



BENCHMARK REPORT

CISIVE INSIGHTS: TALENT SCREENING TRENDS 2021



INTRODUCTION

After more than a year spent in a global pandemic, employers have had to adapt how they attract, hire, screen, and onboard new talent. Many employers had to quickly pivot in the early days of the pandemic to support a newly dispersed workforce, some of whom were working remotely from home for the first time in their careers. Companies that may have previously had no work from home policies had to establish them quickly, while also facing a steep learning curve for how to translate in-person processes like interviewing, hiring, and onboarding into virtual communication.

Cisive conducted an industry benchmark study that asked human resources, talent acquisition, compliance, and recruitment professionals across all industries how their policies and procedures changed as a result of the global pandemic. The 51-question survey asked more than 1,500 organizations about how their workforce practices have changed, how they handle background checks and screenings, the systems they have in place, and what challenges they expect in the coming months. The survey covers the time period between January 2020 and January 2021.

This white paper shares the results of that survey, providing context for what we learned and offering recommendations for organizations who want to build the safest and most effective workforce possible.

Methodology

Cisive surveyed 1,680 respondents from May 2021 to July 2021. Of those surveyed, 78% are in the United States, 9% are in Canada, 9% in Asia-Pacific, and 2.5% in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The respondents’ roles at their organization include Director, Manager or Supervisor (43%), Specialist or Administrator (27%), C-Level or Executive (17%), and Staff, Assistant or Support (12%). Just over 90% of respondents are involved in talent acquisition for their companies.

TARGETED AND FOCUSED GROWTH DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

In the earliest days of the pandemic, many companies anticipated a reduction in force; however, when asked about how their workforce changed between January of 2020 to January of 2021, the data show that just 22% reported a decrease in staff and 23% said it stayed approximately the same. The majority of respondents (52%) reported that their company’s staff grew during this time period.

As far as recruitment goes, some companies stopped hiring for more or less than three months, but the majority either carried on as expected pre-pandemic, hired more workers, or hired workers to work remotely (see Table 1).

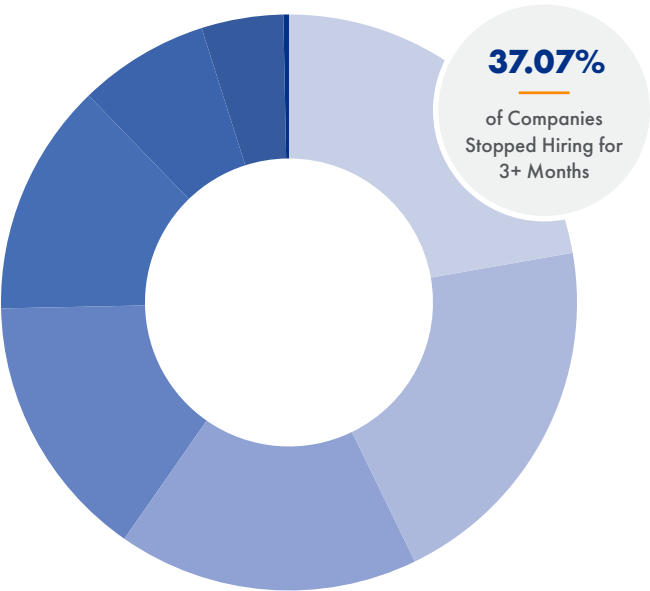
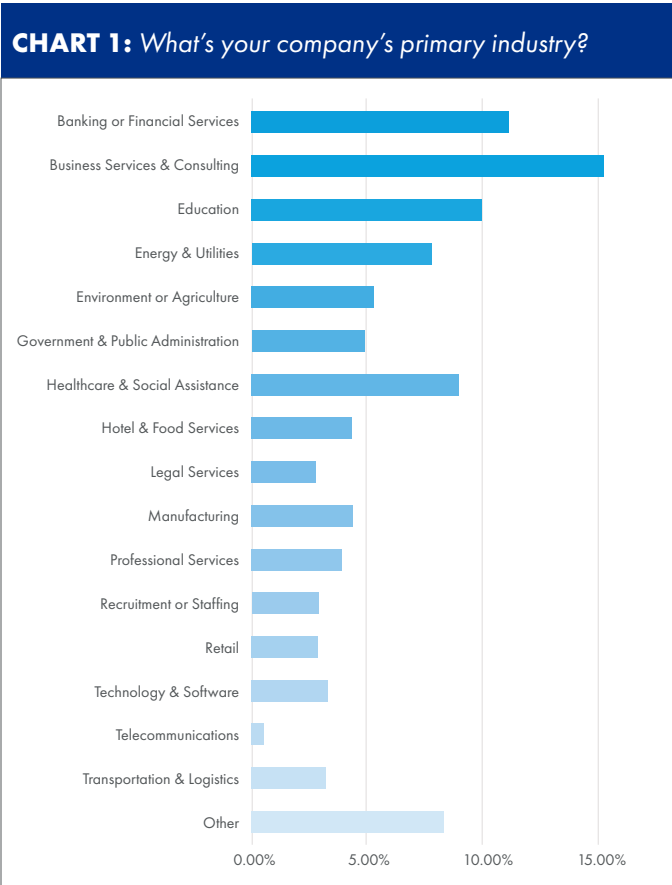


TABLE 1: How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your organization’s recruitment in 2020?		
	37.07%	My Company Stopped Hiring for More than Three Months
	34.27%	Recruitment Carried on Roughly as Expected in 2020
	28.15%	My Company Hired More Workers as a Result of the Pandemic
	24.98%	My Company Hired Workers to Work Remotely
	21.81%	My Company Stopped Hiring For Less Than Three Months
	12.23%	My Company Hired Workers in Different Countries to Work Remotely
	7.66%	It Did Not Impact Our Recruitment
	0.52%	Other

Without data, we could speculate that the majority of survey respondents reporting growth during 2020 are likely to be larger and potentially in industries experiencing the highest demand during the shutdown. However, the respondents work at companies with between 101-500 employees (37%), less than 100 employees (22%), 501-999 employees (18%), 1,000-2,499 employees (13%), 2,500-4,999 employees (6%) and more than 5,000 employees (6%). The vast majority (59%) of companies surveyed could be considered small- to mid-sized businesses with 500 or fewer employees.

As far as industries, Business Services & Consulting topped the list at 15% of respondents, but the remainder consisted of 11% or fewer from every other industry.



The expectations early in the pandemic were dire for small business. For instance, the [National Federation of Independent Business](#)¹ found in a [July 2020 survey](#)² that 23% of small businesses expected to be closed within six months unless economic conditions changed. A Fed [study](#)³ released in April of 2021 found that the pandemic has resulted in an additional 200,000 permanent closures of businesses over pre-pandemic levels—or about a quarter to a third above normal.

Cisive's survey asked respondents if they had to take measures to reduce overhead, salaries, staffing levels, bonuses, and perks, or if they experienced permanent office closures (see Table 2). The highest percentage (33%) said they cancelled bonuses, another 31% said they cut salaries, 29% reported that they withdrew non-financial benefits, 26% reported staff furloughs or redundancies, and 15% said they closed offices permanently. Just 19% said they took no action.

