



Pre-Employment Screening: Advantages and Disadvantages

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ABSTRACT

Employers face a number of human resource challenges. Recruiting the right employee for the right job is one of the most critical challenges. Employers can no longer rely solely on candidate interviews to make a sound hiring decision. Pre-employment screening is a process that allows employers to verify information such as education, and prior job history and performance. In addition, the screening process reveals important information about a candidate's prior behaviour which can help an employer assess potential risk posed by the candidate. Prior behaviour can include substance abuse, credit history and bankruptcy, driving records, and criminal convictions, and civil litigation. This research paper focuses on meaning of pre-employment screening, need behind conducting the pre-employment screening and the advantages and disadvantages of pre-employment screening.

KEYWORDS

Pre-employment screening, Back ground verification, Criminality checks, Education checks.

INTRODUCTION

Pre-employment screening refers to the process of investigating the backgrounds of potential employees.

Background checks are often requested by employers on job candidates for employment screening, especially on candidates seeking a position that requires high security or a position of trust, such as in a school, hospital, financial institution, airport, and government. These checks are traditionally administered by a government agency for a nominal fee, but can also be administered by private companies. Background checks can be expensive depending on the information requested. Results of a background check typically include past employment verification, credit history, and criminal history.

These checks are often used by employers as a means of judging a job candidate's past mistakes, character, and fitness, and to identify potential hiring risks for safety and security reasons. Background checks are also used to thoroughly investigate potential government employees in order to be given a security clearance.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the meaning of Pre-employment screening.
- To study the need and purpose of Pre-employment screening.
- To know the advantages and disadvantages of Pre-employment screening.

Meaning of Pre-employment screening:

Pre-employment screening is a process of investigating the backgrounds of potential employees and is commonly used to verify the accuracy of an applicant's claims as well as to discover any possible criminal, workers compensation claims, or employer sanctions.

Types of checks conducted under Pre-employment screening:

1. Academic Verifications
2. Character Reference Check
3. Gaps in employment history
4. Gap in educational history
5. Identity and Address Verification - whether the applicant is who he or she claims to be.
6. Generally includes verification of the candidate's present and previous addresses. Can include a money laundering, identity and terrorist check and one to verify the validity of passports.

7. Whether an applicant holds a directorship
8. Credit History (credit score is not included)
9. Purchase fire arms

The Job applicant provide authorization for the pre-employment screening at the time of employment. The staffing representative (person who is responsible for conducting the pre-employment screening) notify the screening requirement during the extension of the job offer to the candidate.

PURPOSE OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING

The purpose of standard and compulsory pre-employment checks is to ensure that a new employee:

1. Is who they say they are;
2. Is legally entitled to work in a specific country (India, UK, US and etc).
3. Has nothing in their employment history that would make them unsuitable for the role (e.g. previous gross misconduct, previous settlement agreement with the University, etc);
4. Has the qualifications, skills and/or experience they have claimed to have and which are required for the role;
5. Does not have a medical or other condition which would make the role unsuitable.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGE OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING.

ADVANTAGES:

Increase Applicant and New Hire Quality

A complete employee screening process:

- Results in fewer applications with serious discrepancies
- Discourages applicants who are trying to hide something
- Increases applications from applicants who want to work in a safe environment
- Increases the quality of new hires due to an improved applicant pool and improved selection process

Reduce Workplace Violence

According to a survey conducted by the US Dept of Justice, 1.75 million days of work are lost each year by victims of workplace violence. The cost in lost wages account for about \$55 million per year. When less direct, but further-reaching costs are considered, such as lost productivity, legal expenses, and diminished public image, the annual cost of workplace violence could measure in the billions. Employers have a moral and legal obligation to provide a safe work environment. Therefore, knowing whether a potential employee has been involved in criminal activity (such as drug or other substance

abuse, reckless behavior, dishonesty, theft, or dangerous and violent behaviors) allows the employer to determine if an applicant is appropriate for the job and work environment.

Protect Against Negligent Hiring Liability

Negligent hiring liability holds employers responsible both for what they do know and what they should have known about their employees. It can even hold employers responsible for employees actions off the job. Courts have repeatedly affirmed that employers have a duty to exercise reasonable care in hiring individuals who, because of the nature of their employment, may pose a threat to the public.

