



Xx December 2010

MEDIA RELEASE

Australian employees expect their Facebook page to be free of employer scrutiny and aren't comfortable with online screening, according to WorkPro's latest national survey.

WorkPro's WorkPlace Pulse Survey of 1,943 employees found that 78% of respondents are comfortable with reference checks and 56% felt police checks were a reasonable level of employment screening. However, only 4% of respondents said the same for conducting Google searches or Facebook searches on prospective employees.

The survey also found that employees are not letting employment opportunities get in the way of an honest Facebook page, with 54% of respondents saying they have never changed their Facebook page settings with their employer in mind.

Tania Evans, Manager of WorkPro, said the survey highlights inconsistency between employees' expectations and actual employer practices in Australian workplaces.

"It seems there is a sense of naivety among candidates around the level of pre-employment screening that takes place prior to being appointed. In particular, expectations of online screening, such as Facebook and Google, remain low," she said.

However, research in the US earlier this year found that 73% of employers used social media to recruit, with 55% of those using Facebook. Given that Australians are the world's most prolific social media users, Ms Evans said it was reasonable to expect similar rates here.

"Overall, employer screening has become much more comprehensive, as companies seek to minimise any risks in the hiring process – not just to protect the company, but also its staff and customers" Ms Evans said.

"This means employers conduct more than a reference check, with criminal checks now part of the standard screening procedure. Given that many are using online methods as well, jobseekers should be aware of their digital footprint," she said.

The survey also found that many jobseekers aren't sure what information is provided to an employer from a police check. Nearly two thirds of respondents (62%) correctly believe it relates to any charges made by police against an individual, but the remainder were unsure or chose an incorrect answer. One in five respondents were also unsure whether a criminal check had been performed on them in the past.

"Given employers' widespread use of criminal checks, there's surprisingly little understanding of it among employees. Employers could be doing more to communicate the recruitment and screening process. Not only is good practice, it's an opportunity to build their employer brand and leave candidates with a positive impression," Ms Evans said.

The study also showed that 86% of respondents feel that police checks are a necessary safety precaution prior to employment.



“Employers need to understand that this level of screening is anticipated by jobseekers, so they shouldn’t be afraid to share the standard procedure with any prospective talent. Most candidates are unconcerned and even expect police checks to be undertaken as a pre-employment step – online is where employees feel uneasy,” she said.

-Ends-

About WorkPro:

WorkPro is a web-based employment screening solution.

The system allows an individual to centrally and securely collate key employment related information, and then share that information with any potential employer, streamlining and facilitating a more efficient employment engagement process for candidates, contractors and employers.

The solution represents recruitment industry best practice in the mitigation of workplace risk, with services including a broad generic course library of work health and EO training and induction modules, a national criminal check service and the option to tailor and customise the solution to appear proprietry-owned.

WorkPro was launched early in 2007. It has been adopted by over 350 recruiters across Australia and New Zealand, and more than 200,000 individuals have registered and completed induction training on the system.

Media Contacts:

Danielle Tricarico
Media Consultant, Buchan
03 9866 4722 or 0403 688 980
dtricarico@bcg.com.au

Tania Evans
Manager, WorkPro
03 9864 6017 or 0415 294 183
tevens@rsagroup.com.au