

Q&A Column
Author: Mark Swartz

Email Subject Line: Checking Up On Your Own Background

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Headline: Conducting A Background Check on Yourself

Summary:

Question: Last month I went on an interview for a job I thought I was perfect for. A few days later the company called and offered me the job verbally, saying the final offer was subject to my reference and background check. About two weeks later I received a form letter from them saying I hadn't received the job. Is there a way for me to find out what they might have uncovered? I don't want this to happen again!

Kyle B., Winnipeg, Manitoba

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Dear Mark,

Question: Last month I went on an interview for a job I thought I was perfect for. A few days later the company called and offered me the job verbally, saying the final offer was subject to my reference and background check. A week later I hadn't heard back from them and I phoned them to see where things stood. They didn't return my call but later that week I received a form letter from them saying I hadn't received the job. Now I'm wondering if something came up in their investigation that may have hurt me. Is there a way for me to find out what they might have uncovered? I don't want this to happen again!

Kyle B., Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear Kyle,

While it's almost certain the company you interviewed with will never reveal what came up in your background check, you can go ahead and try to find out on your own what's "on the record" about you.

There are several areas you should consider in particular. The following is based on information I found on the website of [InlineReference](http://www.inlinereference.com) www.inlinereference.com, a service that employers use to do professional background checks on potential employees*:

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References and Employment History

Begin by making sure you know what your references are going to say about you (see "[Prepping Your References In Advance](#),"

<http://workopolis.ca/servlet/Content/resource/20060428/cqa20060428?gateway=work>). Note that employers who are asking about you may also confirm your relationship to each reference (e.g. colleague, supervisor or worker), plus the timeframe in which they've known you.

Also call Human Resources, or the person who keeps records of your employment history, and ask them to verify your start and end dates, plus the titles you held that they have on their records.

Education and Memberships

Try calling the [schools](#) you graduated or received accreditation from, and professional associations you belong to, just to ensure that they have the correct information on file about you.

Financial History

Contact the major credit reporting agencies, such as [Equifax Canada](#) http://www.equifax.com/EFX_Canada and [TransUnion of Canada](#) <http://www.tuc.ca/TUCorp/home.asp> for details about your personal financial history including current accounts, bankruptcies, collections and legal items.

Other

Anything on your [drivers license abstract](#) http://www.ndaa.org/pdf/drive_abstract_canada_chart.pdf that might suggest you're a risky choice as an employee? Or how about if you have a criminal record <http://canadaonline.about.com/cs/crime/ht/criminalrecord.htm>: Does it show anything that you haven't been upfront about?

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Mind you, not every employer goes to great lengths in order to screen you so thoroughly. In fact it may surprise you to hear that quite a few do nothing at all. But if the places you've applied to are set on performing due diligence, better you should have a chance to set your records straight if there are problems.

* please note that inlinereference **does not provide services to individuals directly**. They deal exclusively with employers. There may be other firms in this field that do deal with individuals.



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