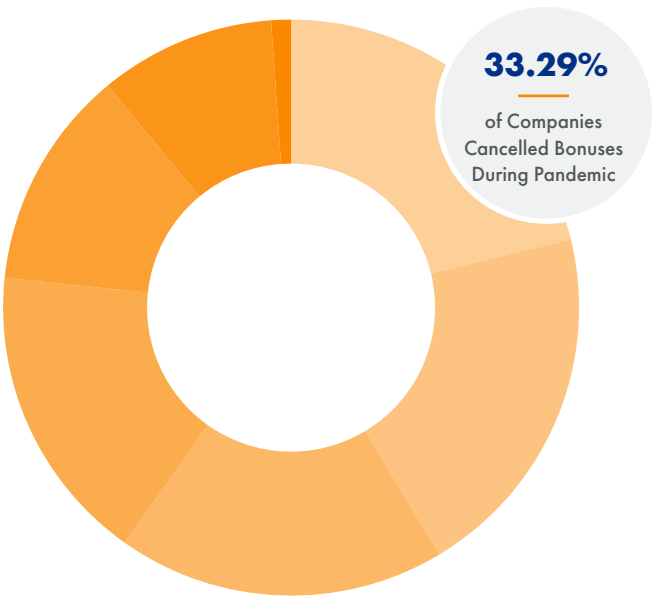
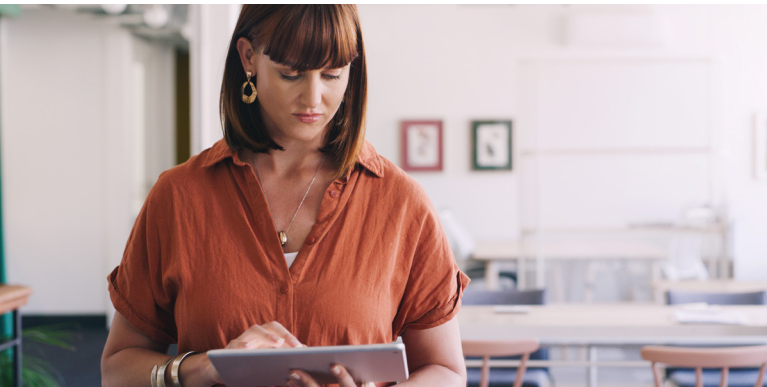


TABLE 2: Which of these actions were taken by your business during the COVID-19 pandemic?		
33.29%	Bonuses Cancelled	
31.68%	Salaries Cut	
28.93%	Non-Financial Benefits Withdrawn	
26.44%	Furlough/Redundancies	
19.40%	None of the Above	
15.50%	Permanent Office Closure(s)	
1.74%	Other	



Many small businesses took advantage of support with a [Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#)⁴ loan, an SBA-backed loan that helps businesses keep their workforce employed during the COVID-19 crisis. PPP is a loan designed to provide a direct incentive for small businesses to keep their workers on payroll. PPP loans can be used to help fund payroll costs, including benefits, and may also be used to pay for mortgage interest, rent, utilities, worker protection costs related to COVID-19, uninsured property damage costs caused by looting or vandalism during 2020, and certain supplier costs and expenses for operations. While the program ended on May 31, 2021, the SBA will [forgive loans](#)⁵ if all employee retention criteria are met, and the funds are used for eligible expenses.

The answer varies by industry, but a small business is one that has fewer than 1,500 employees and a maximum of \$38.5 million in average annual receipts, [according to the SBA](#)⁶. The largest number of survey respondents fall into the category of small businesses, with more than half of all respondents reporting a workforce size of 999 or fewer employees (see Table 3).

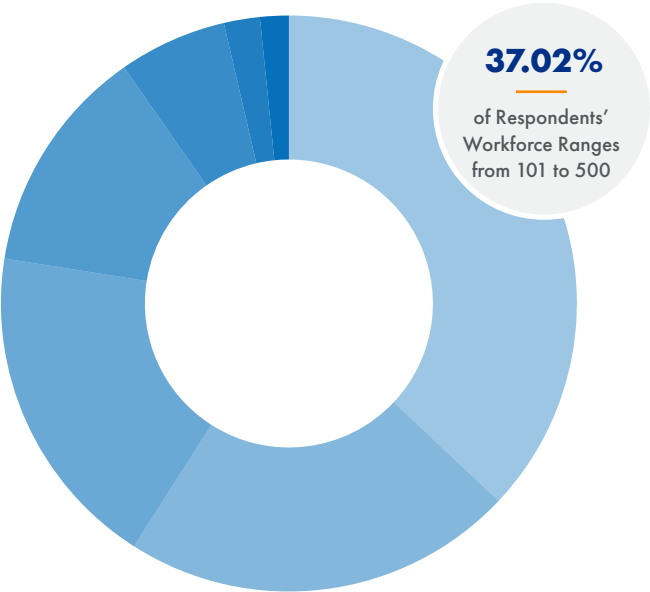


TABLE 3: What is your organization's total workforce size?		
●	37.02%	101 to 500
●	22.02%	Less than 100
●	18.45%	501 to 999
●	12.80%	1,000 to 2,499
●	6.07%	2,500 to 4,999
●	2.02%	5,000 to 14,999
●	1.61%	15,000 or more



TECH & SYSTEM INTEGRATION ARE KEYS TO SUPPORTING GROWTH

The abrupt closure of many offices and workplaces starting in March of 2020 ushered in a new era of remote work for millions of employed Americans and may portend a significant shift in the way a large segment of the workforce operates in the future. Most workers who say their job responsibilities can mainly be done from home say that, before the pandemic, they rarely or never worked from home, according to an October 2020 [Pew Research Center study](#)⁷. At the height of the pandemic, approximately 70% of corporate workers shifted to remote work swiftly, which left a lot of HR and company leadership teams scrambling to support communication for suddenly dispersed workforces.

“Doing work remotely is not new, but more intense than ever with the health crisis. Virtual work changes the boundaries of work from a focus on the ‘place’ to a shared set of values. Employees are ‘at work’ when they are creating value for customers regardless of their physical location. A customer value work boundary means that each day an employee should be able to articulate why today’s work will impact a customer either today or in the future,” said Dave Ulrich, speaker, author, professor, and HR thought leader.

The same [Pew study](#)⁸ reported that 81% of employed adults who are working from home all or most of the time say they use video calling or online conferencing services like Zoom or Webex at least some of the time (59% use these often). And 57% use instant messaging platforms such as Slack or Google Chat (43% use these often). Among those who use video conferencing services often, 63% say they are fine with the amount of time they spend on video calls; 37% say they are worn out by it. In general, teleworkers view video conferencing and instant messaging platforms as a good substitute for in-person contact – 65% feel this way, while 35% say they are not a good substitute.

HR teams began seeking different ways to mirror in-person processes like interviewing, all hands meetings, onboarding, performance reviews, and so on – with many employers relying on technology and system integration to accomplish what had formerly been face-to-face interactions. HR technologies became critical during this time, particularly for segments experiencing growth during the earliest days of the pandemic so they could continue to meet increased demand for goods and services.

But it isn’t just communication technology and all-hands meetings that HR leaders need. Technology should support



and enhance HR processes and systems that enhance the different areas of the employee life cycle. As companies ramp up their hiring and recruiting efforts, recruitment is one key area that employers are focusing on to quickly scale their hiring to support their changing business needs.

One critical piece of HR technology for the hiring process is the applicant tracking system or ATS. The ATS is a technology component for effective and efficient hiring to support business objectives. The Cive survey asked whether or not participants use or integrate with ATS technology (see Table 4). The majority of respondents (40%) reported use of and integration with an ATS, 30% reported they use an ATS but do not plan to integrate, 10% reported they plan to integrate in the next 12 months, and 18% reported that they do not use an ATS, nor do they plan to use one.

