



## REDUCING INSIDER THREATS WITH PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING

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**Employers today are paying more attention to the potential risks that employees pose to their organisations, regardless of whether they are long-time employees or temporary workers and contractors.**

The ability for individuals to cause havoc from within an organisation is an issue that continues to grow annually, and has come to be known as insider threat.

Key to combating the potential danger posed by insider threats is to understand the various forms it takes and how at-risk employees compromise systems or information from within a company. These kinds of threats range from theft of intellectual property, trade secrets, or embezzlement of company funds, amongst others.

Despite the wide array of white collar crimes that pose a risk to organisations globally, recognising those potential employees that might pose a risk has proven effective in pre-emptively preventing insider crime. Pre-employment background checks are an often undervalued weapon in the arsenal of employers, despite the important role they play in the overall employment process.

Identifying potential risk factors in candidates can help you gain a better understanding of how an individual will fit into your company culture, if their qualifications are relevant to the position, and if they have a history of disciplinary

issues at previous employers. An all-encompassing pre-employment screening program should assess the mental and psychological health of a candidate, as well as providing a platform for continuous evaluation of their performance during their duties.

Hiring an employee represents a significant investment from your side, both in terms of financial outlay and time. Covering your bases during the hiring process can ensure success in the long-term for both you and the candidate. By conducting an expansive and in-depth pre-employment background check, you can have access to an invaluable risk management tool that helps protect you against potentially disastrous hiring decisions.

There are two key components to an effective background check – verifying the information and credentials of a candidate, such as educational and employment histories, as well as conducting research into their personal records, which could include their criminal record or credit reports, amongst others. In cases such as these where sensitive personal information is being handled, it is often more safe and effective to make use of a competent background screening company so as to avoid any potential legal pitfalls.

Comprehensive pre-employment screening can effectively minimise the effect of candidates lying during the interview process. Instead of hiring an individual and finding out, after a number of months, that they lied about their qualifications for example, pre-employment screening allows an employer to clarify this information before hiring and allows you to act accordingly.

However even with seemingly sound hires there is still the potential for them to pose an insider threat to your organisation. Employees with a greater level of access to sensitive information are often in a position of power that, should they wish, would allow them to take advantage of this. Additionally, risk factors such as an urgent need for money, the introduction of substance abuse, or other similar circumstances could lead an otherwise safe employee to pose a security threat. In order to minimise the risk of these situations arising you need to ensure that your background check encompasses ongoing screening during your employees' period of employment that continuously assesses their performance and risk potential in the organisation.

The fact of the matter is that employers need to stay on the ball before and during an employee's lifecycle at any given company. While the cost of pre-employment screening processes is often considered just an added expense, the

security of knowing how effective and trustworthy your employees are will not only help save money in the long-term, but ensure a stable and secure work environment for you and your workforce.

Bottom line: Employers must conduct due diligence before AND after hiring an employee. While this requires spending money, and the cost of background checks can be seen as a drag on the bottom line, the average cost of a screening usually equals the salary paid to employees for their first day of work. To paraphrase a well-known 1970's marketing slogan: "You can pay (a little) now, or pay (a lot) later."

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