

Taking Your Screening Program to New Heights in a Down Economy

How to leverage Enterprise Screening Management (ESM) technologies to elevate screening program efficiency and effectiveness.

Prepared by Kevin Dunning



Taking Your Screening Program to New Heights in a Down Economy

How to leverage Enterprise Screening Management (ESM) technologies to elevate screening program efficiency and effectiveness.

Executive Summary

Managing a screening program in today's legislative-driven and economically challenged global environment comes with significant complexities for large organizations. Increasing security concerns, globalization, legal compliance requirements, and job market competition have contributed to put added pressure on large employers to build tighter controls and take unnecessary costs out of their screening efforts. As a result, workforce screening has evolved from a fairly simple transaction to a complex, multilevel program that requires comprehensive design and management to meet the geographical, legal, security, safety, industry, privacy, corporate, integration and other technical requirements of multiple user constituencies across the organization.

Few of today's background screening solutions have adequately responded to current market challenges, and thus, struggle in helping organizations truly meet all of these requirements. However, a new category of screening solutions has emerged, helping large employers address the complexities of screening in a comprehensive, yet simple manner. Enterprise Screening Management (ESM) solutions are designed to help organizations maximize screening program efficiency, tighten internal controls, gain greater program visibility, improve collaboration, recruit better candidates, hire workers faster, ensure a safer workplace and retain talented workforces.

Challenges Impacting Today's Screening Programs

An accepted best practice, employment background screening is conducted by more than 90 percent of large organizations today. Yet, there are six key factors generating significant challenges for employers operating employment screening programs today: economic recession; cost cutting; risk management; talent management; regulatory compliance; and workplace safety and security (*HireRight Benchmarking Report, 2009*).

- **Economic Recession:** Adapting to the organizational effects of an economic recession often involves changes to workforce sizes and the balance between employee and non-employee workforces — especially as the economy starts to rebound and companies tend to rely more heavily on temporary staffing. This can be difficult for HR professionals to deal with, as managing multiple internal and external vendor programs can be complex and increase employee workload.
- **Cost Cutting:** Most industries are currently facing the challenge of slumping sales, resulting in a need to reduce costs throughout organizations to maintain profitability. Successful organizations often measure the overall costs (hard and soft) of their workforce screening programs and strive towards an ever-increasing net benefit. Under cost-cutting conditions, hiring professionals are often left overwhelmed with having more to do and less time to do it.
- **Risk Management:** In a litigious society, with more people filing suits on a regular basis because of perceived injustices or financial concerns, ensuring that your organization minimizes related risks is vital. Ensuring that an employee is a great fit for the job and verifying candidates "are who they say they are" can be a challenge for hiring professionals in today's unique global marketplace.

- **Talent Management:** Today, a greater number of applicants are applying for each open position than ever before. With fewer hires being made, each hiring decision becomes much more critical, thus increasing the importance of a comprehensive background check as part of the hiring process. Equally important, given the requirement to do more with less, is the need to streamline the talent management lifecycle to the greatest degree possible.
- **Regulation and Compliance:** Since 9-11 and the corporate scandals that were well publicized in the early part of this century, new laws and industry regulations have been enacted to increase the level of security and scrutiny demanded of employers. More recently, U.S. legislation regarding employment eligibility and automated verification has placed stronger diligence requirements on employers. Regulation and compliance are always changing, leaving organizations in a constant state of uncertainty as to whether hiring practices are current or if they are at audit risk.
- **Safety and Security:** As a result of increased personal financial pressures, employers are experiencing more data thefts and seeing increased tension in the workplace. The truth is, in harsh economic times there is a tendency to see increases in employee theft. A study published in December 2008 by the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) found that 31 percent of companies with 10,000 or more workers said they've noticed an increase in the theft of company-owned items such as office supplies, products they produce, electronic equipment and food items since the economic downturn. Conducting effective criminal background searches is a vital step toward protecting the workplace from potential theft and violence.

Because of these six factors, workforce screening today is a significant challenge, especially for large employers with diverse workforce populations.

