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Why Background Screens Are a Must

Background screening is guaranteed to save you time and money when hiring employees. In conjunction with some basic interviewing and onboarding techniques, background screening is the easiest way to minimize employee theft and turnover. Yet a significant number of retailers, wholesalers and distributors don't run background checks; also, many others run ineffective and/or illegal checks.

I am not speaking hypothetically or based on information I have read but on real-world experience and feedback from my clients. (Disclaimer: One of my companies is a screening provider.)

Checking Out Checks

Question 1: Are background checks effective? They seem expensive and difficult to do, and getting results takes a long time.

Answer: Proper background screening is highly effective. Depending on the company you use as a screening provider, what you want to run and where you are located, a screening on a clerk will cost \$15 to \$45. Running a background screening takes about 5 minutes. It's very easy to manage, and many search results are returned within 10 minutes.

Question 2: I talk with local folks and the town police, and I look online to see if there are any issues. So why should I pay for background checks?

Answer: You are missing out on a lot of information that could affect your hiring decision, such as Social Security confirmation, sex-offender status and crimes committed in other counties and states.

► **Example 1:** One 20-year-old applicant two years ago went across state lines,

robbed a liquor store and beat up his girlfriend. Your current sources may not provide this information.

► **Example 2:** A clean-cut 30-something guy who has lived locally for the past few years and was even born in the area left for five years. While he was away, he was addicted to drugs and stole to pay for those drugs; he just came home after getting out of jail and rehab.



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These are the types of situations we have actually had reported to us by our clients when they call or email to say, "Thank you—you saved me from making a really bad hire."

► **Question 3:** I have a background-screening provider, so why should I talk with another one?

Answer: Just as with any other vendor, you always want to make sure you are getting the best quality of products, the newest offerings and a fair price for the services, so why would a screening provider be any different? Folks regularly switch to new providers based on searches their old provider never told them about,

quicker results, better customer service and cost savings.

Question 4: Do I really want or need to do drug testing?

Answer: I believe the answer to this question is yes, for two reasons. First, many people may not have a criminal record yet, but I would argue that the use of illegal drugs and the possibility of abusing them and becoming addicted is likely to lead to any number of criminal issues. Second, if an employee is using drugs, what is the likelihood of the person making errors in judgment, such as not handling a spill or fire properly? How about not being able to count change, or just making sure the customers are actually paying for their purchases?

Yes, drug testing does add costs to the process, but isn't it worth it not to have to deal with these issues later?

Final Thoughts

If you are not doing background screening today, through a true background screening company, please ask other retailers or suppliers if they run background checks. If they do, find out who in their company runs the process, and talk with that person to find out how helpful the process is in avoiding bad hires. I think you will be surprised by just how many folks have positive screening experiences.

If you are using a background screening company and you have been with them for a while without looking at other options, it may be worth the time and effort to see if you could be getting more information, better information, quicker results and possibly lower costs. ■