

Employment Screening Today – A Travelers’ Advisory!

In today’s employment environment, HR managers are faced with catastrophic tasks concerning the hiring, maintenance and development of employees, with the single most difficult task centered in the hiring mode.

Not only are prospective employers faced with the largest available potential workforce since the Second World War, but, as things have become more sophisticated, so have the deception techniques of those who would shaft you and your company.

Negligent hiring, sexual harassment, and frivolous Employee lawsuits have increased sharply in recent years, as have the incidents of workers’ compensation fraud and employee theft.

What Can You Do?

In the area of hiring the most qualified candidate for the job, there are the reference checks, the employment and education verification and the background check.

A good background check should include a thorough candidate identification, financial and driving histories and criminal convictions at any and all court levels.

Sounds simple, doesn’t it? Unfortunately, it isn’t that easy. Today, you must conduct as thorough a check on the company doing your screening as you would on screening your candidates. Why? As mentioned, a lot of little companies have sprung up touting the wonders of overnight background checks, some of which could be illegal. A number of these firms which rely upon database research to compile the background data, without so much as a verification of the information discovered.

Case in point. A well known HMO recently settled out of court with a group of families, two of whom suffered the loss of their mothers because a psychopathic orderly took it upon himself to call patients and tell them that they had cancer. Two women committed suicide and fourteen others sought serious psychiatric help to get them through the problems that didn’t really exist.

Yes, the HMO did indeed do a background check – one that was low-cost and was ordered on a computer screen. No record was found, and the candidate was hired. No one took the time to learn that this individual had just been released from prison in Massachusetts one year before for doing the same thing at a Boston-area hospital.

In this case, the HMO saved a few dollars on the background, but the result was a \$14 million settlement!

When hiring a background check firm, look for stability, longevity, a good track record, and one that isn't afraid to refer you to any of its clients. Look for professional memberships, and above all, find out how they do their criminal conviction research. If they do it by database or computer, you could be better off if you stay away.

Thomas C. Lawson, CFE, CII is President and Founder of [APSCREEN](#) International, the world's leading full service Consumer Reporting Agency. Lawson is called "one of the real pros" as he has helped to reshape laws including employment screening permissible credit reporting, asset discovery and fraud examination. Tom is a Life Member of: ACFE, ASIS, SHRM, PIHRA, PNRRA, PRRN, CII, WAD, WIN, FCAOC and OCEMA.