

Popular background checks: What should you be screening talent for?

As businesses continue to face economic battles, they are not willing to take risks on new hires given the mismatch between skills needed and available talent. This means background checks for potential candidates are more vital than ever.



Image source: Andriy Popov – 123RF.com

The finding is part of the [2022 Background Screening Index \(BSI\) report](#) released by background screening and vetting company, Managed Integrity Evaluation (MIE). During 2022, MIE performed over 2.8 million background screening transactions for companies across Southern Africa – increasing 26% year-on-year.

Of all the psychometric assessments performed, the most widely requested standalone check was the Integrity Assessment, which validates the integrity of a candidate's qualifications and experience. "Given South Africa's economic challenges and the challenging job market, more candidates are embellishing their qualifications and experience as employment becomes more difficult to find," says Jennifer Barkhuizen, head of marketing at MIE. "This makes it even more important for companies to do proper screening before employing an individual."

Barkhuizen notes that companies who make use of background screening solutions not only improve the quality of their hires, but also help to eliminate the receipt of falsified information in the first place. "If candidates are made aware that they'll undergo background screening, this deters them from misrepresenting information about themselves on their job application and CV," she says.



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Most requested checks

Criminal verification within MIE remains the most requested check, increasing by 28% year-on-year. When conducted on a regular basis, these verifications can prevent abuse and violence amongst employees and avoid possible employee theft.

The report also showed how specific industries are using screening tools to suit their particular challenges and contexts. The medical industry, for example, is making use of the sexual offender's database checks to ensure that candidates hired to work with children, the elderly and the vulnerable are not listed on the database to ensure the safety of the people they work with. Within the mining industry, there has been an uptick in qualification verifications where historically this was not always done as part of the screening process, even though hiring unqualified individuals poses a risk to the mine.

Within the e-hailing industry, companies are opting for a more comprehensive understanding of the drivers they employ, and so have started to include social media screening as part of their onboarding process. The benefit of thoroughly screening an individual's online presence is to better understand their behaviours and whether they might pose a risk to their passengers or fellow employees. It's important to note that social media screening can also highlight positive attributes about a candidate.

Identity verification increased by 21% in 2022, highlighting the importance of including this as part of a company's background screening process, especially given that that identify theft is so rife within South Africa. "It's crucial that a company knows that the person being screened is who they say they are," says Barkhuizen.

Fraud listing verifications is also on the rise, which Barkhuizen says points to the fact that more companies are doing their part to combat fraud or fraudulent activities.



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Screening trends

Looking ahead at screening trends for 2023, MIE expects that companies will need to adopt a re-screening policy to ensure regulatory compliance across various industries. This will include focusing on complying with regulations that restrict access to an individual's personal information. Having a comprehensive screening policy in place for companies is also recommended to ensure all individuals are thoroughly screened as set out in their screening policy.

With Generation Z now entering the workforce, the workplace will change dramatically over the years to come – and companies will need to adapt accordingly. "Companies will have to revisit their screening processes to adjust to this very diverse group, bearing in mind their values and priorities," says Barkhuizen.

The challenges companies are facing in the current economic climate mean that screening potential employees is more important than ever in ensuring a successful hiring process. “The risk to employers of hiring the wrong candidate has never been higher, so employers will do whatever they can to minimise this risk and hire the right person for the job the first-time round,” concludes Barkhuizen.

The full report can be found [here](#).

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