



# HR Examiner

*Examining practical HR issues business owners  
and managers encounter every day*

## ***Making Your list and Checking it Twice***

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### Strategies

It's been estimated that one third of applicants falsify their employment application and 1/20 of applicants falsify key data such as social security numbers, driver's license numbers, etc. You can protect yourself.

Think hard before you determine which background checks are appropriate. Check with

### Double Checking Candidates

I know we're entering summer, not December, but the "Making Your List and Checking It Twice" header can also apply to your hiring practices. Do you have a list of ideal qualifications, skills, traits and personality criteria in mind (or better yet, in writing) to make sure you're hiring what you and your organization needs? If not, you may be doing yourself a disservice by going more on "gut" and less on a factual search.



I believe that gut plays a big part in selection. You

your peers in other organizations to see what they're using. And find an expert in the field of background checking to help you sort through the myriad of vendors and resources.

- ▶ • Make sure you have all the proper releases authorizing you to acquire the background information. Not all forms are complete.

- ▶ • Don't rely only on State criminal searches alone. Most crimes are committed in and recorded only on county systems.

- ▶ • Has the person moved from county to county or state to state? Make sure

may have a candidate who is perfect on paper but not so perfect in person. You're not required to hire the candidate who doesn't have the full spectrum of talents they need to succeed. But when your gut feels good, the person seems right on paper and the person has the interpersonal skills and personality you're seeking, are you going one step further to make sure that what the employee is selling you is an accurate product?

Those of you who have heard me speak about hiring and interviewing, have heard me say that the hiring process is a dual-sales event. We're selling the candidates on our organization and they're selling us on their skills and abilities to perform the job.

The real question is how we can make sure the employee is selling/representing themselves accurately. Our candidates are exceptionally skilled in interviewing and we typically spend a relatively short time with them during the interview process. As such, we have trouble "getting into the heads" of the candidates to really know who they are and what they can do.

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you're collecting the information you need.

### Medical Testing

Many organizations have a need for pre-employment physicals, including drug testing. So that you're not violating the Americans With Disabilities Act, be sure you only conduct these tests after extending a conditional offer of employment. Also, select the appropriate positions requiring such tests.

▶ Determine what physical criteria needs to be evaluated.

▶ For example, if lifting is your concern, what are the weight requirements, how frequently is lifting, does it also include walking and carrying

## Avoid Buyer's Remorse

Our hiring objectives is to avoid the “evil twin” concept, where we hire the great candidate and their evil twin shows up for work. As such, we need to use a wide variety of tools to give us more information than the interview allows.

**Assessments:** There are a wide variety of assessment tools companies can use to better understand the personality traits, work habits, and abilities of our candidates. When using such a tool, be sure to administer them to all candidates in the same stage of employment.

For example, assess all final candidates for specific positions, so that you're not discriminating. Also, determine your specific assessment objective. For example, are you looking to assess personality fit with the team or innate abilities to be competent in the position?

**Skills Tests:** Truly reflect on what you really need the candidate to perform. If it's an administrative position, what software must they be proficient in? If the position requires technical skills, how can you determine whether their level of expertise only allows

the weighted items, climbing, reaching, bending, etc.?

- ▶ • What other physical requirements can be assessed?
  
- ▶ Have you provided the medical examiner with the job description and the details of what to evaluate for?
  
- ▶ Drug testing is considered a medical examination and may only be performed after the conditional offer.
  
- ▶ Have you selected and developed a relationship with a drug testing facility? Or are there more convenient tests available?

them to answer your interview questions or whether they can truly apply depth in technical applications.

Determine whether you can create your own skills assessments or whether there are pre-developed assessments you can purchase. Check with other organizations in your industry to see if they've developed something you can "borrow." Again, consistency in implementation is key to avoid discrimination.

**Background Checks:** I think we're often more trusting than we should be when it comes to conducting criminal, driving and financial background testing of candidates.

A client of mine recently interviewed for a position and the candidate presented herself as exceptionally capable, professional, knowledgeable, mature, etc. But considering the candidate would be working in the business owner's home, we discussed conducting a criminal background check. Thankfully, the owner did. As you probably already have realized, the candidate had a deep history of criminal offenses that were grounds for immediate disqualification.

Without acquiring this vital information, who knows what could have happened.

There's so much more that could be included here. If you have more questions, feel free to call me. I also have contacts with Background Check and Assessment resources, if you'd like some ideas where to start.

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Don't take any risks – from the skills or the background perspective. Increase the odds of hiring the right person for the job by considering the whole of the candidate, not just what their selling.  
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## About Arlene Vernon

Arlene Vernon, PHR, partners with small businesses as their Human Resource Xpert to create their HR systems and solve their HR problems.

If you have gaps in your HR operation, have an employee problem to solve, or want to enhance your managers' skills, call Arlene today. Learn how HRx can save you time and help you avoid costly HR mistakes. HRx, Inc., Eden Prairie, MN 55344, 952-996-0975, [www.HRxcellence.com](http://www.HRxcellence.com).

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