

BUSINESS

Employment screening

Critical guidelines you need to know before hiring anyone.

BY CATHY TAYLOR

We don't like to think about people doing harm to ourselves or others. The reality, however, is that we live in a country with one of the highest rates of financial crimes, including embezzlement, fraud, theft, etc. And, that's just the beginning.

Let's look at just a few statistics on what the FBI reports is the fastest growing crime in the U.S. - employee theft:

- U.S. Chamber of Commerce reports that \$50 billion dollars are lost annually due to employee theft and fraud and that 20% of all businesses fail due to the same reason.

- According to an Ernst & Young Report, "*White Collar Crime: Loss Prevention through Internal Control*", companies lose 1% to 2% of their sales to crime -- most committed by, or in collusion with, employees.

Employee theft, negligent hiring, sexual harassment, and workers' compensation fraud are just a few of the liabilities an employer has to face in today's hiring environment.

Some incidents can be horrifying as in the case of an Arizona Fitness Club which hired an unscreened applicant who later raped and murdered a female patron while she lounged in the sauna. Is it any wonder that employment screening has become mandatory?

Not only do you want to avoid hiring criminals, don't you want to hire the *right* candidate who is most *qualified* for the job? All of this information can be ascertained through a proper background check from a company that knows what they are doing,

and/or which can supplement an already existent screening program.

Critical tips when choosing an employment screening company

When choosing an employment screening firm, look for longevity first with a track record that can be verified with numerous references from clients. Also look for professional memberships in organizations such as ASIS, SHRM, PIHRA, NPRRA, NAPBS, to name just a few.

Do you have a complete knowledge of

employment law? If not, your screener should know the laws involving the background screening process. It helps, if the firm you hire has an acute knowledge of "negligent hiring," much in the way that an Expert Witness might know, since it will be the expert witness who exposes the shortcomings of any hiring loophole which created the environment for the negligently hired employee to have come aboard in the first place!





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Does the prospective screener have knowledge and understanding of current HR Management systems? How about corporate *Due Diligence* programs or *Factual Employment Screening* programs that train people to find fraudulent applications and false identities?

In short, can your vendor help keep you from unwanted litigation? Unless you or someone in your company is an expert in employment law, you are putting your company at significant risk. If you are using any of the multitudes of online databases that have become available recently, it's not likely you are protected.

Not only do these companies decrease your risk of exposure, they may even add to it. For example, let's say you are currently using an employment screener who does not require you to provide a signed release

for each applicant. Sounds relatively harmless, doesn't it?

The truth is these companies have had you waive liability to them when you signed up for an account so they can avoid the time and effort it takes involved in this critical step. In the case of an audit, your company is responsible for producing a signed application and therefore liable if you don't have one on file. A good employment screener provides signatures for these audits and you'll never even know when they occur. A typical lawsuit of this nature could cost your company six figures. Can you think of any good reason to take this kind of risk?

Join us again in the next issue of *Today's Woman* and we'll expose several common myths about background checks and give you the real facts about what you *must* have, including: a thorough candidate identification process, financial and driving history and hand-researched criminal court records. We'll also show you how to use this information to make the best hiring decisions.

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Cathy Taylor is a marketing consultant with over 25 years experience. She specializes in internet marketing, strategy and plan development, as well as management of communications and public relations programs for small business sectors. She can be reached at Creative Communications: creative-com@cox.net or by visiting www.internet-marketing-small-business.com

Tips for a job interview

So you have an interview scheduled with your dream company. You know you are qualified for the job, but are you "interview ready"? Here are a few helpful tips that will assist you as you prepare for a successful job interview:

1. Try to obtain a job description of the position available so that you can prepare a list of 6-10 pertinent questions to ask during the interview process
2. Do a little research and acquire background knowledge of the company. Have set career goals and an understanding of how you can contribute to their organization.
3. Practice makes perfect! Have your friends help by conducting mock interviews. This will allow you to minimize mistakes and increase your confidence during the interviewing process.
4. Make sure you adhere to the appropriate dress code, arrive 15 minutes early, and bring 2-3 copies of your resume. Greet your future employer with a firm handshake, good eye contact, and smile!