

3 good reasons to conduct background checks when hiring



Many employers use background checks as a regular part of their hiring processes. But “many” does not mean “all.” In fact, recent research conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management indicates smaller businesses tend to skip this important hiring step. Among companies with fewer than 100 employees, fewer than half conduct criminal background checks on job candidates vs. 83% for employers with at least 2,500 employees.

If yours is a smaller organization, you may understandably feel pressured to hire good candidates quickly. After all, you don’t have the hiring resources of a larger organization and might really need the help. But, in today’s complex and often litigious working world, background checks remain highly advisable. Here are three good reasons to conduct them:

1. To protect yourself legally. Among the various legal risks you face is being accused of “negligent hiring.” This is a legal concept used in lawsuits against employers that alleges an employee’s harmful actions (such as assault of a co-worker) could have been avoided had the employer more thoroughly vetted the worker before hiring. The cost of a background check today is likely a tiny percentage of the legal costs your organization could incur if such a lawsuit were filed.

2. To safeguard your business data and customers’ personal info. Although many data breaches are perpetrated by distant outsiders breaking into proprietary systems, the threat of an inside job is very real. A dishonest job candidate may be playing a “long game” of getting hired and then gradually siphoning data (or money) from your organization. Or he or she may simply steal sensitive information as soon as possible. In either case, a background check can raise red flags that warn you of these possibilities.

3. To improve your hiring process (and background checks aren’t that expensive anymore). Sometimes the hardest part of doing anything is changing existing processes. If you’ve hired new employees the same way for ages and never had a problem, background checks may seem unnecessary. But a hiring process that involves background checks is simply better. And they’re not as expensive as they used to be. Providers now have technology that makes the process much more efficient, and they have to price their services competitively.

If your organization is inexperienced in obtaining background checks, approach the matter carefully. You’ll need to jump through some legal hoops to comply with existing laws and regulations. We can work with you and your attorney to assess what’s appropriate for your organization.

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