Unique Challenges for Enterprise Organizations

Collaboration, Visibility and Control

Another important trend leading to greater challenges in managing a workforce screening program is globalization and the need for collaboration, visibility and control among multiple geographic locations. For many enterprise organizations, the workforce is widely distributed in offices around the world and maintaining a consistent screening process for multiple locations is a complicated, but critical requirement.

Enterprise organizations with multiple recruiting offices across the country must develop screening policies and procedures that ensure consistency in the screening process to meet legal, regulatory, security and policy requirements. In addition, it is important that the workforce screening solution and program provide a way for human resources managers, recruiters, hiring managers, security personnel and other interested parties to be able to efficiently collaborate throughout the process. This challenge is greatly multiplied when offices are located around the world and subject to local, legal, cultural and procedural requirements, as well as the established corporate policy requirements.

Regulatory Requirements

During the past several years, a wide range of new legislation including those related to employment eligibility and E-Verify checks has greatly impacted the management of the enterprise workforce background screening program. These new regulations require organizations to conduct a wider variety of deeper searches for different kinds of positions, introducing greater complexity in the workforce screening program. These new complications demand sophisticated procedures for program management, particularly within enterprise organizations.

Many enterprise organizations must comply with a wide variety of regulations, including U.S. corporate governance requirements such as Sarbanes-Oxley, industry-specific

regulations such as those for the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Department of Transportation, and state and federal I-9 employment eligibility verification legislation requiring E-Verify checks. The use of a comprehensive screening program and sensible periodic audits are a necessity for maintaining compliance.

Organizations must remain abreast of changing regulatory and industry requirements that affect their workforce screening programs and make adjustments accordingly. In addition, new requirements must be effectively communicated worldwide to all hiring personnel, and enforcement procedures and systems must be put in place to ensure that the proper screenings are performed to prevent the risk of fines, penalties and lawsuits.

Extended Workforce

It has been a steadily growing trend that enterprise organizations are relying more and more upon the extended workforce (temporary, contract, vendor, partner and other workers) to sustain a dynamic staff to meet fluctuating market demands most efficiently. As a result, enterprises are now recognizing that this portion of the workforce represents a major security gap as many of these workers have access to personnel, facilities, data and systems, without first being vetted through the same workforce screening process used for permanent employees.

To rectify this, organizations are instituting extended workforce screening procedures, but it's a complex process because of the varying types of constituents and relationships with each. It can include contract software engineers, business consultants, janitorial services and construction workers; and each type of worker must be screened appropriately to the level of access provided, consistent with corporate policies and in compliance with relevant regulations. Integration of the extended workforce and employee workforce screening programs proves vitally important, particularly when the possibility of an extended worker transitioning to a permanent employee exists.

War of Talent

Very few industries are growing given the current economic conditions, resulting in many organizations experiencing a shift from the war "for" talent to the war "of" talent. With high unemployment rates, organizations face an overabundance of candidates for each job opportunity, requiring focus not just on finding a good candidate, but weeding out the less skilled candidates and truly finding the best of the best. Companies can afford to be selective now, making workforce screening an even more critical step in identifying the most suitable, qualified candidates for a position. By confirming candidate qualifications, education, previous employment and relevant history, organizations can ensure that the right people are placed in key positions. Additionally, if the right selection is made initially, organizations can reduce employee turnover and hiring costs.

For those companies that require significant candidate specialization (e.g., in the health care industry) and are still experiencing the war for talent, a key priority is speed to hire with electronic forms and automated processes providing a significant competitive advantage. Until recent years, workforce screening had been a relatively slow process, sometimes taking weeks, increasing the risk that a competitor could snag away an attractive candidate in the meantime. Using new technology to improve efficiency, eliminate redundancy and reduce the potential for errors has greatly shortened the turnaround time on background checks — often to just a couple of days — speeding up the hiring process for competitive advantage. The benefits of reducing time-to-hire and improving the candidate experience increase as the size of the candidate pool shrinks.