Reduce Employee Dishonesty Losses

Theft and fraud is something of which employers are aware but perhaps a bit complacent. The true prevalence of these crimes is pervasive and not well known. Approximately 30% of employees admit to stealing from their employers

Prior history is a good predictor of future performance. Background checks are used by employers to verify the freely volunteered information provided by applicants (usually through a resume or job application). Background check tools such as Criminal Record Checks, Prior Employment Verifications, Education Verification, License Verifications, Drug Screening and other research tools can reveal potential problem areas. Through careful and wise use of the information obtained in complete background checks, employers greatly reduce or eliminate the risk of employee dishonesty.

Screen Employees with Access to living Quarters

Apartment owners, property management firms, and maintenance and custodial companies are just a few of the employers that face potentially costly problems caused by dishonest and criminal behaviour of employees who have access to residences and living quarters.

All employees (including temps, part-time workers, contractors and volunteers) who have access to consumer residences or living quarters should be backgrounded. A background check, or application verification, verifies the information provided by the candidate using independent sources such as criminal and civil court records, prior employer records, educational institution records, and credit or motor vehicle reports

Reduce Employee Turnover: Hire The Right People

Pre-Employment Background Checks help screen in employees who stay longer because employers are able to make the "Right Hire" the first time. Employers are able to hire the right people by increasing the accurate and objective information available to hiring managers.

Bad Hires Are Expensive

According to a survey conducted by Right Management Consultants, the replacement cost of a bad hire is 1 to 5 times the salary of the job in question. Consider the direct and indirect cost of recruiting and hiring, the direct and indirect cost of training, and the wasted wages and benefits. Also consider the management, administrative, and legal costs of a bad hire, plus the direct and indirect cost of damaged or stolen funds, materials, equipment, work environment, customer goodwill, and employer reputation. Verifying applicant claims helps the employer make the right hire the first time and is clearly worth the investment in a thorough background check.

Meet Regulatory, Insurance, And Customer Requirements

Many employers are required by government regulation, their insurance carriers, and/or their customers to conduct background checks. To receive all the benefits discussed above, employers should meet any external requirements and then seriously consider obtaining more complete background checks where appropriate.

DISADVANTAGES OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING

The cons of thorough employment background check for employers are primarily costs in time and money.

Cheap and/or poorly done background checks are a waste of money and may be worse than no background check at all because they may give a false sense of security and may not follow federal and state legal requirements. Quality background checks easily pay for themselves.

A quality background check vendor will assist the employer in establishing proper procedures

The Disadvantages of pre-employment screening for employees are primarily:

- Possible mistakes in the background check
- Exposure of lies and forged documents
- Old mistakes and problems being uncovered
- Concerns about privacy.

Mistakes can and do occur in background checks. After all, the information in a background check was created, compiled, maintained, searched, and reported by fallible individuals. This is why it is important that employers give applicants the opportunity to review negative information before any adverse action is taken. If an applicant finds information in a background check report that is incomplete or inaccurate, the employer should be promptly informed. If errors are found on a background check, it is likely that the applicant will need to contact the original source of the information (employer, school, court clerk, etc.) and request the information be corrected. A background check vendor should be willing to re-investigate and reissue the report at no further charge.

Past mistakes and problems may well be uncovered by a thorough background check. During the job interview, a frank explanation of any past problems provides the applicant the opportunity to explain what happened and get any potential issues out on the table. Few jobs and employers require an absolutely clean record to be hired. Most employers can and do consider how long ago a problem occurred and whether the problem has any bearing on the position being considered.

Some feel that background checks are an invasion of privacy. Most background checks simply verify information provided by the applicant on the resume and/or job application. Unfortunately, many lie about their experience and credentials. Employers have the right and the responsibility to verify applicant-provided information and they have the legal requirement to provide a safe workplace for employees, customers, and members of the public.

Conclusion: Pre-employment background checks help an organization be more successful. That means greater profits to for-profit organizations and greater impact for non-profits. Poor hiring decisions can be minimized by implementing a recruitment process that includes work history, education, and reference verification and a series of position appropriate background checks. Background checks can include criminal history, driving record history, credit and bankruptcy history, and civil litigation history. It is important to implement a screening process that is consistently applied. Employers can be held liable for the actions of their employees if they have not taken reasonable steps to identify potential risks posed by the applicant. Negligent hiring lawsuits can cost a company million in legal fees as well as actual damages and punitive damages if the company is found to be negligent. Many companies choose to outsource some or all pre-employment screening to a

specialized firm. Companies who choose a pre-employment screening provider should exercise due diligence to make sure they have the specialized skills and knowledge required to perform all functions correctly.

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