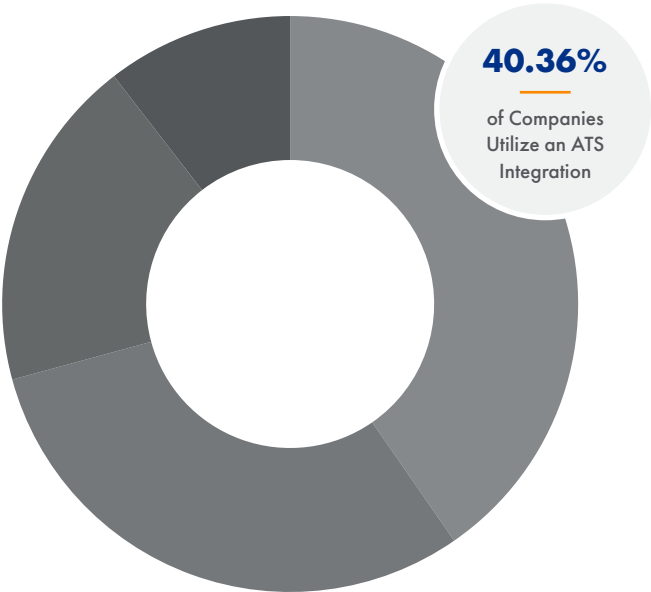
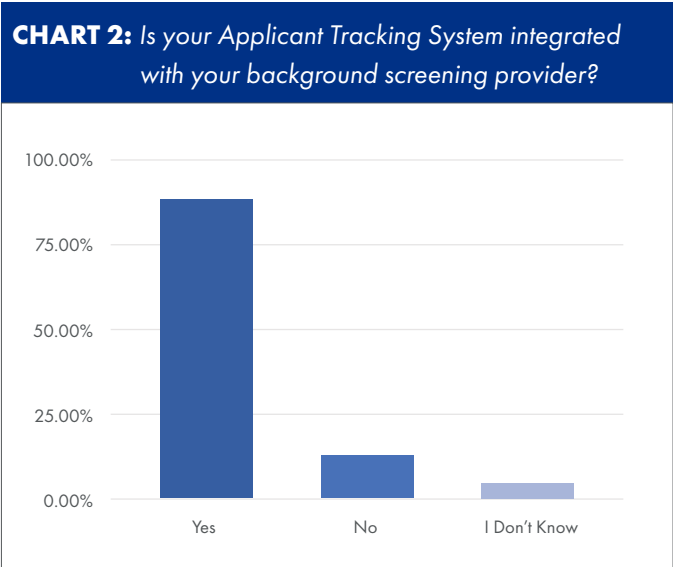


TABLE 4: Does your company use or integrate with an Applicant Tracking System (ATS)?		
●	40.36%	Yes, and it is integrated
●	30.42%	Yes, but we do not plan to integrate
●	18.75%	No, and we do not plan to use one
●	10.48%	No, but we plan to in the next 12 months

Integration of HR technology can be key to streamlining processes like applicant tracking, screening, sourcing, reporting, onboarding, and more. When asked if their ATS is integrated with a background screening provider, the majority of respondents (86%) reported that their ATS is integrated, 11% reported that it did not integrate with a background screening provider, and 3% report that they did not know whether or not their ATS integrates with a background check provider.



Integrations with HRIS technologies are a smarter way to remove bottlenecks from your recruiting and hiring processes.

Ben Eubanks, HR Analyst and Principle at Lighthouse Research and Advisory, said: “Talent leaders today do not have the time or patience for doing busy work or duplicate efforts to accomplish their tasks. Technology integrations allow them to not only solve those problems, but also creates an accurate picture of what’s happening within their data. Forward-thinking business leaders rely on integrations to make them more effective and efficient at critical tasks like hiring and onboarding.”

Why Integrate Background Screening With Your ATS?

Integrating background screening with your ATS has many benefits for recruiting and human resource teams, including a better candidate experience, improved productivity, metrics and analytics, and better accuracy and compliance. Here are the five primary areas that can be improved by integrating your background screening with your ATS.

1. **Improve candidate experience.** This stems from a greater level of transparency in the background check process, candidates' personal involvement in data collection, enhanced security with their personally identifiable information (PII), and legal compliance measures that protect candidates as much as their potential employer.
2. **Fewer hiring bottlenecks and improved productivity.** When background screening is integrated with your ATS, real-time background check report status is available within the ATS, increasing your team's productivity. After a background check has been submitted, best-in-class screening providers can communicate synchronously with an ATS and provide real-time status of the background check. ATS providers typically display the status in a dashboard and from within an individual's "candidate profile." This functionality saves your HR team time because they won't have to log in to your screening solution to check a candidate's status.
3. **Fewer errors, improved accuracy and compliance.** Integrating background screening with your ATS adds efficiency to the document completion process and helps ensure compliance with the FCRA Disclosure and Authorization process. As described above, an ATS does not contain all of the information an employment screening solution obtains from candidates. While some ATS providers present an FCRA Disclosure and Authorization, without the additional data that best-in-class employment screening providers obtain via an applicant portal, an ATS cannot accurately determine all of the authorization forms and documents that may be relevant to the candidate.
4. **The recruiter experience.** This is an important one in terms of the HR or recruiting leader who is responsible for job offers as well as monitoring and managing the background check screening process. Your recruiters should be able to move from offer to background screen seamlessly, and integrating your ATS is key to doing so. Additionally, removing concerns about compliance means that your HR team can spend more time on high-touch tasks with candidates and less time checking for compliance or keeping up with ever-changing regulations.
5. **Improved hiring metrics and analytics.** When an ATS is integrated with a best-in-class employment screening provider, duplicate data entry on the part of your busy recruiting and HR team is eliminated. The integrity of candidates' data is also improved, as it is securely

transmitted to the screening provider exactly as it is stored by the ATS. The consistency of applicants' information in your ATS and screening solution is important to ensure accuracy of their background check report, but it will also improve data integrity so you're able to get more accurate hiring metrics and analytics.

Example of a Start-to-Finish ATS Integration With Cisive

- From within the ATS, the employer changes a candidate's status to "Background Check"
- The ATS securely sends the candidate's data to the integrated background solution
- The employment screening provider emails the candidate instructions that link to a secure, mobile-enabled applicant portal
- The candidate logs into the applicant portal, provides additional data, and electronically signs all required authorization forms
- The screening provider conducts the candidate's background check
- Real-time background check status, such as In Progress, Review and Complete is displayed on a dashboard within the ATS
- With single sign-on technology, the employer may click to be logged into their screening solution and view the candidate's report

HR and hiring managers are now pivoting to scaling up hiring efforts in a post-COVID economy. We're faced with recruiting and hiring in a very different landscape that may be mostly or fully remote, meaning that we have to use technology to help us find the best candidates, engage them, build relationships, and perform outreach digitally. Additionally, this new talent economy requires companies to assess how they can bring remote employees into their company culture and get them up to speed so they can be productive as quickly as possible.

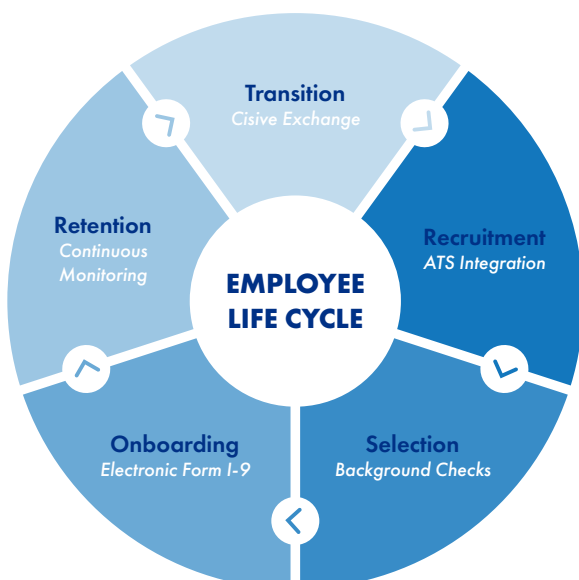
Cisive asked survey respondents about how their organization's turnover was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Close to half (44%) reported that their turnover was about the same, but 33% reported that turnover increased.

CHART 3: How was your organization's turnover impacted by the pandemic?



