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Leading Provider of Employee Screening Services

# EMPLOYEE SCREENING TRENDS 2025

# 01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyses key trends in employee screening activities conducted by iFacts, the leading provider of employee screening and background checks from June 2024 to May 2025, alongside global industry insights to inform strategic decision-making for the future. The findings reveal a shifting landscape, with an increased adoption of digital verification tools and a growing emphasis on screening remote and international workforce candidates. Globally, organisations are integrating AI and data analytics to enhance decision accuracy, though these advancements come with challenges, such as bias and data security concerns.

In South Africa, the industry faces unique challenges related to data access, compliance with local regulations (such as the Protection of Personal Information Act, or POPIA), and verifying identity documents amid rising costs. Despite these issues, success stories demonstrate how innovative verification methods can reduce turnaround times and improve accuracy, with many clients acknowledging the value of continuous screening practices, such as lifestyle audits.

Key background checks—criminal records, qualifications, driver's licenses, identity verification, and social media assessments—remain essential to effective screening; however, the industry must evolve to address emerging risks such as document fraud and identity theft. Customer feedback indicates high satisfaction levels despite concerns over check turnaround times.

Looking ahead, the industry must navigate ongoing regulatory complexities, leverage technological innovations responsibly, and implement tailored screening processes that align with sector-specific risks. By doing so, organisations can better mitigate risks, enhance compliance, and foster more efficient, fair hiring practices in an increasingly complex employment landscape.

# 02 KEY TRENDS AND INSIGHTS

## Globally, the top 6 trends in employee screening and background checks are:

**Increased Adoption of Digital and Online Verification Tools** 01

Companies are leveraging technology to streamline background checks through online platforms, reducing turnaround times and increasing accuracy.

**Enhanced Focus on Remote and Global Workforce Screening** 02

With the rise of remote work, organisations are increasingly conducting international background checks to verify candidates from different regions, ensuring compliance with local laws and standards.

**Integration of AI and Data Analytics** 03

An alarming trend shows a rise in job applicants using AI to create fake identities, documents, and qualifications. According to a Gartner study, it is expected that by 2028, one of every four job applicants worldwide may be fake.

**Stricter Compliance and Privacy Regulations** 04

Employers are increasingly attentive to data protection laws (such as GDPR POPIA) and are adopting stricter protocols to ensure that background checks are compliant with regional legal frameworks.

**Growing Emphasis on Soft Skills and Cultural Fit Assessment** 05

In addition to traditional checks, such as criminal records and employment history, companies are expanding their screening to include soft skills, personality assessments, and cultural compatibility, particularly for leadership roles.

**Fraud Prevention** 06

Fraud is on the rise, and a report by Crowe UK and the University of Portsmouth revealed that recruitment fraud costs UK businesses approximately £23.9 billion annually.

# In South Africa, the top trends in employee screening and background checks are slightly different for various reasons:

**Increased Adoption of Digital Verification Platforms** 01

Organisations are increasingly utilising digital verification tools and online platforms to conduct background checks efficiently, reducing turnaround times and improving accuracy.

**Enhanced Focus on Compliance with POPIA** 02

With the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) in effect, companies are prioritising data privacy and implementing stricter protocols to ensure background checks are compliant with local data protection laws.

**Growing Emphasis on Criminal Background Checks** 03

Criminal record checks remain a priority, especially for sensitive or financial roles, due to safety and fraud concerns. However, there's a growing need to shift towards integrity assessments that evaluate intent, as South Africa's low conviction rate is often overlooked.

**Integration of Employment and Educational Verification** 04

Employers are placing greater importance on verifying academic credentials and previous employment to mitigate risks associated with false qualifications or gaps in employment history.

**Ongoing Screening / Lifestyle Audits** 05

69% of clients believe that employee screening should continue beyond the initial employment phase and that regular checks and lifestyle audits are essential during a person's employment. This will minimise risk within organisations.

**Employee Screening Policy** 06

61% of clients believe that only Human Resources should be responsible for input into the policy. It is essential that the legal, risk, and executive teams buy into and approve the policy for it to be effective within the organisation.

