

Tackling Screening:

The ultimate guide for effective and efficient pre-employment screening



Reduce the cost and effort of ensuring your candidates are who they say they are, while optimising the candidate experience.

Screening in numbers:

Nearly **£9,365,000** issued in fines and penalties for illegal workers between January – March 2019

75% of all applications contain inaccurate data

83% of candidates say a negative experience can change their minds about a role of a company that they once liked (Lever 2017)

38% of candidates are more likely to stay with a business if their experience is positive (RI, 2017)

46% of more than 1,000 workers and 300 senior managers reported they knew job applicants who misrepresented themselves and included false information on a CV

College and University registrar's report that at least **60%** of the verifications they receive contain falsified information

Candidates who experience positive onboarding have **54%** greater productivity rates (Avature)

Introduction

The job market has not only become increasingly competitive, but employers also have to deal with new regulations as government legislation continues to change. With new laws, increased data regulations and a tightening of online security, businesses need to work hard to ensure they are staying compliant and ahead of the game. In addition, they are striving to adapt to new ways of working demanded by today's changing workforce, all while ensuring their screening policies are keeping them compliant and protected. The outcome of Brexit is not likely to make things any simpler!

This guide will help your business understand what you should be screening for and the best practice approach for screening within your organisation.

Every year, Human Resources professionals are asked about their top business concern and every year they reply that it is finding, retaining and developing talent. In 2019, it has come out as a bigger concern than ever with it being a major challenge for 54% of businesses. Unfortunately the situation does not look like improving with **76%** of businesses expecting their workforce size to grow in the next year and only **7%** expecting it to decline. As many as **33%** of businesses have sizeable growth plans, expecting to hire at least an additional **6%** of their current workforce.

Whilst traditionally many have relied on slow and inefficient screening processes to vet candidates, not always having the right checks in place could result in a damaging mistake for organisations. The Home Office reported that between January 2019 and March 2019, a staggering £9,365,000 was issued in fines and penalties for illegal workers across the UK. An investigation from the BBC reported that thousands of people in the UK are applying for jobs with fake degrees that have been purchased, while up to 75 percent of all applications contain inaccurate information. Furthermore a recent report found that around a fifth of employers ask candidates about criminal records in potentially unlawful ways.

A Matter of Fact conducted research into Background Checks and found:

- 39% of all Background Checks had at least one serious flag
- 10% of Education Verifications had serious flags
- 23% of Employment Verifications had serious flags
- 44% of Driving Records had serious flags

Hiring candidates based on inaccurate or incomplete information could at best mean hiring someone who is less than desirable and at worst, someone who could have criminal or malicious intent. Naturally as a business, it is important that you are conducting the right checks, whether diversity screening, establishing a right to work checks or checking whether prospective employees have an unspent criminal record.

Compliance

Compliance and the ability to stay compliant in the face of ever changing legislation is a challenge for many organisations and some can find it overwhelming. This is why it is so important to embed compliant checks within your screening process. The correct checks undertaken early on ensure that nothing comes to light later that could damage the reputation of your business and your ability to attract future talent.

In the news: When it goes wrong

Health and Social Care sector:

In 2018, a woman was found to have supplied fake qualifications to work as a doctor for over twenty years. She claimed to have a degree from the University of Auckland, however she'd actually dropped out in her first year. The General Medical Council failed to check whether her documentation was genuine, therefore putting patients at risk.

Not for profit sector:

The Oxfam scandal is another instance of an organisation failing to conduct the correct background and personality screening checks that later led to untold damage to the business, both financially and to its reputation.

Retail sector:

A supermarket giant was fined £115,000 for employing foreign students whose work visas had either expired, or did not permit them to work the long hours they were undertaking. The breaches involved more than 30 students who were eventually deported and hefty fines for the company, not to mention bad press and an embarrassing situation

Recruitment sector:

While failure to adequately screen the correct documents can lead to legal action, it can also lead to huge internal losses. For example a large recruitment firm suffered when a senior executive who supplied fraudulent documents, siphoned over £300,000 from the business, resulting in a prison sentence for the executive and a damaged reputation for the business.