Being able to move from attracting talent to candidate application to offer to hire quickly is crucial to keeping your talent pipeline stocked and your hiring funnel robust. When considering which areas to target for improving productivity, your recruiting technology should be front and center.

Technology integrations at every stage of the employee lifecycle are key to being able to hire in a tight talent marketplace, from recruitment to selection to onboarding and career development. These can be as simple as an interview scheduling tool that integrates with your HRIS to a multi-functional integration to speed up new hire paperwork, background screening, document verification; accelerating time-to-hire has never been more important.



BACKGROUND SCREENING IN A COMPETITIVE TALENT MARKET

Cisive asked survey participants about the top benefits their organizations experience from an employment screening program (see Table 5). Better quality of hires is at the top of the list (47%), followed by greater employee retention (39%) and improved regulatory compliance (35%).

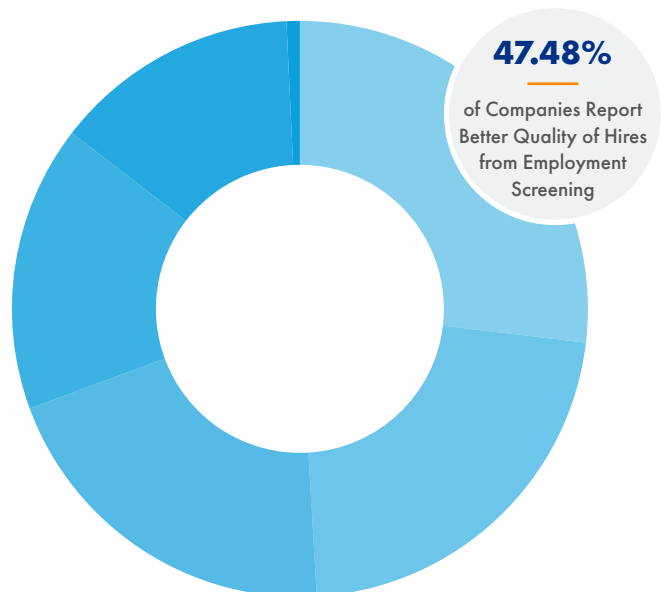


TABLE 5: What are the top benefits your organization experiences from employment screening?

47.48%	Better Quality of Hires
39.21%	Greater Employee Retention
35.89%	Improved Regulatory Compliance
28.41%	Better Company Reputation
24.37%	More Consistent Safety and Security
1.32%	Other



By focusing on hiring quality talent, organizations can implement tactics such as pre-employment background screening programs that can help them improve retention rates and minimize staff turnover. Several industries such as financial services, healthcare, and transportation, for example, are subject to industry and even job-specific screening requirements. More than one-third of survey respondents associate background screening with improved regulatory compliance. Regardless of the industry, however, employers must comply with the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) as well as the growing number of state and local “Fair Chance” ordinances, also known as “Ban the Box.”

Cisive asked participants which background screening components uncovered the most discrepancies with job candidates (see Table 6). Previously undisclosed criminal convictions were the most common (36%), followed by previously undisclosed conflicts of interest (30%), and driver motor vehicle records (27%). Positive drug test results (22%) were also among the most common discrepancies reported by participants in fourth place.

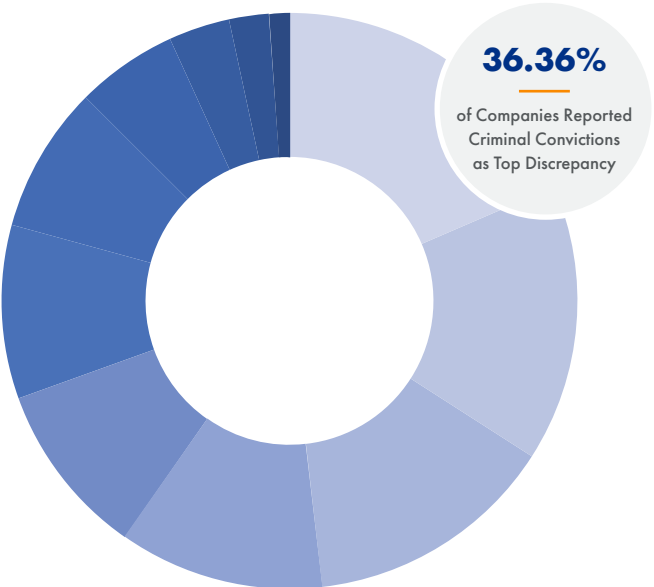


TABLE 6: In which areas have you uncovered the most discrepancies with job candidates as a result of background screening?		
	36.36%	Criminal - Previous Undisclosed Convictions
	30.53%	Directorship - Previously Undisclosed Conflicts of Interest
	27.68%	Driver Motor Vehicle Records
	22.58%	Drug Test - Positive Result
	19.27%	Credit Checks
	19.14%	Employment Verifications
	16.16%	Education Credentials
	11.19%	Identity Checks
	6.75%	Professional Licenses
	4.37%	Other
	2.25%	Registries/Sanctions



The frequency of undisclosed criminal conviction discrepancies emphasizes the significance of a thorough and effective background screening program. Positive drug test results, however, are also a common discrepancy among survey participants. This coincides with the latest workplace drug positivity research that indicates historically high records. In the general U.S. workforce, positivity increased 3.8 percent (5.3% in 2019 versus 5.5% in 2020), according to the [2021 Quest Diagnostics Drug Testing Index](#).⁹ The study is the first large-scale analysis of laboratory workforce drug tests performed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cisive asked participants if their organization uses a criminal record adjudication matrix when deciding how to treat records from background checks (see Table 7). The majority of employers indicated that they do (71%), while slightly more than one-fifth (22%) do not. “Employers should set the criteria for adjudication matrix to be job-specific and be mindful of not violating any federal, state, or local equal employment laws,” states Chad Ascar, Director of Compliance and Product Training at IntelliCorp, a Cisive company.

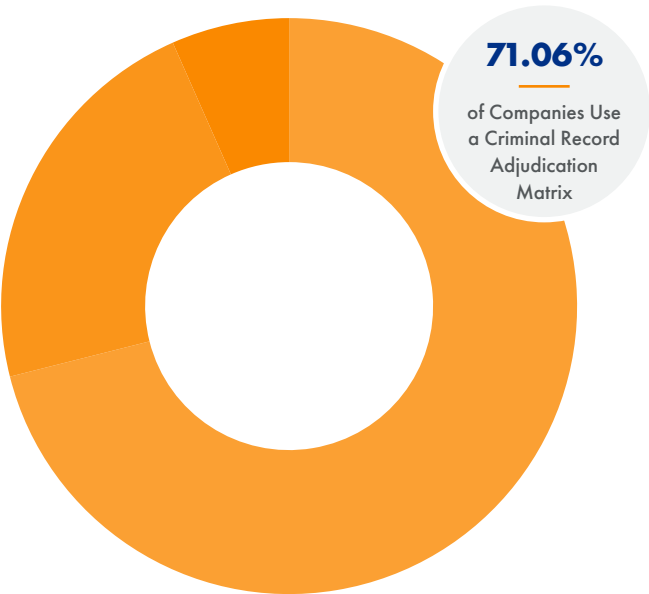
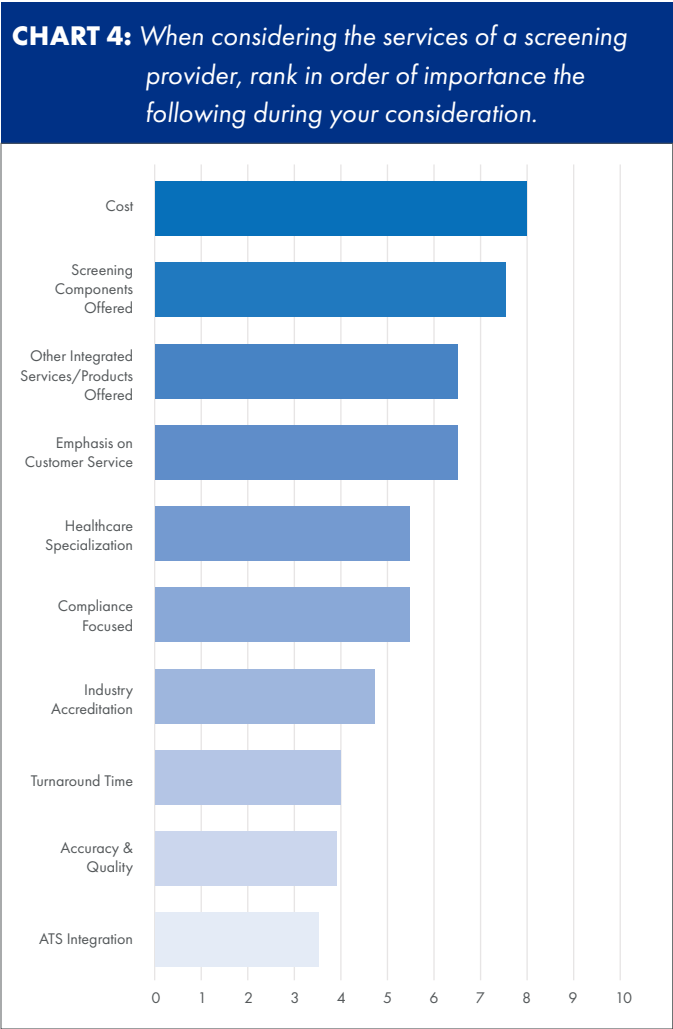


