



Case Study

Pre-employment Assessments: How Frequently Do Employers Use Them?

In 2007 researchers conducted a survey to ascertain what types of pre-employment screening tools were being used by the leading retailers in the United States.

The survey was completed by companies that had from 250 to over 3,000 store locations, and focused on the following screening tools — assessments (integrity, personality, aptitude), drug testing, credit checks, criminal background checks and motor vehicle checks. The survey gathered information about the use of these hiring tools at the store, distribution center and corporate levels.

The tables below provide a summary of the findings of the survey. At the store level, assessments are the most frequently used form of screening with an overwhelming 90 percent of employers using such instruments. This apparently stems from their ease of use, as well as stores being very focused on turnover, productivity and integrity issues.

Assessment usage is followed by criminal background checks and drug testing. No stores utilized credit or motor vehicle checks.

Screening Tool	Store Level
Assessment	90%
Credit Check	0%
Criminal Background Check	70%
Drug Testing	50%
Motor Vehicle Record Check	0%

With respect to distribution centers, criminal background checks were most frequently used, followed by drug testing and motor vehicle checks. Still forty percent of distribution centers utilized some form of pre-employment assessment.

Screening Tool	Distribution Center
Assessment	40%
Credit Check	0%
Criminal Background Check	80%
Drug Testing	60%
Motor Vehicle Record Check	60%

Finally, at the corporate level, criminal background checks were used most frequently, with assessments, drug testing and motor vehicle checks all coming in second in terms of use. The corporate level was the only place where credit checks were used.

Screening Tool	Corporate
Assessment	40%
Credit Check	33%
Criminal Background Check	70%
Drug Testing	40%
Motor Vehicle Record Check	40%

In sum, it is rather odd that some commentators indicate that pre-employment assessments are illegal, lack utility and are not commonly used by employers. As evidenced by this study, very large organizations seeking state of the art hiring processes utilize such assessments extensively.

It is noteworthy that prior to the adoption of these assessments, their utility and appropriateness is reviewed by a host of human resources professionals, employment attorneys, loss prevention professionals, hiring managers and corporate executives. According to the study's respondents, the popularity of assessments stemmed from the fact that they can be administered and used relatively inexpensively (both online and via paper), plus they provide an excellent first step in the screening process.

If you have any questions regarding the study described herein, please contact Wonderlic's General Counsel: Dr. David W. Arnold – Dave.Arnold@Wonderlic.com (email).