

The High Price of Bad Hires

The price tag for hiring the wrong person can run thousands, even millions of dollars. With so much at stake, Corporate America is taking notice and implementing screening procedures for job applicants and existing employees.

Licensed private investigator Mark Shook, President of AccuSearch, Inc., a full-service, Phoenix, Arizona-based background screening agency, says employers are now more acutely aware than ever of the potential consequences of hiring an employee without first checking his or her background. "Over the past few years, more and more companies have come to us for pre-employment screening," he remarks. "Their worries go deeper than the mere fear of lost revenue. They are concerned with matters like employee safety, theft prevention and keeping violence out of the workplace."

Since 1989, AccuSearch has performed pre-employment background checks and other procedures for over 400 companies nationwide, including a large number of Fortune 500 companies. The agency, which also provides drug-testing services, offers customers a variety of procedures to promote safe hiring. These include education and employment verifications, reference checks, criminal and driving record checks, Social Security number traces, credit checks, federal and civil court records checks, drug testing and more.

Statistics show that about a third of all job applicants stretch the truth on applications. Steve Arruda, AccuSearch's Vice President of Client Relations, says prospective employees will sometimes provide false information about their name or date of birth to evade detection of past criminal wrongdoing. "When we run background checks, we take special precautionary measures to reduce the likelihood of a missed 'hit'.

Arruda advises those looking for a search agency to do some investigating themselves. "Make sure the screening firm you select is licensed, bonded and insured. Ask for references. Any reputable agency will gladly supply you with a list of satisfied customers. Inquire about additional costs and turnaround times. Find out if the agency has an actual physical location, or if they operate out of a home office or P.O. Box. Last, but not least, ask if you will be able to quickly reach someone knowledgeable once results are in and questions arise." Answer these questions, and you'll be on your way to making an informed decision.

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