

## Doing Background Checks

Written by Steve Marr  
Tuesday, 10 May 2011 22:40

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Business leaders should consider background checks as part of the hiring process. King Solomon wrote, "The naive believes everything, But the sensible man considers his steps" (Proverbs 14:15 NASB).

An unfortunate reality today is many people misrepresent their background. ADP released a study a few years ago stating 50% of job applicants provided one or more material misrepresentation on an employment application, résumé or during an interview.

A number of background checks may be completed, based on the workplace situation. Criminal checks would be in order when personal care is given to children, or others. If a prospective employee has a criminal background you may want to restrict the possible jobs, or not hire at all. You don't want to put a convicted embezzler in charge of an accounting department, or be given unlimited accesses to the cash register. Those with a violent history may set you up for lawsuits if you failed to check the background and they injured an employee or customer.

Failure to check on the immigration status of employees can open up the possibility of fines or criminal charges leveled against employers.

Driving records should be checked if an employee would be driving as part of the job. Even if driving is very limited, or if they are driving a personal car checking the past driving record is important. Again, you can be sued if an employee causes an accident while driving, and you may be held liable for negligence if you allow a person to drive who received 5 tickets over the past two years.

You may want to do a credit check to determine a candidates credit score, if they have outstanding tax problems, past bankruptcies or civil judgments.

Drug testing is a common way to help hold down workmen's compensation insurance costs.

If the person holds any government issued licenses, ask for a copy of the license, or check

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their status. More than one employer has been held responsible for hiring non-licensed personal, even if by accident.

Education records and past employment records will verify claims of degrees, grades, or previous positions held. I almost hired a person who claimed to be a manager with another company, but when I checked the background reference I learned they were never a manager. I declined to offer the person a job.

I am not an attorney, so I encourage you to check the law in your location as to what background checks may be done and how they need to be conducted. Different states and cities have differing laws and regulations on how background checks may be done, and how information may be used. You will generally require a release from the prospective employee. Most attorneys can give you an overview at very little cost.

If you do background checks, be consistent. Check everybody's the same way, regardless of how well you know the applicant. You would not want to discriminate.

Identity theft, and other inaccurate information may be uncovered during a background check. A business needs to validate the accuracy before turning someone away.

Work through a policy on doing background checks, check out those key items before you hire. Remember, 50% of applicants have an untruthful statement, for me that is grounds not to hire a candidate.

You can read my related article on checking past employment references here: <http://bit.ly/IHhPts>

Steve Marr, Your Christian business Coach

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