

Feature

News digest

You're hired! Or did you lie on your CV?

RECENT research by CIFAS, the UK's Fraud Prevention Service, revealed a disturbing trend of people lying on application forms whilst the recent winner of The Apprentice, Lee McQueen, was found to have lied on his CV to get on the show, writes Sarah Jane Turcan.

Failing to carry out thorough checks may make an organisation liable for any losses incurred or put the health and safety of its employees or members of the public at risk.

Where do I start? Create a policy to check that information provided on application forms is valid. It must state what information needs to be checked, how to do this and what to do if there is any doubt regarding the information provided.

What about data protection?

Any checks must be carried out in line with Part 1 of the Employment Practices Data Protection Code with checks ideally only carried out on successful applicants.

What needs to be checked?

The information provided on the form or CV needs to be verified by following up references and checking qualifications and work history.

References

Offers of employment should always be conditional on receipt of satisfactory references. Ensure that the company which is providing the reference exists and obtain, as a minimum, the dates of employment, the job title and the type of work the individual carried out.

Verify application forms or CVs

Request original certificates, evidence of training or licences to check academic and vocational qualifications. Ensure there are no unexplained gaps or breaks in employment or discrepancies in dates provided.

Criminal Records

Certain jobs require Criminal Records Bureau checks before the individual can start work. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (coming into force during 2008) will require certain employers to only employ people who have been through the new centralised vetting process.

Permission to work in the UK

Check that the potential employee has permission to work in the UK prior to starting work. It is a civil offence (with a fine of up to £10,000) if an employer fails to carry out these checks and a criminal offence to knowingly hire an illegal worker.

More information: Sarah Jane Turcan, partner, Charles Russell Employment and Pensions Service Group, 01242 221122 or email sarahjane.turcan@charlesrussell.co.uk.



ADVICE: Sarah Jane Turcan

The county's getting creative

Gloucestershire is enjoying a growing reputation as a hotbed for creative industries. Sue Bradley finds out more about this growth industry.

THE media industry and spin-off enterprises in Gloucestershire are heading for a thousand million pound turnover over the next decade.

It is estimated that throughout the county, creative businesses already bring in more than £808 million and provide employment for almost 9,000 people.

Meanwhile events such as the Cheltenham International Screenwriters' Festival attract a glittering array of high profile guests and further cement Gloucestershire's reputation as a media industry hotbed.

At least 1,900 companies and small enterprises in Gloucestershire are directly involved in creative work.

These include the Cheltenham Film Studios and media service enterprises like Snow Business of Ebley, near Stroud, which provides more than 160 different types of synthetic snowflakes for everything from blockbuster movies to advertising shoots.

Most media companies, however, employ an average of fewer than five people and include production companies, artists, web designers, software creators, photographers and fashion designers. Latest reports show that the creative industries are a big growth sector with around half their number fewer than 10 years old.

And with further and higher education centres in the county offering a host of media-related courses, the number and range of businesses are set to increase yet further in the years ahead.

Meanwhile, research shows that the media industry is self sustaining with around 70 per cent of businesses supported by a mainly local customer base.

At the heart of this activity is the Gloucestershire Media Group – a not-for-profit organisation with a membership of more than 280.

It was set up to support the development and expansion of media companies, individuals and activities and provides networking events and training opportunities ranging from web design to sound recording and editing, visual effects and lighting.

GMG's communications co-ordinator Emma Heathcote-James, who is based at the Cheltenham Film Studios, believes more and more media companies are finding Gloucestershire a good place to work and grow.

"There is a growth of media companies in



GOOD LOCATION: Emma Heathcote-James

this county. Why move to London and become a little fish in a big pond?" she said.

"GMG works very closely with Gloucestershire First, Business Link, HE and FE establishments looking after everyone in the industry from school leavers, graduates and freelancers to full blown production companies. Our campaign is both internal upskilling our members as well as promoting Gloucestershire."

Most GMG members are freelancers working in television, film and new media as well as corporate communications. GMG provides practical help in the form of grants and bursaries for members to help them build their businesses and stay competitive in the local, national and international market places.

The organisation is managed by a voluntary steering group, with members from county industries and organisations, and funded by South West Screen, the regional screen agency set up by the UK Film Council, the South West of England Regional Development Agency, Learning and Skills Council Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire First and Cheltenham Borough Council.

For more information about Gloucestershire Media Group visit the website: www.thegmg.org.

Numbers game

£808 million

Turnover of media industries

9,000

People employed in media

1,900

Companies involved in creative work

"There is a growth of media companies in this county. Why move to London and become a little fish in a big pond?"

Emma Heathcote-James



THE WHITE STUFF: Steve Shelley of Snow Business

Case study Cordial AV

PRODUCTION company Cordial AV has plugged a gap in the market with its range of film and video production services. Owners Tim and Mandy Pellatt have gone from strength to strength since starting the Gloucester-based business in 2001.

Cordial AV is primarily a video production company, making films for private and public sector organisations. Over the years it has expanded its facilities to offer the full spectrum of video production services and now works with a wide range of clients. These include blue chip companies such as Ecclesiastical Insurance, local authorities including Gloucestershire County Council, and news agencies and publishers such as Gloucestershire Media, through to start-up SMEs, PR agencies, training companies, event venues and manufacturers.

Recent broadcast work has included footage of the installation of flood barriers around the Mythe Treatment Works at Tewkesbury in July 2007 which was shown on BBC, ITV, CH4 and Sky TV news.

The company also has a training arm – Cordial Media Training – which evolved from its involvement with the Viewfinder Film Festival. Its series of special filmmaking workshops for primary schools in Gloucestershire aims to encourage the next generation of filmmakers by working with children and helping them develop skills in terms of putting together storyboards and scripts, filming and producing their very own films. Some of these films were screened at CineWorld, Cheltenham in March this year.

Tim has been making films since the age of 13, but he initially started out in graphic design within the print industry, before combining his love of filmmaking and design with his interest in technology to specialise in multi-media. He set up Cordial AV at his home in Abbeymead, Gloucester seven years ago before moving the business to a studio at the city's Morelands Trading Estate in 2006. The new base provides ample room for a range of equipment and facilities, including a voiceover booth, two edit suites and studio.



While Tim and Mandy's roots lie in Gloucestershire, the couple have found the county to be an ideal location for their business.

"We realised there was a real gap in the market," said Mandy. "Over the years our business has grown largely due to word of mouth recommendations."

"With today's technology there is no need for companies like ours to be based in London."

"Gloucester is ideally placed for areas such as Birmingham, Oxford and the South West and its closeness to motorways makes it easy to travel to shoots."



PLUGGED A GAP: Tim and Mandy Pellatt of Cordial AV with Rob James, Cordial Media Training, with figures for their animation film, Isolation