

Risky business: Making hiring decisions without background checks can lead to costly mistakes

By Nick Fishman

The practice of conducting an effective pre-employment screening process on prospective employees has become increasingly important over the last decade. The need to hire the most qualified candidates never has been greater — nor has the inherent risk in hiring the wrong applicants.

Employers owe it to themselves and their customers to know everything they can about their employees, and the most effective method to accomplish that is through background checks.

Workplace crime, misleading résumés and unethical business practices are on the rise. The cost of theft by employees is bleeding businesses both large and small and is becoming a multibillion-dollar drain on our economy. Negative publicity —

Nick Fishman is executive vice president of Cleveland-based Background Information Services Inc., which conducts thousands of background searches annually. For more information visit www.employeescreen.com.

especially when it stems from a less-than-thorough background check — can devastate the very foundation of a trusted company.

Food marketers across the nation share the same concerns, which are magnified by the public's growing fear that our food supply is not immune to terrorism and tampering. Through a wide array of services, pre-employment screening companies can compile comprehensive reports on applicants' pasts. That information could prove ultimately useful, as it either qualifies or disqualifies favorite candidates.

Prescreening can reveal, for example, if an applicant lied on his or her résumé. Don't laugh; our research indicates that 56 percent of all résumés contain false or misleading data. Prescreening also reveals if a candidate was convicted of a crime, which legally provides employers with a reason not to hire. Similarly, a comprehensive background check can reaffirm a gut instinct that a candidate is both a good citizen and a diligent worker, which is a nice feeling to have.

The most common reason many employers give for not conducting thorough background checks is cost. Truthfully, however, the cost of conducting an effective screening program represents only a fraction of what a company can spend terminating an employee or defending itself in a lawsuit brought on by a victim of an employee's actions.

What's more, thorough background checks often can stop workplace theft before it occurs. Yes, the costs and damages can be recovered through insurance carriers, but money alone cannot repair a damaged reputation.

The last thing any company needs is negative publicity from the media or through word-of-mouth. While the practice of conducting background checks does not guarantee that such detrimental incidents will not occur, it can limit your risks drastically.

This article does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors and management at Nation's Restaurant News.

Side Dishes

NAME OF THE WEEK

Pickle Bill's Grand River, Ohio

NRN reader Scott Johnson spotted this week's winning restaurant in Grand River, Ohio. It specializes in seafood and prime rib.

If you spot a clever, funny or bizarre restaurant name, send it to Name of the Week, Nation's Restaurant News, 425 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Restaurant offers bear necessities for the winter

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA — A chef recently discovered the hard way that his restaurant provided the bear essentials for one particular grizzly here.

Restaurateur Brett Carlson was alerted by a state trooper that a bear had been spotted entering his restaurant through a broken window, so, according to American Hunter magazine, he went down to investigate with a companion and the trooper.

As they approached the restaurant, which had been closed for the season, they spotted the broken office window with a snowdrift beneath it that was covered in feces and urine. They also noticed that the restaurant's interior had been trashed. The trio armed themselves, put on headlamps and went from room to room, assessing the damage. Down the

hallway, the men saw "a huge mound of something," the magazine reported. It was the 7-foot-tall grizzly beginning to wake from his slumber. A member of the group shot the bear as it began to rise. There's no way to tell how long the bear had inhabited the restaurant, but Carlson was quoted as saying that it was there "long enough to make a mess and have a few digestive cycles." He added that the restaurant would "reek when it thaws."

Award-winning actress can stand the heat in the kitchen

LOS ANGELES — Though some movie stars maintain highly visible profiles, others prefer to stay in the background.

Oscar-winning actress Renée Zellweger doesn't really have any seating preferences when she dines out, US magazine recently reported.

"I've always been perfectly fine sitting next to the kitchen in a restaurant," the actress said. "Food doesn't taste better by the window."

Nothing's simple about Paris in the springtime, not even a barbecue

LOS ANGELES — It must be good to live the simple life — at least Paris Hilton must think so.

According to the New York Post, the starlet, who recently got engaged to Greek shipping heir Paris Latsis, celebrated the news by gathering together 75

of her nearest and dearest for a down-home barbecue at her new \$10 million mansion in Beverly Hills, Calif. But don't for a minute think that the Parises were grillin' and chillin' on their own.

The Carl's Jr. spokesmodel, who recently has been under fire for starring in the fast-food burger chain's racy new ads, served barbecued burgers and hot dogs cooked by — yep, you guessed it — the executive chef of the Beverly Hilton Hotel. And, oh yeah, the drink of choice was Dom Perignon champagne.

Compiled by Elissa Elan



Each week Nation's Restaurant News asks a question, in which a restaurant features prominently in a movie. The answer appears in the following week's issue. So all you movie buffs out there, put on your thinking caps and have some fun. Visit www.nrn.com/reelfood to check out previous answers.

What is the name of the TV movie in which the manager of a diner decides to team up with his ex-mother-in-law to open a restaurant in her bar after the diner's owner refuses to make him a partner?

Answer to June 6 Reel Food: In the documentary "Crazy Legs Conti: Zen and the Art of Competitive Eating," the Acme Oyster Bar in New Orleans holds an oyster-eating contest.



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