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**A BEGINNER'S GUIDE
TO SURVEILLANCE, DIGITAL,
SECURITY AND PRIVILEGE**



HANDLING INCOMING



VERIFI

BY ANTHONY LUIZZO AND PHIL LUIZZO



CATION

A function rarely offered by PI firms is assisting their corporate clients to handle incoming verification requests for current and previous employees.

This function is almost always performed by internal HR or management personnel. Notwithstanding, it's extremely important that investigative firms strongly consider offering and/or partnering with firms that offer this specialized service. In these lean financial times, outsourcing of incoming verifications to capable entities that can effectively do the job is one option worth looking into.

THE EBB AND FLOW OF HANDLING INCOMING VERIFICATIONS (A HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIO)

XYZ Corporation receives a call to verify previous employment and income data on one of its current and/or previous employees. Who in the company is assigned to handle this incoming inquiry? Is the inquiry forwarded to the job site (where the employee was assigned), or is it being handled by corporate HR? If, by chance, it is being handled at the job site, the central question to consider is whether the person handling the verification (more often than not, a supervisor at the site) can be trusted to be totally impartial, without injecting his or her bias into the mix. If, for example, the supervisor, or assigned operative, had a beef with the previous employee, will his or her verbal or non-verbal response enter into the dialogue? The manner and content of a phone response to a request for employment verification can create unexpected liability for the company.

In the court of good management wisdom, the most effective way to handle incoming inquiries is via the company's HR department exclusively.

THE ABCS OF HANDLING AND MANAGING INBOUND VERIFICATIONS

The pivotal questions to be answered include:

1. Does the company know where their inbound verification calls are going?
2. Does the company know whether the verification information furnished is accurate?
3. Does the company have a policy in place that spells out the ABCs of the program?
4. Was that policy disseminated to all corporate personnel?
5. Is the employment and income-related information disseminated via phone or fax?
6. Is a signed release required?
7. Is the program data properly archived?

If these elementary questions cannot be properly answered, it's important to recognize that the company has a problem that requires further investigation.

MANAGING INCOMING VERIFICATIONS

Companies have two options for handling incoming verifications:

1. Handle the requests in-house
2. Outsource the requests

HANDLING INCOMING REQUESTS IN-HOUSE

Questions in search of an answer include:

- Does the firm properly validate incoming verifications?
- Does the firm verify who forwarded the incoming request?
- Does the firm corroborate whether the request is for permissible purposes?
- Does the firm's HR administrator or lower level HR person have full access to the company's HRIS system, including salaries for executives, etc.?
- Does the firm have policies and procedures stipulating that "only the facts name, rank and serial number, etc." are to be disseminated? Companies with less stringent, looser fitting, pol-

icies may not know that personal information, such as biases about an employee from a possible former peer, are also being disseminated.

OUTSOURCING INCOMING REQUESTS

Engaging an outside vendor is an option more and more companies are considering. Historically, only the very large companies outsourced these verifications, while small and mid-sized companies managed the task internally. Today, many companies, of all sizes, are looking at outsourcing their verifications, for a number of reasons including: reducing labor burdens, reducing liability, and improving turnaround times.

BENEFITS OF OUTSOURCING INCOMING VERIFICATIONS

Outsourcing with the right company can:

- Help reduce corporate liability.
- Improve verification turnaround times and accuracy, thereby allowing the target of these searches, who may be seeking an apartment, to close the deal more quickly.
- Assist the person (employee) buying a new or pre-owned vehicle to begin using the vehicle sooner.
- Assist the new home buyer to move into their new abode more promptly.

Most importantly, the company's HR staff may be able to use the time saved to tackle more strategic projects and generate additional revenue for the firm.

TRANSITIONING FROM AN IN-HOUSE TO AN OUTSOURCING MODEL

Private Investigators who try to get a company to change over from an in-house verification model to an outsourcing model should know that it is simpler than you may think. With today's groundbreaking technology, a simple DIRECT file feed from the company's payroll provider is all it takes. The process begins by the requesting firm reaching out to their payroll provider and asking them to cherry-pick specific fields of data and send it onto the new verifying company via a secure venue on a weekly or biweekly schedule (consistent with the host firm's payroll schedule). An example of the type of data required includes, but may not be limited to:

- Employee start date
- End date
- 2nd start date (if applicable)

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“The manner and content of a phone response to a request for employment verification can create unexpected liability for the company.”

- 2nd end date (if applicable)
- Position held
- Wage specifics

Once the first file is received and dissemination guidelines approved, the requesting firm can commence internally routing all incoming verification inquiries to the new outsourcing verification company. The normal transition time from start to finish should take less than a week to complete. Essentially, once the outsourcing firm has the data, they can immediately begin processing incoming inquiries.

A FINAL WORD

Private investigators perform a host of specialized tasks in their daily endeavors. Notwithstanding, one of the most important roles a PI can perform is to help his or her clientele find new and innovative techniques, technologies, and cost-cutting initiatives. Turning the incoming verification process from a costly exercise to a profitable enterprise should be a win-win for all. It's most important that PIs do their homework and ascertain which third party verification firms perform programmatic compliance audits and offer attractive financial incentive programs to help clients recoup previously lost dollars. Still and all, beyond profits, the most important benefit gained in streamlining the incoming verification process is that corporate liability is diminished. **PI**

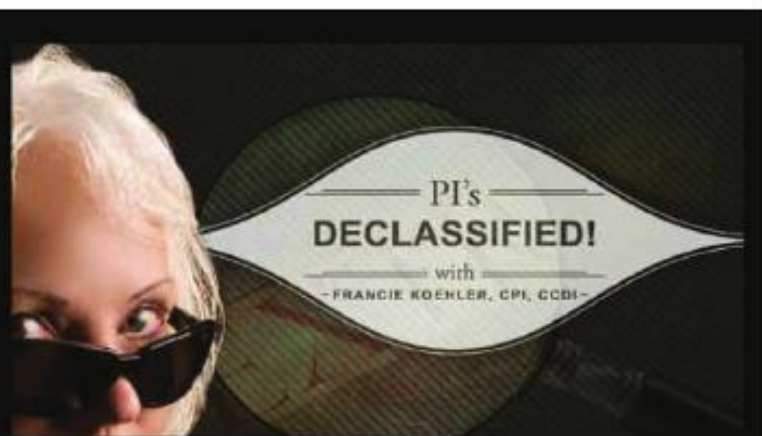


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