TABLE 7: Does your organization use a criminal record adjudication matrix (i.e., a chart identifying acceptable/unacceptable criminal history) to help you decide how to treat records returned on a background report?		
71.06%	Yes	
22.32%	No	
6.62%	I Don't Know	



Survey participants were also asked to rank what matters most when considering the services of a screening provider. Cost was selected as the most important factor, closely followed by screening components offered as second. Other integrated services/products offered and emphasis on customer service were a close tie for third place in respondents’ rankings.





In a year that was shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is understandable that employers have placed a heavier emphasis on cost than in other conditions. When safeguarding their organizations, however, employers should consider other factors besides program costs. Screening components offered also ranked high on participants' considerations. Incorporating the appropriate screening components can mean the difference between a compliant program and one that misses the mark.

When building an employment screening program, selecting a vendor that has integrated services can help organizations streamline processes and maximize efficiencies. Customer service, however, was also highlighted as an important factor. Not only is the customer experience important for employers as they interact with their screening partner, but it can also impact the candidate experience, which is an emerging area of focus for companies across the globe.

Cisive asked survey participants what their top employment screening challenges are (see Table 8). Minimizing turnaround time is at the top of the list (44%), followed by providing a positive candidate experience in a close second at 41%.

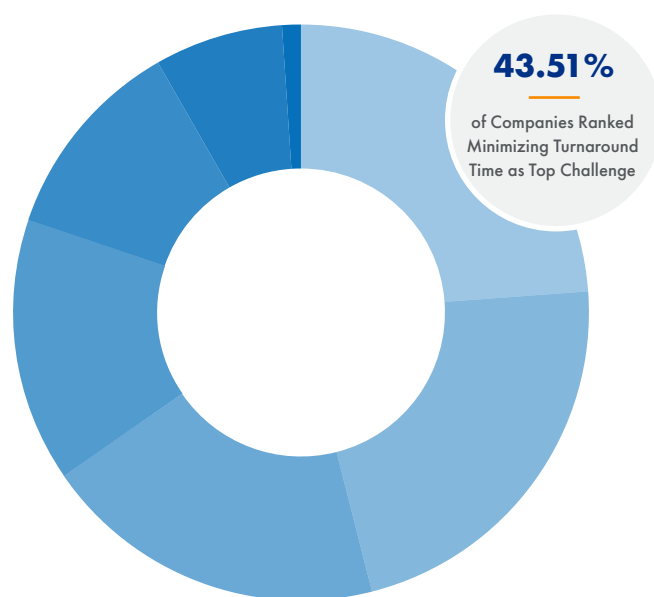


TABLE 8: What are the top employment screening challenges your organization experiences?

●	43.51%	Minimizing Turnaround Time
●	40.53%	Providing a Positive Candidate Experience
●	35.43%	Managing Program Costs
●	27.02%	Complying with Regulatory Guidelines
●	20.99%	Implementing Technology Integrations
●	13.18%	Verifying Information Successfully
●	1.92%	Other



Candidate experience is defined as how job seekers perceive and react to employers’ sourcing, recruiting, interviewing, hiring, and onboarding processes. If a job seeker had a poor experience during an interview a decade ago, he or she would be less likely to apply again in the future, accept a job offer, or buy that company’s products or services. They would also probably tell their inner circle about the poor experience.

Workplace change agent, author, and consultant Jessica Miller-Merrell states: “This is even more critical in a post-COVID talent marketplace for both candidates and employees. The response your company had to the pandemic, with regard to employee safety and wellness, remote working policies, and so on, really matters to employees - and they will remember it and you’ll see it on employer review websites. If you have been focusing on things like psychological wellness and offering resources for your employees, this should be front and center as you work to recruit candidates and treat them with empathy.”

The ubiquitousness of social media and employer review sites have dramatically expanded the dynamic and size of our inner circles. As a consequence, news of a poor employee or candidate experience can travel much faster and further. Research shows that candidates who had a poor candidate experience are far more likely to tell others not to apply to a company and write a negative review.

Time is always a crucial factor in recruiting. According to the [2020 NA Talent Board CandE Benchmark Research Report](#)¹⁰, if employers make the offer within one week of the final interview, the candidates’ great experience and willingness to increase their relationship with the employer increased 67% for all employers. More employers are investing more in communication and engagement with new hires before their start date. The more engagement prior to their start date, the better a retention starter it becomes. For candidates who were given multiple options to communicate goals, meet team members, and get questions answered prior to their start date, their great experience increased 83%. When they completed all their new hire forms online in an onboarding system, their great experience increased 68%. And if they get a call from the hiring manager, their great experience and willingness to increase their relationship with the employer increased 68%.

Throughout most of 2020, COVID-19 forced many state, county and federal courthouses to temporarily close, operate remotely, and oftentimes with a limited number of on-site employees. Additionally, laboratories that provide drug testing may not be available for in-person visits and candidates may be reluctant to visit a lab due to risk of exposure. So what

does this mean for companies that need fast and reliable background checks in order to screen candidates?

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, drug testing continues to be a valuable risk mitigation tool for employers. The stress and pressures from the pandemic have elevated the opioid epidemic to new heights. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) data show that total drug overdose deaths spiked to record levels in March 2020 after the pandemic hit, according to a report by [The Commonwealth Fund](#)¹¹. Our research shows that most employers understand the value of drug testing and have a program in place (see Table 9). Only 13% of respondents indicated they do not conduct pre-employment drug testing while 1% did not know if their organization performs drug testing.

