

# Staff safety lies in the hands of the business owner

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It is universally acknowledged that a strong employee base is the foundation of any good business. For this reason, when introducing new hires into a company, the safety and productivity of existing staff should be top-of-mind.

Hiring the wrong candidate can hold many disadvantages for a business – from obvious external dangers like that of reputational damage to more undetectable internal risks, such as the deterioration of staff morale.

The emotional and physical health of an employee should be viewed as equally significant in the eyes of the employer, as both these aspects factor in how an individual performs their duties.

“The well-being of your business and that of your staff go hand-in-hand. The individuals you choose to hire are in constant contact with people both outside of and within your business. When it comes to customers, employees project the company ethos, they become an extension of your business. Similarly, employee attitude and actions also convey your company’s inner values to other members of your staff. This makes a verifiable pre-screening process that much more of a necessity when it comes to finding the perfect fit for your business,” says Rudi Kruger, general manager of Data Services at LexisNexis.

An employee with a history of bad behaviour in the workspace can easily conceal previous indiscretions if the hiring process relies solely on resumes and cursory pre-screening methods.

“Dangerous behaviour in the workplace – or employee-on-employee violence – encompasses more than physical threat, it includes the use of abusive language, sexual harassment (both physical and verbal), racial abuse, as well as intimidation or bullying. These are all actions that would be deemed unacceptable if aimed at a customer, and should not be tolerated when occurring inhouse as it sets a tone within the business which other staff members ultimately feed into. One dishonest or legally compromised individual is all it takes to put your employee morale – or worse, the employees themselves – in jeopardy,” Kruger adds.

As is always the case, it is important to remember that all liability lies with a business. Any wrongdoing by an employee – be it against a customer or a co-worker, and no matter how small the misstep – has a direct impact on the company.

“Consider the consequences of hiring a candidate for a managerial position without the safety net of pre-screening, only to later discover the individual repeating questionable behaviours that could have been unearthed during the hiring process through a comprehensive check. The average employee would be hesitant to take on a co-worker in a position of power, and the stress of working under such negative conditions can affect productivity levels severely,” Kruger says.

Lexis® RefCheck offers a number of verification services that can help you safeguard your business and staff from potential threats. These include:

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