surprise for me was how normal these conversations have already become.

When one leader shared they'd experienced two AI-enabled fraud incidents in a single week, there wasn't disbelief around the table, there was recognition.

That tells us that candidate fraud has moved beyond isolated incidents and is becoming an operational challenge that Talent teams need to be equipped to manage alongside hiring itself.

In my opinion, the organisations that respond successfully won't be those with the most checks. They'll be the ones that rethink where and how trust is established across the entire hiring and post-hire journey."

James Ballard
Co-Founder & Managing Partner at Annapurna

Your Action Plan

Next 30 Days

- Audit your current hiring process to identify where identity is first verified in your process.
- Assess your current screening process to ensure it's up-to-date and sufficient for today's hiring environment.
- Identify high-risk roles – prioritise positions with access to sensitive data, financials, or critical infrastructure.

Next 90 Days

- Provide scenario-specific and policy training to recruiters.
- Introduce layered verification to avoid relying on a single identity check.
- Create a documented process for recruiters to follow when something doesn't look right.

Next 12 Months

- Define who is accountable for candidate identity fraud and when in the candidate journey that may change.
- Schedule annual reviews of your recruitment process to ensure verification practices remain sufficient.
- Create an AI hiring policy that clearly outlines where AI can support recruitment.

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