

BUSINESS

Informed hiring decisions

Essential information you need to know.

BY CATHY TAYLOR



In the last issue we looked at guidelines for hiring including why background checks are crucial, as well as outlined guidelines for choosing an employment screening company. Now we'll examine some of the common myths surrounding background checks and give you the real facts.

Most people underestimate what it takes to run a complete background check. One of the most predominant myths in this industry is the belief that it's easy to buy one source so you can make a quick decision. For example, if you believe that just data checking a prospect's criminal record, or ordering a fingerprint report will give you enough information to make an informed decision, you are seriously mistaken. A thorough screening requires numerous checks and balances in order to compile an accurate and valuable report.

The first step in running a background check is to verify that you are researching the right person. With the rising rate of identity theft, this process becomes even more critical. What if your applicant has a very common name, or you

aren't sure you even have their real name? A trained employment screener conducts an extensive, multi-step "Candidate Identification Process" that fully identifies real name, prior address history, aliases, and so on.

The second common myth presumes that online databases are a complete records check and as such just as good as any other method used in the hiring process.

This couldn't be further from the truth. Online repositories are a compilation of multiple jurisdictions, developed in proprietary languages, or bridged into a single operating repository. The key element in any repository is *file retrieval technology*. Like "optical character recognition" (OCR), high-quality, and technically competent or robust technology of this type is very expensive. As a result, the majority of online databases are extremely limited in scope.

Traditionally speaking, unless you are a huge corporation or government agency, with unlimited resources, most compilers can't afford the level

of file retrieval capability necessary to yield at least a 98% result. So most file retrieval software programs might give you an 88% to 92% retrieval success rate, which means 8% to 12% of the time, a "No Record Found" is returned. What if your applicant is in that latter percentage? Criminal records specifically must be hand-researched at the court level in every jurisdiction in which an applicant has lived. Otherwise, you are getting only a piece of the total picture.

This story might help you understand the nature of repositories better. A couple of years ago, the Internal Revenue Service tried a compilation approach to bring all of their operating systems under one roof. They spent hundreds of millions of dollars and failed. They kept throwing more money at the problem, and eventually over another three year period, they got the system right - not by integrating or bridging operating systems, but by discarding their old systems in favor of one single common operating format, so basically, everyone had the same

technology. This exact same thing happened with the FBI.

The biggest problem with huge repositories of information lies in importing all of the different data from numerous sources with various operating systems, different software and several levels of security, into one compiled database. It's a never-ending challenge.

The bottom line is that any repository should *only* be used as a lead generation tool, and not as a definitive source on which to make a final decision.

The last industry myth that should be put to rest is that one should never hire a person with a criminal record. The whole reason to do a background check in the first place is so you can make an *informed decision*.

The primary goal is to know that you are getting the truth from the moment an application is completed. And, part of a good screener's job is to see the "holes" in the information submitted including where information has been left out or is erroneous.

Not all people with criminal records are unemployable. Ultimately, you have to evaluate

the crime, its sentence, and the individual in relation to the job description and the organizational culture.

It's true that most of us have stuff we'd like to clean up from our past and maybe in our

credit, driving or criminal histories. The most important thing is for an employer to be armed with the truth, so that he/she can make an intelligent hiring decision. **tw**



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Achieving financial success

A salute by a CAM graduate

I have spent years looking for a career that would bring the financial success that I wanted for my family and me. For over 10 years I worked as a medial billing assistant and collector. I have spent most of my life helping others obtain that success while I took the back seat and watched it all happen. I knew that I wanted something better - I just didn't know what.

I came across an ad for the **College of Automotive Management** while I was searching through an employment magazine. What instantly grabbed my attention was not only were the programs incredibly short but the average earnings of a full time Finance Manager were above and beyond what I had ever seen before. I decided to take a chance and made an appointment to visit the school. After meeting the staff and hearing of all of the successes of past alumni, I was hooked.

My experiences with the college were nothing that I could have anticipated. The instructors were so helpful with any questions I had and gave me the one-on-one teaching that I needed. I built a very personal relationship with the placement department, as they took the time to really get to know me and what I wanted for my new career. I wish to thank them for having such faith in me and holding my hand throughout the entire process as I entered this new field.

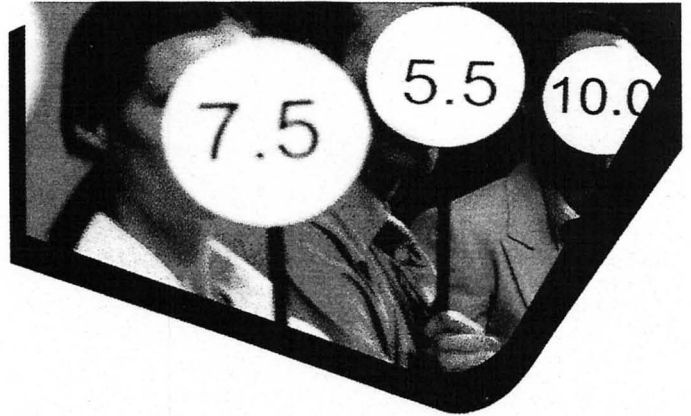
A previous graduate had

recently been promoted to General Manager and needed a Finance Manager for one of his stores. I had no Finance experience let alone any automotive experience and was hesitant as to why they would hire me at such a high level position. Not only did the dealership believe in the school but they had such success with the college's alumni that they rarely hired anyone else. I interviewed for the position and am now the Finance Manager.

I am so blessed to have found the College as they have helped me achieve my dreams and goals. I will always be thankful to the school, especially to the instructors and those wonderful people in the placement department. It was Dave Gorman, an instructor, who was my mentor, my inspiration and a wonderful person and educator. I highly commend the school for having such excellent instructors and staff. **The College of Automotive** has truly impacted my life - and I write this as a way to encourage others to take that leap of faith and give them a call. Be prepared to find yourself on the road to financial success!



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