July 29, 2026

Equifax Survey: Three in Four HR Professionals Report Challenges with Fabricated and Misleading Candidate Information

Additional Findings Underscore AI's Emergence as Both an Operational Advantage and a Source of New Challenges for HR Teams

ATLANTA, July 29, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Equifax® (NYSE: EFX) today announced the results of the company's latest HR Trends Survey, finding that employers are increasingly challenged to distinguish between genuine qualifications and embellished information received from job applicants. Based on responses from more than 350 HR executives and professionals at the SHRM 2026 Annual Conference, the findings reveal that nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents say they encounter challenges with fabricated or misleading candidate information, with half (50%) of respondents citing challenges with employment history. The findings also demonstrate that artificial intelligence is helping HR teams work more efficiently but also making hiring more complex.

The survey shows that more than one-third (36%) of respondents say AI-generated candidate content has reduced their confidence in hiring decisions, though nearly eight in 10

(78%) report AI is improving hiring and onboarding efficiency. As HR leaders work to improve employee experience, modernize workforce operations and navigate evolving candidate expectations, the findings suggest AI is becoming a catalyst for greater operational efficiency while reinforcing the need for HR professionals to balance AI's efficiency gains with transparency, compliance and human judgment.

"Even in these early stages, HR is seeing meaningful efficiency gains from investments in AI," said Chris Johnson, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Employer Services at Equifax Workforce Solutions. "The next phase of opportunity will come from optimizing the use of trusted, high-quality data to help spot candidate AI-created content. That combination helps HR leaders make more informed decisions, strengthen confidence in the hiring process and create more time to focus on the employee experience."

The survey also found that improving employee experience and engagement remains HR's top workforce management challenge. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of survey respondents cited employee experience as a top challenge, widening its lead since last year's survey over attracting and retaining talent (45%). The findings suggest organizations are placing more emphasis on supporting and engaging existing employees rather than focusing primarily on recruitment. AI is supporting this effort by reducing administrative burdens and allowing HR teams to spend more time on employee engagement, retention and workforce development.

Confidence in detecting fabricated candidate information is improving

In addition to the half of respondents who cited employment history as the most frequent area of candidate misrepresentation, more than one-third (35%) have also reported encountering fabricated or misleading candidate-provided information related to education, credentials or licenses, reinforcing the importance of data-driven verification processes.

At the same time, nearly seven in 10 (69%) respondents said they are confident in their organization's ability to detect fabricated or misleading candidate information, up from 63% last year. However, only one in four (24%) said they are "very confident," suggesting employers must continue adapting their verification strategies as AI and other technologies make candidate information more difficult to validate.

"In a complex hiring market, the smartest approach is simple: trust but verify," said Bart Lautenbach, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Talent Solutions for Equifax Workforce Solutions. "As AI-generated candidate content becomes more sophisticated, organizations need verification strategies that keep pace. Reliable, more comprehensive employment, education, identity and licensing data can help employers make more confident hiring decisions."

Compliance remains an "always-on" priority

The share of HR professionals who cited maintaining compliance with laws and regulations as a workforce management challenge increased from 23% in 2025 to 27% in 2026. The findings suggest compliance has become an "always-on" priority as organizations adopt AI and other emerging technologies. Increasingly, HR leaders are focused on ensuring innovation is grounded in the governance and controls needed to use it responsibly.

"Today's HR leaders are managing an ever-changing, high-stakes compliance landscape," added Johnson. "Those who lead the way are deploying technology to help automate everyday tasks while using trusted data and insights to more confidently make the decisions that will help shape the future of work."

Methodology

The second annual HR Trends Survey from Equifax was conducted at the SHRM 2026 Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, from June 16–18, 2026, to better understand how HR professionals are navigating workforce management, hiring fraud and AI adoption. A total of 353 HR professionals participated in the survey. Vendors and students were excluded from the final results.

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