

VIEW OF HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS ON BACKGROUND SCREENING METHODS AND EFFECTIVENESS

CONDUCTED BY HR.COM FOR THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND SCREENERs

In an increasingly global economy, employers are rightfully placing a premium on the safety of employees and the community. Employers continue to utilize professional background checks at a near universal rate, according to a newly released survey from the National Association of Professional Background Screeners. The second annual survey gauging the views of human resources professionals found that public safety was their top priority.

Employers of all sizes and locations report using background screening as part of their onboarding process, with a majority waiting until after an interview or job offer to conduct the background check. The number one challenge reported continues to be the length of time in getting results.

The Universal Utilization of Background Checks

Nearly all respondents stated they conduct background checks of some kind, with a majority saying they screen both part-time and full-time employees. Ninety-five percent of employers stated their organization conducts one or more types of employment background screening. Of those, 86 percent said they screen all full-time employees and

68 percent included part-time employees in their screening process. A background check is, in basic terms, information compiled on an individual which may be considered when determining eligibility for a job.

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Prioritization of Safety Remains Top Concern

The percentage of employers citing public safety as the top reason they conducted background checks remained at the top of the list in this year’s survey. A full 89 percent stated they conduct background checks to protect employees, customers and others. Other top reasons cited for screening: improving the quality of hires (52 percent), protecting company reputation (45 percent) and law/regulation requirements (44 percent).

Accuracy is Paramount

In the 2018 survey, human resources professionals reconfirmed their focus on accuracy with 98 percent stating that the accuracy of their background screenings is “very important.” This percentage was consistent with last year’s survey. At the same time, an increased number of respondents stated that the length of time to get results is the most significant challenge facing their

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organization when conducting background screens – 65 percent this year versus 62 percent in 2017.

Accuracy is critical for professional background screeners and an accurate background check is dependent on access to personal identifiers such as complete name and complete date of birth. However, redaction of identifiers, such as dates

of birth, by federal, state and local court systems can lead to delays in hiring. This construct is particularly true in the federal court data system, known as PACER, which systematically excludes dates of birth. This can lead to applicants losing out on a job while the search for identifiers to confirm or refute that a record matches the applicant is ongoing. The lack of identifiers in a system such as PACER can also impact the federal government which consistently has a backlog of Office of Personnel Management background checks – a backlog the Government Accountability Office recently labeled as “high risk.”

Multiple Types of Entities Use Background Checks; Usually After a Job is Offered

Nearly half of the respondents surveyed represented companies with fewer than 100 employees (45 percent). Forty-nine percent of entities represented were privately held, and 28 percent were non-profit. The number of companies waiting until after a job interview or conditional job offer to conduct a background check increased by three percentage points over last year to 89 percent. Sixty-two percent of respondents reported waiting until a conditional job offer is made.

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What Is, and Isn't, a Common Component of a Background Check

Some form of criminal history check continues to be the most commonly included component of a background check while the use of social media in the screening process remains low. Ninety-four percent include some form of criminal history check in their screening program. Seventy-three percent of employers currently do not use social media in their screening process, and only eight percent use social media for all candidates. To determine which components may be included in a background check, applicants are encouraged to consult with their prospective employers and property managers.

The National Association of Professional Background Screeners (NAPBS) commissioned HR.com to conduct an unprecedented national survey of 2,137 human resources professionals to gauge their views on background screening.

ABOUT NAPBS

Founded in 2003 as a not-for-profit trade association, the National Association of Professional Background Screeners (NAPBS) represents the interests of more than 675 member companies around the world that offer tenant, employment and background screening. NAPBS provides relevant programs and training aimed at empowering members to better serve clients and maintain standards of excellence in the background screening industry, and presents a unified voice in the development of national, state, and local regulations. For more information, visit www.napbs.com.

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