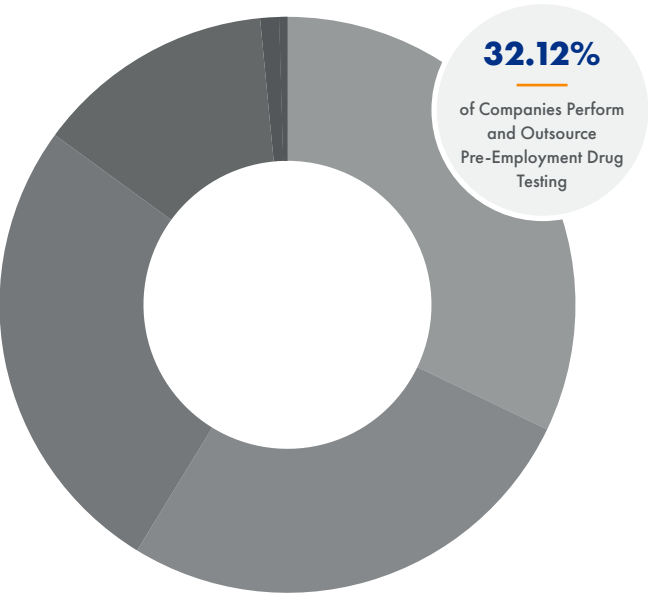


TABLE 9: Do you perform pre-employment drug testing?		
●	32.12%	Yes, and We Outsource Pre-Employment Drug Testing
●	26.62%	Yes, and We Perform Some Pre-Employment Drug Testing Ourselves and Outsource Some Pre-Employment Drug Testing
●	26.29%	Yes, and We Perform Our Own Pre-Employment Drug Testing
●	13.44%	No, We Do Not Perform Pre-Employment Drug Testing
●	1.06%	I Don't Know
●	0.46%	Other



The latest pre-employment drug testing research suggests the pandemic has not reduced the amount of drug tests conducted by the majority of employers. Half of employers (50%) reported the same pre-employment drug testing volume as past years while more than one-fourth (28%) even increased the amount of drug tests, according to the Current Consulting Group’s [2021 Employer Drug Testing Survey](#).¹² The same study found that more than four-fifths (82%) of employers did not alter their drug testing practices as a result of the pandemic and 86% did not suspend any type of drug testing.

Cisive asked how the pandemic affected participants’ background screening programs (see Table 10). Slightly over 31% of respondents said they introduced an ongoing monitoring (continuous screening) program for employees and 30% said they introduced a rescreening program. Nearly 26% reviewed the component checks of their current screening program and 23% said they introduced background screening for new hires. Only 6% temporarily stopped conducting background checks.

Our study also asked participants how often employees at their organization are subject to background checks (see Table 11). Surprisingly, time of hire is no longer the most common frequency, according to participants. The majority of employers surveyed (40%) indicated employees were subject to background checks every two years, followed by time of hire only (35%). Only 17% of companies surveyed conduct background screening on an annual basis.

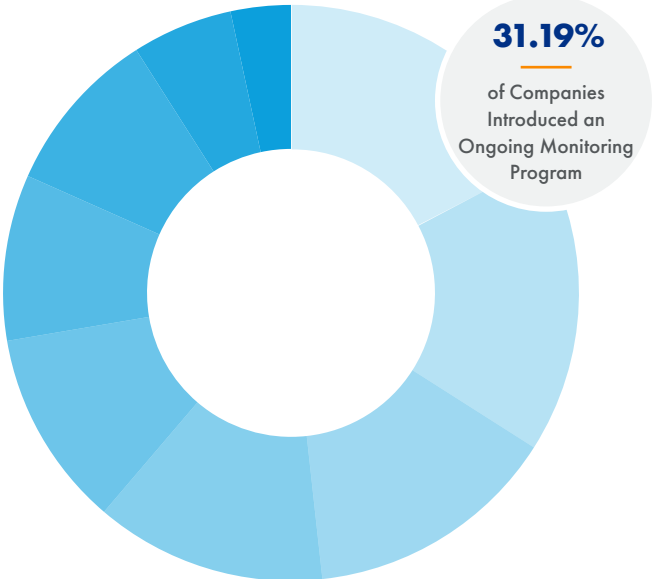
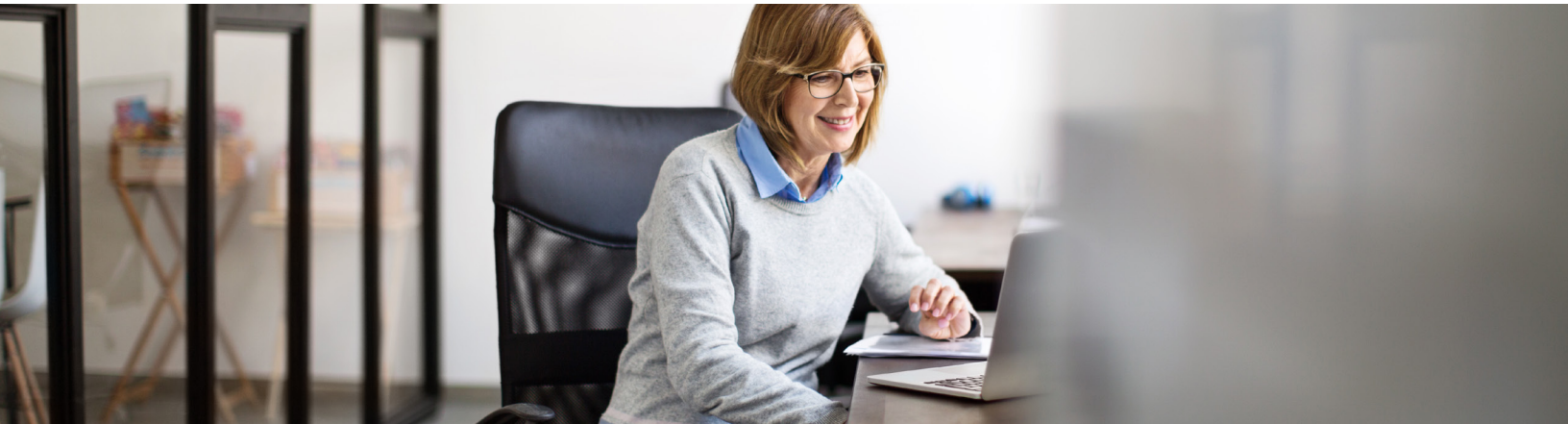
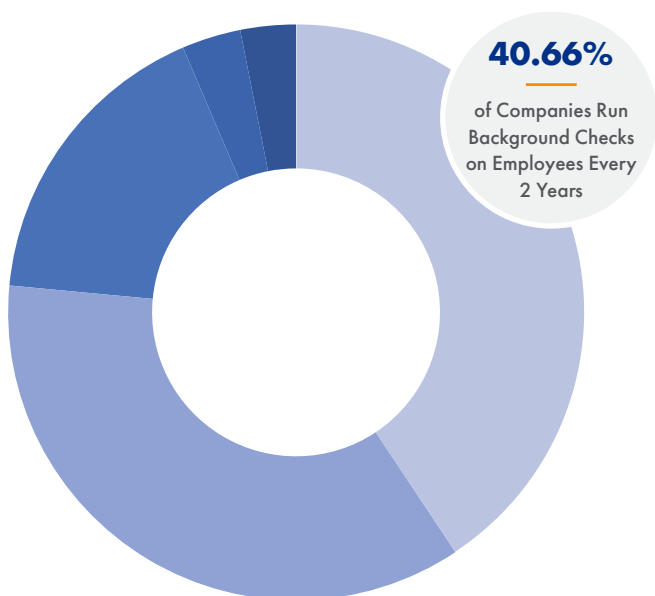


TABLE 10: How did the pandemic affect your background screening program in 2020?		
31.19%	We Introduced an Ongoing Monitoring Program for Employees	
30.20%	We Introduced a Rescreening Program for Employees	
25.70%	We Reviewed Our Screening Program's Component Checks	
23.44%	We Introduced Background Screening for New Hires	
20.00%	It Did Not Affect Our Screening Program	
16.82%	We Ordered Additional Checks for New Hires	
16.82%	We Ordered Alternative Checks for New Hires	
10.20%	We Ordered Fewer Checks for New Hires	
6.09%	We Temporarily Stopped Conducting Background Checks	





Cisive asked participants how often they reviewed their background screening policy (see Table 12). The majority of respondents indicated they review their background screening policy every 2-5 years (44%), and slightly over one-fourth review their policy annually.