Limitations of Transactional Systems

Most of today's screening systems do not address the wide range of workforce challenges, risks and complexities that exist, leaving enterprise organizations to manage the screening process through multiple, disparate, discrete, and often manual systems. Organizations attempting to manage outdated manual processes, paper forms and a series of

point solutions from a variety of technology providers deal with an abundance of unnecessary, inefficient and error-prone outcomes. This kind of transactional approach makes keeping up with, much less meeting, ever-changing compliance requirements very difficult, if not impossible.

Additionally, this approach does not allow for any level of collaboration between users, locations and constituencies, leading to process redundancies, increased inefficiencies and procedure inconsistency, risking inaccurate results and a non-compliant program. These limitations are multiplied when the screening requirements extend beyond the traditional candidates and employees to include the extended workforce.

Meeting the Challenge with Enterprise Screening Management

Driven by these factors, challenges and risks, Enterprise Screening Management solutions have emerged. A highly integrated Enterprise Screening Management solution streamlines workflows to provide program efficiency, consistency, effectiveness, control and compliance. A comprehensive screening management solution brings all screening activities, tasks and tools together in one location, making management of the screening program easier and more efficient than ever before. With key components such as intelligent ordering, dynamic reports and automatic compliance features, an on-demand Enterprise Screening Management solution provides increased time savings, greater visibility and control, and unparalleled convenience.

Utilizing secure Internet technologies, Enterprise Screening Management solutions enable better communication and deeper collaboration among various team members dispersed at multiple locations around the world, including those representing human resources, recruiting, security and the hiring manager, while enforcing the consistent application of corporate policies using automated processes and electronic forms. Especially with the trend toward an HR or security shared services model, Enterprise Screening Management solutions allow for centralized

oversight with centralized or decentralized execution. Comprehensive management and audit reports help to ensure compliance with screening program policies. It allows candidates who are hired to be quickly and easily checked using the E-Verify system and automatically begins the on-boarding process through systems integration.

A comprehensive Enterprise Screening Management solution maximizes efficiency for greater productivity, integrates seamlessly with existing technologies and systems, and enables the expansion of the workforce screening program to address the entire workforce simply while requiring minimal organizational resources. Enterprise Screening applied, allows enterprise organizations to meet their challenging screening needs most efficiently. Typical components of an Enterprise Screening Management solution include:

- A dashboard for maximum visibility and user efficiency that dynamically aggregates key information into a single page location.
- A dynamic ordering process and applicant self service to improve order speed and quality of the screening experience.
- Automated compliance features.
- Collaboration features that support teamwork, while also keeping all relevant hiring stakeholders in the loop.
- A single platform that delivers global screening needs.
- Support for other workforce screening programs through a single platform, including extended workforce screening, drug and health screening, and employment eligibility verification.
- Configuration to meet screening policy needs, offering multi-level user controls.
- A reporting module for program audits and analysis.

As a result of applying the features of Enterprise Screening Management, organizations can benefit by maximizing their screening programs.

Benefits of Enterprise Screening

To institute a workforce screening program that addresses all of the wide-ranging challenges and complexities represented in today's enterprise environment, organizations must implement a comprehensive, strategic solution. An Enterprise Screening Management solution addresses the following complex screening needs:

- **Improve Program Effectiveness:** Organizations that adopt a unified screening solution can address the unique screening processes for permanent, temporary, contract and vendor employees. A consolidated single platform will facilitate effective program management and will be able to address the workforce fluctuations of today and the future with greater finesse and consistent rigor.
- **Reduce Cost:** As operational cost cutting and efficiency continues to be a focus, organizations must look to technology to streamline processes and take soft costs out of their screening program. An electronic screening management solution streamlines workflows and facilitates accurate ordering, while saving time and hassle to the organization.
- **Mitigate Risk:** By instituting a consistent and thorough workforce screening program, organizations can improve risk management and protect themselves against negligent hiring and retention lawsuits by demonstrating they have taken reasonable precautions and followed industry best practices to protect the workplace. A thorough screening program includes the ability to manage domestic and global employment eligibility requirements, verifications and documentation using automated processes with electronic forms and instant E-Verify Checks, thus enabling an organization to make better hiring decisions.
- **Establish Greater Control and Visibility:** A comprehensive screening solution that provides control and visibility allows organizations to hire the best person quickly. Integrating the screening solution into the talent management solution provides a seamless process to help drive costs down and productivity up across the organization. Integration capabilities with existing systems help to streamline workflows, leverage existing technology investments, reduce training requirements and limit operational impacts.
- **Promote Compliance:** Compliance automation can help to ensure organizations maintain compliance with ever-changing legislation. An enterprise screening management program has tools to ensure compliance with ever-changing global, federal, state and industry specific regulations while supporting privacy protection and facilitating periodic audits and reporting.
- **Keep the Workforce Safe:** By building tighter controls into their screening programs, organizations can better protect their reputations, while reducing theft and fraud. A safe and secure screening program will have the most accurate and current information passed through rigorous quality controls in the quickest time possible.

