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This Issue: Focus on Background Investigations

Investigative News

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What is a background investigation?

There are several different types of background investigations. They serve several different purposes based on the client's needs. A background investigation should not be confused with the kinds of services (a background "check") advertised on the internet. Investigations are inherently more complex, utilize significantly more resources, and utilize current information. Background 'checks' simply utilize historical database information which most people find outdated and expensive, rarely addressing any of the questions clients are looking for. Whatever kind of background you are looking for, our Background Investigators are required to identify, locate, and interview a sufficient number of people who know the parties well. We want a balanced and unbiased investigation.

A Personal Background Investigation provides information useful to determine the general character and trustworthiness of an individual. This investigation will normally ascertain the subject's true identity, current and former residence addresses, business ownership interests, employer or other income sources. In addition, a thorough search of the subject's civil and criminal background history may be undertaken within the region the subject currently resides or in counties, states or countries of previous residence or travel. The investigation may provide the subject's driving history and personal financial profile including ownership interests such as real property

or motor vehicles and liabilities including bankruptcies, civil judgments, notices of default or foreclosure, and state or federal tax liens. A personal background investigation may be fundamental or complex depending upon the subject individual and matters at issue. Other examples of Personal Background Investigations include pre-marital investigations, locating family members, in anticipation of legal action or in connection with another investigation.

A Business Background Investigation provides information useful to determine the structure and condition of any business entity, be it a sole proprietorship or multinational corporation. These investigations are particularly useful and warranted when you are considering purchasing another/preexisting business. Working with as much information as is available investigators will determine the correct business name, size and type, ownership and key executives, facility locations, holdings and interests, business activities and practices; as well as civil litigation, criminal conviction and regulatory compliance histories. Additionally, a business background investigation can identify assets and liabilities; the background of principal officers and directors; or company suppliers, vendors, employees and customers. These investigations are structured to fulfill specific client requirements for purposes of investment, merger, acquisition, competi-



tor analysis or litigation.

A Pre-employment Background Investigation is specially designed to ascertain the character and trustworthiness of a potential employee at the most basic up to the executive level. This is accomplished by verification of the applicant's personal identification, education, employment history, credit rating, criminal history, driving record and civil standing. A pre-employment background investigation may be customized to fulfill specific employer needs, such as those dictated by contractual agreement or company policy. These investigations may be basic or extensive as warranted by the pending position and budgetary considerations.

Other types or categories of background investigations include: background records checks, criminal records checks, post employment investigations, tenant screening, asset searches, due diligence backgrounds, and people locator ser-



What do I do and how do I act if a background investigation is being conducted on me?

The best guidance I can give you is: tell the truth. Regardless of what type of investigation (personal, business or pre-employment) the point is that telling a lie or omitting information can be more disastrous than the truth. We conduct investigations under contract for several governmental agencies. I ALWAYS start an interview of the applicant with the following comment: "I've been doing this 30+ years. There's nothing you are going

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to tell me that I haven't heard before. It's not an issue of what you have done. It's an issue of did you tell me about it. If you tell me about something that you did, possibly something that you have been hiding, something you are ashamed about or something that you are embarrassed about; it's ok. It's when you don't tell me something and I hear about it from someone else that we are going to have problems." That's a pretty simple thought process. It really looks bad when an applicant thinks that their employer doesn't deserve to know something. Most employers are not really concerned

with what you did 20 years ago. They are concerned with your integrity and honesty. Did this guy/gal think enough about me and this job to tell me the truth or did he think I'm just an idiot?

Give us a call at **501-605-0360** (24 hours) or **501-372-2202** or visit our website if you have any questions.