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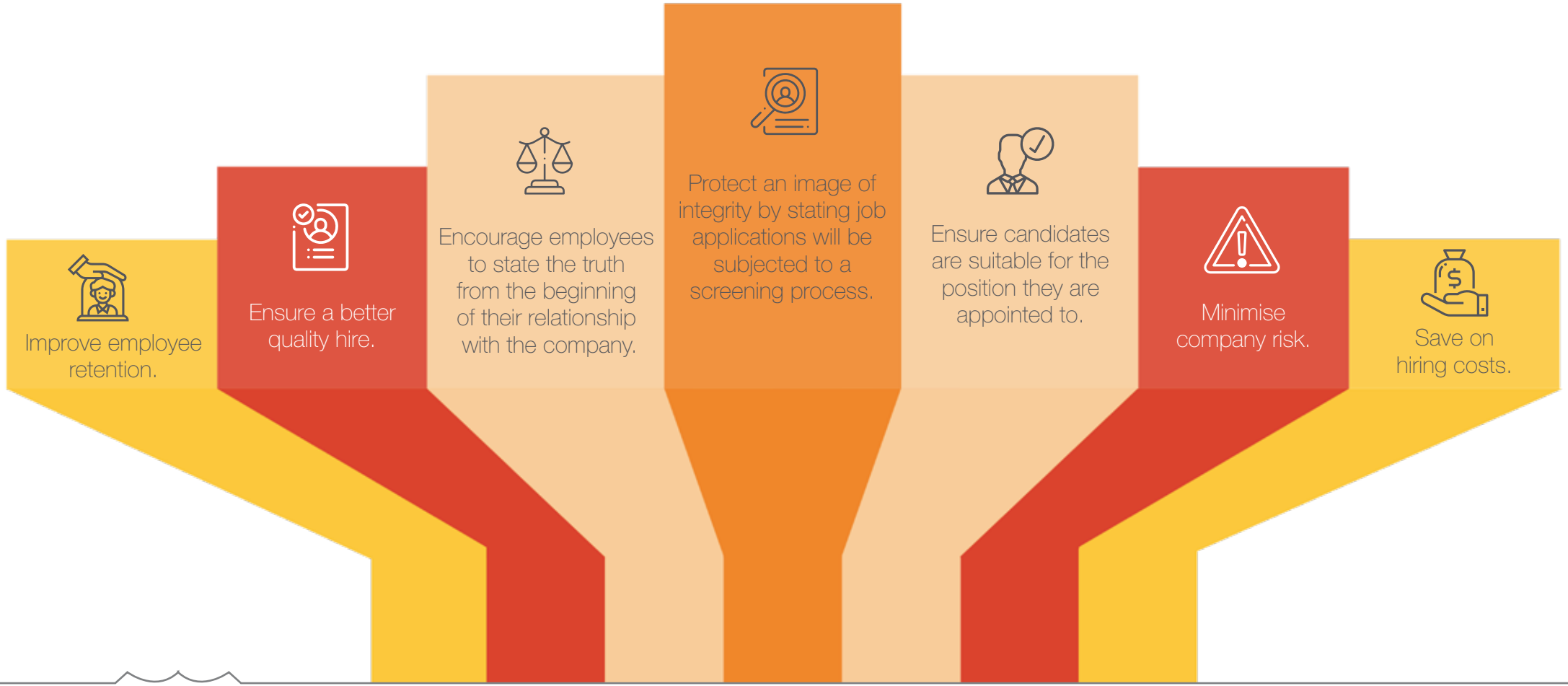
# 03 WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE AN EFFECTIVE SCREENING POLICY IN PLACE?





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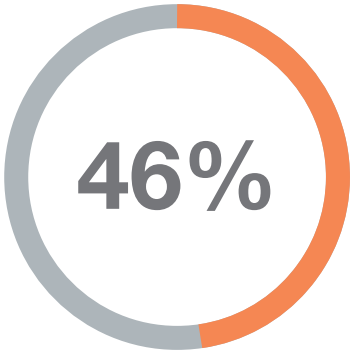
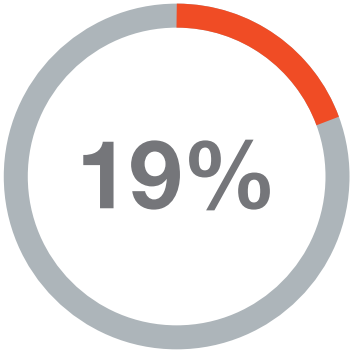
# 04 COMMON BACKGROUND CHECKS



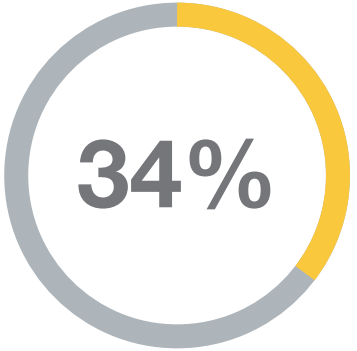

## DRIVING LICENCE VERIFICATIONS

Whilst only **2%** of driver's licence verifications were invalid, an alarming **46% of Professional Driving Permits (PDPs)** issued were invalid, marking a **3% increase** compared to the previous year.




