

Top screening trends, hiring remains sluggish - MIE's 2020 Background Screening Index

The global Covid-19 pandemic has affected industries across the globe, and the background screening industry has not been spared.



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In South Africa, as in many countries, the hard lockdown enforced in March 2020 and the months that followed had both immediate impact and long-lasting repercussions.

Managed Integrity Evaluation's (MIE) 10th annual Background Screening Index (BSI) shares statistics and highlights the impact the pandemic had on levels of activities in the industry, showing how the lockdown affected demand for background screening, and emphasising which industries were impacted in both activity and risk.

"One of the challenges continuously faced by recruitment professionals is the risk of candidates misrepresenting their professional, criminal and academic histories in order to secure work," says Jennifer Barkhuizen, Head of Communications at MIE.



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"This places added pressure on the recruitment process, and further underpins the need to accurately and reliably assess candidates before hiring commences, to ensure that the candidate is the right fit for an organisation, and that the necessary due diligence has taken place. Not only are financial and reputational risks mitigated for the organisation, but undue pressure on recruitment budgets can be avoided."

Another trend highlighted in the 2020 BSI report is that criminal record checks remain the most requested amongst all available checks, and although risk levels dropped to below 20% in 2020, this is expected to increase in 2021 due to lower lockdown levels, increased unemployment and economic strain.

“Interestingly, integrity assessments were the most-requested stand-alone psychometric assessments in 2020,” notes Barkhuizen. “This highlights the need for businesses to ensure that they are hiring quality candidates who will uphold the integrity of the organisation.”



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“The high unemployment rate in South Africa, coupled with retrenchments and organisations closing their doors, will contribute to the many challenges job-seekers face with finding employment, and further emphasises the importance of background screening vigilance on the part of those responsible for hiring decisions.”

Looking ahead to 2021, Barkhuizen expects that background screening solutions will become an integral part of HR policies and procedures as businesses look to mitigate associated potential risks.

[View the full BSI report here.](#)

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