

7 Ingredients to a Proper Background Screening (That Are Often Overlooked)

It's sad, but there are a lot of products and services that we routinely buy and actually *expect* to be undersold or disappointed with. The new phone is never quite as fast or convenient as advertised; the movie doesn't give us the deep laughs that were promised; the frozen pizza doesn't look the way it did on the box.

In a way, these are some of the most obvious symptoms of the marketing hype that's all around us, and we've become accustomed to tolerating it in some parts of our lives where we know advertisers like stretching the truth.

Some things should work exactly as they're supposed to, though. No one buys medicine expecting to get a watered-down version, and you couldn't get away with selling a substandard parachute. These are obvious examples, but the point is that when your life and/or future is on the line, you want to know you're getting something that's actually useful, not just an empty promise.

I'm mentioning this today because there are a lot of things that go into a proper, useful background screening check that aren't often given to businesses that think they're being protected. For that reason, it's much easier than most people realize for convicted criminals and individuals with dangerous backgrounds to "slip through the cracks" and join companies and nonprofits. They may even be entering homes and businesses on your behalf.

So what kinds of gaps exist with most background screening systems? I could write a list that's several pages long, but here are seven of the most important shortcomings:

- 1. Trained investigators.** Automated computer systems can't do the work of live, trained investigators. You need someone in the system who doesn't just check boxes, but knows exactly what to look for (and what kind of tricks criminals use to beat the system).
- 2. True identity matching.** Having someone provide their Social Security number isn't enough; you need things like photo identification, middle names, aliases, and previous addresses to be sure you have the right person.
- 3. Detailed searches of court records.** While instant background checks compare Social Security numbers to a few widely available databases, your background search needs to go into local and municipal courts to find information that might be missing from federal registries.
- 4. Sex offender registry checks.** Although this is an extremely important part of any background check, some systems don't incorporate state and local court records or convictions.

5. Photograph verification. While photo identification is a good starting point, you want photographs from past government records, previous employers, and other third-party sources to ensure that your applicant is the person they claim to be.

6. Personal history profile. While criminal and credit checks are nice to have, you should be sure to look into things like employment history, driving records, and previous addresses to get a more complete picture.

7. Review for discrepancies. A trained investigator can spot trouble signs, missing information, or outright fraud quickly. Computer programs can't look with the same eye for detail or draw the same obvious conclusions.

These are just a few of the most important elements that popular instant background checks don't include... even though they are crucial to verifying the identity of the person you want to evaluate and getting an accurate picture of their history and risk profile.

The bottom line is that, when you bring someone into your organization (or send them to customers using your name, uniform, and/or ID), you are liable for the actions they take. How confident are you that you're going far enough to evaluate them properly before making a recruiting decision? How sure do you feel that contractors and vendors are following the best practices on your behalf?

If the thought of those questions troubles you, then it's time to start working with a company like ISC that has an established system in place for verifying identities and performing fast, thorough, and affordable background screening using live agents.

About The Author: J. Denton (Denny) Dobbins is Nationally and Internationally recognized as the world's leader in Premises Liability Protection and has been featured across North America sharing the stage with Political Leaders, Police Celebrities, Administrators and Business Leaders. Since 1978, Denny has been involved with the detection and deterrence of Criminal Activity in properties and employment of all types.