

What are red flags on background check?

Author: Trish Makiwa . November 2021

You want the best of the best to represent and run your business, so your recruiting practices must be the best of the best. A thorough and accurate employee screening procedure can help you discover more about the people you could hire, but you must still weigh all of the facts and how it affects your decision. Knowing all the typical backgrounds check red flags and how they affect a candidate's qualifications can help you pick the best individual for the position and your organization.

You've found the [right person for the job](#). They acquitted themselves admirably in all of your interviews and competence testing. You're all set to make them an offer. It's now time for the final stumbling block: their background check. Background checks do not work on a pass/fail basis. A background check is a smart approach to prevent making a poor hiring decision. Background checks, on the other hand, should not be used to eliminate good candidates automatically. It's usually a good idea to bring up any issues you notice with your applicants and offer them an opportunity to react. Here are some of the red flags to discuss with candidates during a background check:

- **Multiple Unemployment Periods**

Employment gaps are typical, and many potential employees' resumes may include periods of unemployment. Someone may have changed careers, become unwell, or taken time off to care for a family member. However, if unemployment appears to be a pattern in the candidate's background, you should look into it more. Multiple gaps in employment may suggest that the candidate is difficult to work with, unreliable, or otherwise unable to maintain employment.

- **Several Short-Term Jobs**

Someone with various short-term jobs, like someone unemployed for a long time, could be a source of concern. While seasonal or temporary jobs are fine—and excellent for acquiring experience—someone who jumps from job to job is unlikely to be a good fit for your organization. It could indicate that they were dismissed or forced to resign or are quickly bored or dissatisfied with their current work. You want your organization to invest in dependable, long-term personnel, and this type of candidate is unlikely to meet those goals.

- **Inconsistency in Education or Experience**

Inconsistency is one of the most prevalent red flags in a background check. If a background check turns up material that contradicts what the candidate and their résumé said, you should look into it further. To make oneself more appealing to you and your firm, your potential employee may make up facts about their schooling, work experience, or the roles and responsibilities they held. While many job applicants embellish their resumes to make themselves sound as excellent as possible, you should proceed with care if the exaggerations become fraudulent. Even if they have the necessary skills in other areas, this understanding of their personality is invaluable.

- **Past Jobs That Aren't Relevant**

While falsifying experience on a CV is not a good idea, the contrary should also be avoided. Occasionally, job seekers will exclude relevant positions or experiences from their resumes. When job hunting, applicants want to present their best self, but the lack of many suitable possibilities suggests they may want to conceal anything about those positions. Your new employee may have an explanation for the missing information, but it's also a good idea to contact these previous employers to acquire as much information as possible.

- **History of Offenses**

Investigating a candidate's criminal history is perhaps the most crucial component of any background check. While some instances may not prevent you from hiring a candidate, knowing an employee's criminal background is nonetheless vital. If you don't conduct criminal background checks on employees and later commit a crime, your organization could be held liable. However, it would help to consider the context of any information uncovered during a criminal history check. Arrests do not always mean convictions, and small or long-ago incidents could be the result of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. While these results may not be deal-breakers in and of themselves, you should be wary of employing someone who lies about their [criminal history](#) in an application or interview. A candid candidate who is open and takes the time to explain the problem honestly demonstrates more trustworthiness than one who lies about their records.

- **Convictions That Affect Your Job**

While minor convictions or occurrences from years ago may not be cause for alarm, consider how a candidate's criminal background may affect the position at hand. Someone with a bad driving record, for example, shouldn't have a job that requires them to operate a vehicle. Even if the charge is small, an applicant charged with financial fraud will not be the first option for a position at a bank. The impact of a previous crime on the job and company is significantly more relevant than the offense's date or the punishment's severity.

- **Refusing to Accept a Check**

In many cases, you can learn just as much about someone from how they handle potential red flags as you can from what emerges on their background check. Suppose an applicant calmly and honestly answers any inquiries regarding their criminal, financial, or work background throughout the application or interview process. In that case, it could signal that they're a qualified and dependable employee to hire. On the other side, if someone lies about their past or refuses to provide information on a background check, they might be concealing something more serious than you think. You want trustworthy and reliable employees to work for you and your organization, not someone who tries to mask resentment.

- **Bad Recommendations**

References are an excellent method to discover more about a possible employee's character and work ethic, and speaking with previous employers can quickly corroborate previous experience. You can get bad comments about your candidate if you phone prior employers. It's crucial to remember that negative feedback can result from misconceptions, personal concerns, or other circumstances beyond the candidate's control. If the same unfavourable opinions keep popping up, you should consider this when deciding whether or not this possible employee will fit into this job and work environment.

As with anything, you want to have as much information as possible and take any context or circumstances into account.

- [Dishonesty Regarding Previous Positions](#)

It's not uncommon for a candidate to exaggerate their former job responsibilities on their CV. It's not unusual to gild achievements or work experience, but intentionally deceiving you about previous positions is an issue.

If you see any inconsistencies or outright falsehoods about former job duties, you should address them immediately. It's possible that the candidate you offered the job to isn't qualified for it.

- [The Internet and Social Media](#)

Examining a candidate's [social media](#) presence is another technique to learn more about their character. While it is wrong to dismiss someone based on their political beliefs, you may want to consider a different candidate if you discover a candidate with questionable values or publishing hate speech. This could save your business money in the long run.

You should have as much information as possible and examine any context or reasoning you have for these red lights, as with everything else. [Discrepancies and disparaging](#) markings are the most typical red flags, however, what constitutes a red flag varies by organization and position. The information a candidate provides on a job application should appropriately reflect their background.

Background checks are critical in assisting businesses in learning about potential red flags in a candidate's background. Knowing what to look for in [red flags](#) can help organizations avoid terrible hires, save money, improve company culture, safeguard employees and customers, reduce public safety risks, avoid negligent hiring litigation, and protect brand image and reputation. Ignoring a red signal can be an expensive mistake with far-reaching consequences. While understanding these issues, companies must establish a background check policy that complies with all applicable rules and regulations, does not discriminate against protected groups, and fits within our society.

This article was written by Trish Makiwa, a consultant at the Industrial Psychology Consultants, a management and Human Resources Consulting company. She can be contacted at trish@ipcconsultants.com