At least one-fifth of participants indicated their organizations do not review their background screening policy more frequently than 5 years. While 2020 was an unprecedented year, it is a reminder of how rapidly change can affect the workplace. "With the proliferation of Ban the Box/Fair Chance regulations, employers should review their screening process at a minimum annually," says Chad Ascar, Director of Compliance and Product Training at IntelliCorp. "Staying abreast of these regulations can help organizations ensure they are following the law."

TABLE 11: How often are employees at your organization subject to employment criminal background checks?

40.66%	Every Two Years
35.83%	Time of Hire Only
17.09%	Annually
3.31%	Other
3.11%	I Don't Know

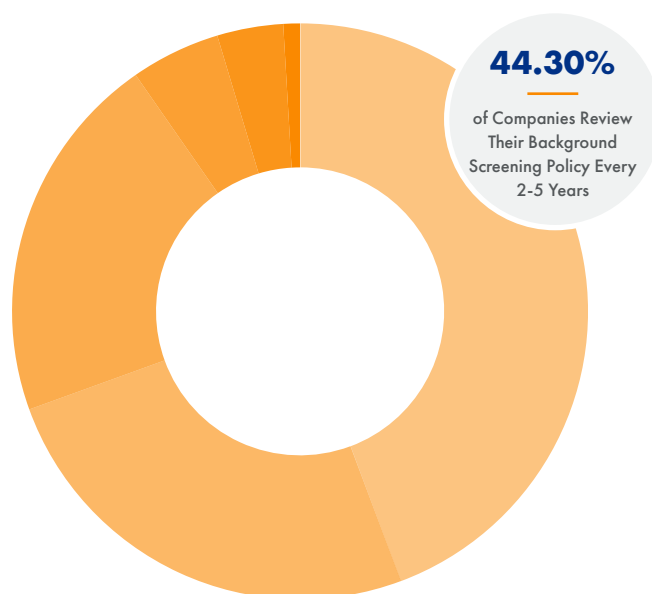


TABLE 12: How often does your organization review its background screening policy for changes?

44.30%	Every 2-5 Years
25.17%	Annually
20.86%	Every 5-10 Years
5.03%	Never
3.71%	I don't know
0.93%	Other



Cisive asked whether participants introduced any new background checks in 2020 specifically to help mitigate the risks of remote hiring (see Table 13). While less than 1% of respondents introduced new checks such as fingerprinting as a response to remote work, the majority of respondents (56%) introduced new checks for other reasons. Our results indicate that over half of organizations introduced an ongoing monitoring or rescreening program for employees in 2020, and companies have adopted other measures such as COVID-19 attestation tools to safeguard employees during the pandemic.

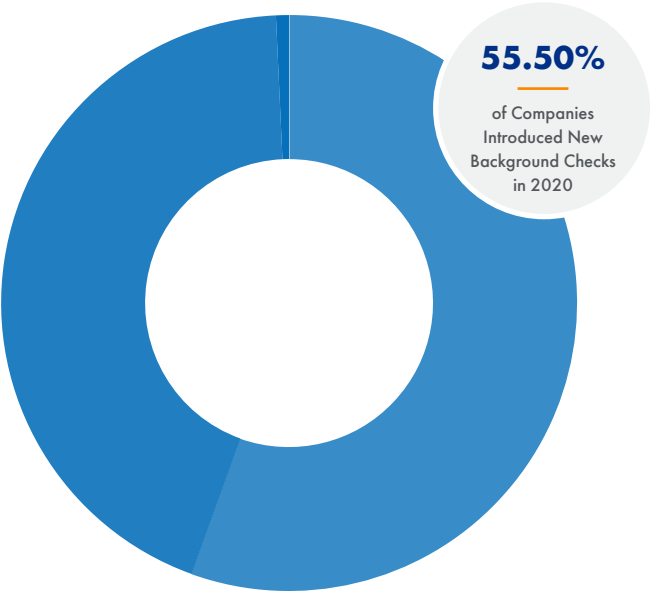


TABLE 13: Did you introduce any new background checks in 2020 specifically to help mitigate the risks of remote work/hiring?		
●	55.50%	No, but We Introduced New Checks for Other Reasons
●	43.77%	No, We Did Not Introduce Any New Checks in 2020
●	0.73%	Yes

HOW COVID-19 CHANGED PRIORITIES OF HR LEADERS

The COVID-19 crisis was unprecedented and many company and HR leaders have had to quickly pivot to a new remote work model that requires companies to assess how they can bring remote employees into their company culture and get them up to speed so they can be productive as quickly as possible.

Cisive asked survey participants what actions they have taken around new hires as a result of the pandemic (see Table 14). Just over 30% said they have implemented new background screening components for remote hires and 16% said they have started recruiting for remote working permanent hires. Additionally, 16% created a fully digital program for onboarding new hires.

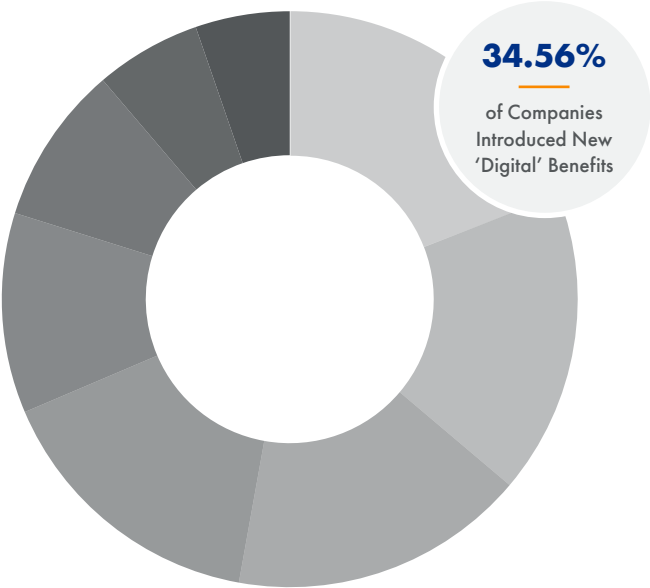


TABLE 14: As a result of the pandemic, which of the following describe actions your company has taken around new hires?		
●	34.56%	Introduced New 'Digital' Benefits (e.g., Subsidized High-Speed Home Internet Service)
●	30.88%	Implemented New Background Screening Components for Remote Hires
●	30.14%	Introduced New Well-Being Benefits (e.g., Gym Discounts, Mindfulness Courses/Apps)
●	28.52%	Provided New Starters with Equipment They Need to WFH or Reimbursed WFH Expenses
●	20.34%	Started Recruiting for Remote Working Permanent Hires
●	16.14%	Created a Fully Digital Onboarding Program for New Hires
●	10.76%	Provided Formal Training in Remote Working Practices for Those Who Needed It
●	9.58%	No New Actions Taken

As time to hire becomes one of our most important HR metrics, organizations are focused on speeding current processes and eliminating bottlenecks, especially around screening talent. Survey respondents (see Table 15) reported that minimizing turnaround time was a top challenge (44%), followed by providing a positive candidate experience (40%). These are followed by managing program costs (35%), complying with regulatory requirements (27%), implementing technology integrations (20%), and verifying information successfully (13%).