Conclusion

As complexities in screening program demands have grown, organizations have struggled to advance their programs to address these challenges. Screening programs must tackle the six factors impacting today's organizations — economic recession, cost cutting, risk management, talent management, regulation and compliance, and safety and security. The challenges that face organizations can be solved with an Enterprise Screening Management solution.

A comprehensive Enterprise Screening Management solution offers an organization greater visibility and control by configuring screening needs and centralizing all activities into a single location on the web — replacing the need to use manual processes and multiple disparate systems. It increases time savings and brings unparalleled convenience to the organization to hire the best talent, while keeping the workplace safe. Enterprise Screening Management solutions allow enterprise organizations to improve screening program efficiency and effectiveness — successfully doing more with less.

Common Enterprise Screening Management Features

As organizations move to advance their screening programs using comprehensive Enterprise Screening Management solutions, they can benefit from the following key features.

✓	<p>Single Comprehensive Platform</p> <p>Manages the entire workforce screening program for employees and non-employees at domestic and foreign locations through a single platform and easily configures to your screening policies and requirements.</p>
✓	<p>Time-Saving Streamlined Workflows</p> <p>Automates inefficient manual processes with electronic forms, intelligent ordering, auto-error checking, automated compliance tools, applicant self service, and e-signatures. Streamlines workflow by consolidating tasks to increase screening program efficiency and convenience.</p>
✓	<p>Intuitive Dashboard and Real-Time Status</p> <p>A simple, intuitive dashboard provides current status through easily understood displays, graphics, charts, tables, lists and collaborative comments that update continuously.</p>
✓	<p>Candidate Self-Service Portal</p> <p>Collection of key information can be offloaded to candidates via a self-service Internet portal that facilitates accurate data entry, candidate communication, and if desired, may be accessed via an on-site kiosk.</p>
✓	<p>Robust Integration Capabilities</p> <p>Functions as a seamless, efficient extension of your talent management solution with the flexibility to adapt to current programs and processes due to an available pre-built, pre-integration and/or a powerful, open Application Programming Interface (API).</p>
✓	<p>Global Workforce Support</p> <p>Manages global screening programs so that they achieve parity with local programs. Provides a positive local experience and the services required for all of your global office locations.</p>
✓	<p>Extended Workforce Support</p> <p>Manages non-employee workforce programs supporting an unlimited number of vendors, automating vendor invitations and providing vendor self-registration. The solution enforces policy and monitors outcomes.</p>
✓	<p>Compliance and Auditing Tools</p> <p>A solution that has been designed to help you manage a compliant and configurable screening policy that includes automated compliance features like automated FCRA compliance and e-consent.</p>
✓	<p>Comprehensive Management Reports</p> <p>As a true management tool, the solution unifies information from all sources and integrated systems in user-configurable formatted reports according to scheduling and delivery options.</p>
✓	<p>Integrated E-Verify Checks</p> <p>Adapts to ever-changing employment eligibility legislation, automating the process for the organization using electronic forms. Provides instant E-Verify checks and tracks documentation expiration dates.</p>
✓	<p>User Management and Collaboration</p> <p>Enabling the ability to control access, while also keeping all relevant hiring stake holders in the screening loop, providing role-based access rights and team notification capabilities.</p>