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## Hiring

### **Streamline Background Checks to Snag Quality Job Candidates**

If the candidates you really want to hire are evaporating on you, a burdensome background check process may be to blame.

"Speed matters when it comes to completing a background check," Ben Goldberg, CEO of Rolling Meadows, Ill.-based background screening firm Aurico, told Bloomberg BNA Aug. 9. Aurico's parent company, Chicago-based jobs website CareerBuilder, found that "65 percent of candidates are still looking for a position while the background check is under way, so speed is important to avoid candidate fall-off," he said.

One way to save time and make things convenient for candidates is to let them use mobile devices to submit their information, Dillana Lim, chief product officer of background check firm Sterling Talent Solutions, told Bloomberg BNA Aug. 9. However, she cautioned, candidates "don't want to download yet another app."

If mobile device submission is "combined with streamlined and automated back-end processing," the background check can move along speedily, to the benefit of both applicant and employer, she said.

Thirty-eight percent of full-time employers "have lost a candidate because they had a negative experience with their background check," CareerBuilder said Aug. 8, based on survey Harris Poll conducted May 24 to June 16. The survey included 221 HR managers.

**Gumming Up the Works** Two problems in particular can clog things up. One is not giving the background screening provider good instructions on what precisely it should be screening for, which can result in the candidate getting a lot of irrelevant questions, Bret Jardine,

general counsel of Atlanta-based background screening firm First Advantage, told Bloomberg BNA Aug. 10. The other thing to avoid is having an applicant tracking system that isn't integrated with the screener's systems, Jardine said.

In addition, he said, "having good communications with the candidate is very important," which is where mobile device interfaces can come in handy. But First Advantage allows applicants to use their laptops or even paper if they prefer, so that there's "a choice and the most ease of use," he said.

Lim agreed that applicants should have their pick of communication methods. "Some candidates want human contact and some don't—they want to just click a button and send a note."

**Kicking the Tires** Another good idea is "for employers to test the candidate experience to make sure it's streamlined and efficient, and compliant with federal and state laws" that require the candidate be provided with information on the background check, in his or her capacity as a consumer, Goldberg said.

Along related lines, Jardine recommended checking with legal counsel to make sure the background check is legally compliant.

Don't ask for unnecessary screening, Goldberg recommended. For example, an administrative assistant candidate probably doesn't need to undergo a credit check, while a chief financial officer candidate does, he said.

"If the experience is good for the candidate, it reflects positively on the employer," Jardine said.

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