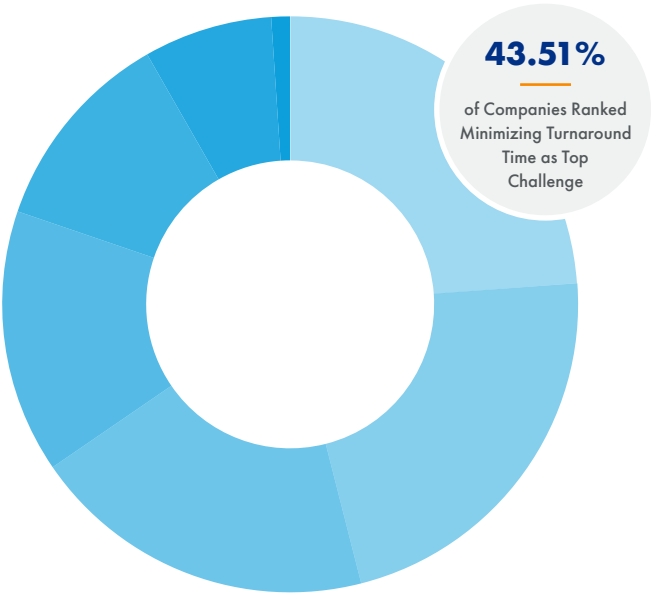


TABLE 15: What are the top employment screening challenges your organization experiences?

●	43.51%	Minimizing Turnaround Time
●	40.53%	Providing a Positive Candidate Experience
●	35.43%	Managing Program Costs
●	27.02%	Complying with Regulatory Guidelines
●	20.99%	Implementing Technology Integrations
●	13.18%	Verifying Information Successfully
●	1.92%	Other



VIRTUAL ONBOARDING TIPS

When selecting the right onboarding technology, it is key to select a user interface that is simple, task-oriented, and works with your organization’s internal workflow. [Cisive’s onboarding solution](#), for example, provides a real-time view into the status of current and past background checks and offers a customizable dashboard that enables HR teams to easily manage tasks associated with the new-hire process. Additionally, it allows remote applicants to complete onboarding documents such as employment applications and direct deposit forms, to name a few examples.

The Form I-9 is a time-sensitive document that must be completed by the third business day of an employee’s hire date, but employers can actually start the I-9 process as soon as they accept an offer for employment. Take advantage of this extra time and consider using an electronic system capable of handling I-9s for remote hires, such as [Cisive’s Electronic Form I-9 and E-Verify solution](#). Using an electronic I-9 system can assist your company in maintaining compliance even when you use an authorized representative who is not familiar with I-9s.

Turnaround time, or the direct impact of turnaround time on time to hire, correlates with candidate experience. In fact, a [2021 Candidate Expectations Survey](#)¹³ from Cronofy reports that responsiveness during the hiring process came out on top as the thing that matters most to candidates in the U.S. In fact, 64% of US candidates said that the process of interview scheduling directly impacts their perceptions of an employer, and even more so with those applying for senior roles.

Global markets are also a priority, as we are now working in remote and hybrid work environments. Cisive asked survey participants if their organization recruits internationally, and the majority (just over 75%) do.



Global background check programs are necessary for both international organizations as well as US organizations that hire a diverse set of candidates. With remote employment broadening your talent pool from your immediate geographical location to nearly everywhere in the world, global background checks are expected to be more common. This can present a challenge for organizations not equipped to handle international background checks.

For example, if an employer has made the decision to keep its workforce working remotely for good and employees move out of the immediate vicinity to another country, domestic background screening isn't sufficient for continuous background checks. Employers will need to abide by the laws of their employee's country of residence and be able to access information in that country. Additionally, more employers are taking advantage of a productive remote workforce to expand talent pools so they can recruit and hire citizens of other countries and will need to be able to conduct background screening in their candidate's countries of origin.

Global background screening isn't just for organizations that have offices or locations in other countries—it also refers to performing background checks on domestic-based candidates who have lived, worked, or studied in another country. With the sharp rise in remote working and the number of companies choosing to retain a dispersed workforce, your formerly US-based employees could relocate anywhere in the world. This complicates a number of things for employers (including payroll), but especially for continuous screening on a global scale.

The three most important areas to focus on when developing a policy for background screening are verification, consistency, and legal compliance.

Verify candidate experience and education. Employers should know who they are hiring by verifying the candidate's educational background, employment history and other licensing credentials. Employment verification is done in the US and globally. This includes both long term and short term work history. It also includes start and end times and reasons for leaving employment. Employment verification can be one of the hardest things to pre-screen, as sometimes past employers may not be easy to reach or they might have closed operations.

Consistency in hiring practices. Your company policy around new hires or continuous background checks should have a consistent set of requirements and standards supported across the organization, and should be developed with



an understanding of all the regions in which they will be implemented and supported. Not verifying applicants' foreign experience creates an inconsistency in your hiring process and may lead to claims of discriminatory hiring practices. For example, if you run a domestic background check on two applicants for the same position and one of them claims to have a degree from a foreign institution, you will end up checking the educational claim of only one of the candidates, potentially exposing your company to litigation. Additionally, negligent hiring claims can arise when an employee causes harm to another employee and your company cannot demonstrate that it exercised due diligence when evaluating that worker's fitness for the job.

Ensure legal compliance. The legal implications of international background screening involve the intersection of U.S. and foreign laws and they can be extraordinarily complex. It is important to understand both the laws that apply in both the U.S. and the relevant foreign country. For example, the obligations of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) still apply for international screening. If you're working with a vendor partner to outsource international screening, the vendor has an FCRA obligation to take reasonable procedures to ensure accuracy. If there is a negative public record, such as a criminal-record "hit," then the firm must make sure the information is correct and up-to-date and supplied in a way that does not violate any data- or privacy-protection rules.

It's also important to know and understand the country's data-privacy regulations, such as the EU's General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), because the background screening process involves collecting and transferring personally identifiable data. These complexities are the primary reason many companies choose to work with a third-party vendor that has particular expertise with international background checks and hiring employees globally.

"Cisive has embraced remote work to thrive in the new normal," said James Owens, Cisive's CEO. "The pandemic has catalyzed innovation for our company. As a founding member of the [Velocity Network Foundation](#), Cisive is at the forefront of an exciting paradigm shift in self-sovereignty of career credentials that will transform the world of talent acquisition. It is more important than ever to have a global strategy when it comes to talent acquisition and background screening, and leveraging the best technology and global-capable platforms such as Cisive's solutions can help companies succeed in the workplace of the future."



CONCLUSION

In order to remain competitive, employers need to strike a balance between speed and quality throughout every part of the employee life cycle. By creating processes and systems that prioritize these updates and changes, companies can gain a competitive advantage in effective recruitment, onboarding, and ultimately retention in a post-COVID workplace.

For companies who are looking to hire quickly, recruitment and onboarding are the biggest areas of opportunity. This is in part because of the competitive recruitment and hiring markets combined with the business need to train and acclimate employees quickly in order to drive productivity and maximize revenue within the employee's first six months of hire. Organizations should lean on vendor partnerships and technology integrations with HR, including background check screening companies like Cisive, allowing organizations to scale and pivot quickly to meet the rapidly changing needs.

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is to expect the unexpected and that organizations who can quickly scale, adapt, and pivot will reap the benefits this changing environment brings. The ability to find talent is a key component, and even more important is the ability to quickly adjust to the market conditions whatever the future might bring.

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ABOUT CISIVE

At Cisive, we are experts in the specific risks and regulations that apply to the financial services and other highly regulated industries. For many years, we have provided tailored solutions to meet the unique requirements of our enterprise clients.

Cisive's service model provides a single, integrated system throughout the globe using complete applicant information and country-specific forms. Cisive returns information to our clients through a centralized system for analysis, quality control, presentation, and billing.

With over 4 decades of experience and expertise in working with many of the world's largest financial services institutions, Cisive's deep insight into employment screening practices and industry knowhow, is unlike any other background screening provider in the industry.

Your business will not only get a background screening provider, but a lifelong partner – a company that stands by their work; protects their clients and provides the consultation and guidance world class act organizations are looking for.

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