Where businesses plan to invest in 2019

HR professionals are clear on where their priorities lie and available data shows that businesses are investing accordingly:

57% Retaining employees and reducing staff turnover

56% Making HR processes more efficient

53% Maximising employee engagement

48% Finding qualified job candidates

(Personnel Today)

Whether you currently perform your screening in house or are looking to outsource to an external company, it is essential that you have a robust process in place.

Working with a reputable screening provider can take the hard work out of screening. It will ensure the quality of new candidates and protect your business against costly mistakes. It can also help to speed up the process and create a better candidate experience.

BENEFITS:

- Time to hire is faster – resulting in more talent being secured
- Positive candidate experience – leading to increased engagement and productivity
- Reduced admin time – freeing up resource and saving you money
- 3rd party relationships are consolidated into one – reducing risk and cost
- Consistency across the business is enforced – increasing compliance
- The business has a clear, audited history – reducing risk, time and money
- Compliance can help win new business in pitches – increasing revenue and profit

The background screening service from NSL Checking can bring all of your screening processes into one solution, creating a thoroughly robust system that works for you whatever the nature of your business or industry.



Your 5 top tips for effective screening:

1. Standardise the policy

Formalise your screening procedure as much as possible and implement it into every layer of the business. Communicate that no one is exempt and it's part of your standard company policy. Document the policy in writing to ensure that it is widely circulated and available to all employees and also serves as a protection for your company. Make sure that it outlines how you screen and why you do it. Understanding is key to adoption.

2. Communicate what you're doing

Transparency and communication are often the key to unlocking most difficult situations. Keep your candidates informed as to what is happening and what will happen next, as well as explaining why you're doing it. Not every candidate will care, in fact, the majority won't and will be happy for you to conduct the appropriate screening checks. However, some people can be nervous or concerned, so advise them of the process, stay in contact during onboarding and talk through your actions before you ask for personal or delicate information.

3. Remain confidential

You may come across candidates who have highly sensitive information they wish to keep private, so be discreet with personal data. For example, someone may have a criminal conviction for speeding or graffiti in their youth, however it may not be relevant to their job or stop them from doing excellent work. Reassure your candidates that all their personal information is treated as sensitive and highly confidential.

4. Partner with a reputable provider

Partner with a reputable screening provider to add credibility to the information you're asking for. If you are worried that you may be asking for the wrong information, they can also alleviate that pain point, leaving you free to focus on engaging with candidates and colleagues. By partnering with one screening provider who can support the wide range of screening checks you may need to undertake to cover all of the roles in your organisation, you can reduce time, effort, cost and most importantly, risk to your organisation.

5. Screen for your particular needs only

Your approach to screening should be designed to exclusively suit your business needs. Companies recruiting workers at a lower pay scale in high turnover industries may well need different practises than a company hiring professionals with advanced degrees. It is acceptable and recommended to screen some people differently to others. For example:

- Executives – who may have specific career backgrounds to check
- Those with access to financials, funds or sensitive material
- Roles with regulatory requirements, such as drivers or pilots
- People who work with children, the sick or the elderly
- Those who work from home may need less screening
- Safety sensitive positions – home care, deliveries

Conclusion

Conducting the right screening procedures and ensuring all your processes are compliant and efficient is your business safety net. Not only does it keep you trading and employing in the right way, but when done correctly, it will improve your time to hire, cost per hire and reduce your recruitment spend. It will also enhance your candidates' experiences, which in turn will lead to greater loyalty, lower attrition and increased productivity.

As background checks are fast becoming an essential part of all business practice, it is also essential that they are gathering the right information and giving employers the full picture. Partnering with a reputable screening provider will help you uncover issues and information that would not have otherwise been found. In a time when cost of hiring illegal or unqualified workers is so high, thorough, efficient and cost effective screening is imperative for your business and future success.

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