## CREDIT CHECKS

**19%** of credit checks flagged negative credit records, reflecting a **3% increase** from the previous year.




## FIREARM COMPETENCY

**34%** of SAPS Firearm Competency checks resulted in invalid certifications.

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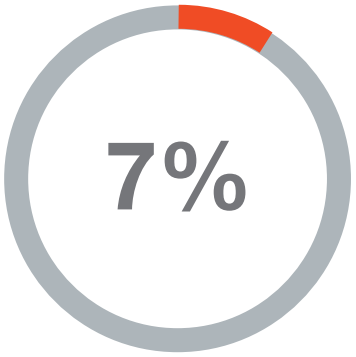
COMMON BACKGROUND CHECKS

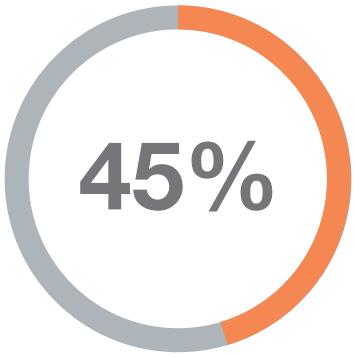
# CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

Criminal record checks play a crucial role in helping employers identify potential risks and ensure workplace safety. However, it's important to approach these checks within the correct legal framework. South African labour law requires that any criminal history be assessed in relation to the specific role, rather than serving as an automatic disqualification. This ensures fair, job-relevant hiring decisions that align with legal and ethical standards.




## CRIMINAL RECORDS

**7%** of candidates screened were found to have criminal records.




## CRIMINAL RECORD MISCONCEPTIONS

**45%** of clients believe a criminal record should disqualify a person from employment. This is not correct, and South African labour law dictates that any employee screening must be job-specific.

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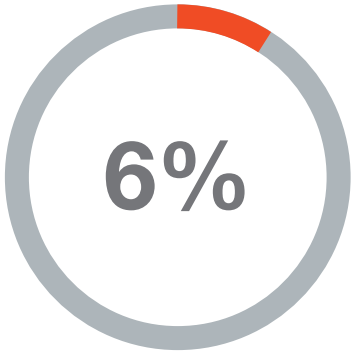
COMMON BACKGROUND CHECKS

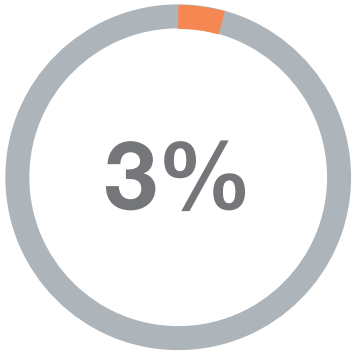
# EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS VERIFICATION

Verifying academic credentials is a key step in ensuring candidate honesty and competency. With increasing instances of falsified qualifications, it's essential for employers to validate both school-leaving and tertiary certificates. Recent findings reveal notable discrepancies, highlighting the ongoing need for thorough educational checks during the hiring process.




## MATRIC QUALIFICATIONS

**6%** of matric qualifications (South African school leaving certificate) were invalid.




## TERTIARY QUALIFICATIONS

**3%** of tertiary qualifications failed validation.

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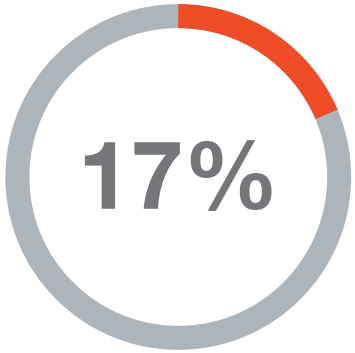
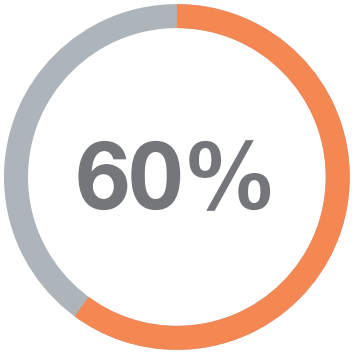
COMMON BACKGROUND CHECKS

# IDENTITY VERIFICATIONS



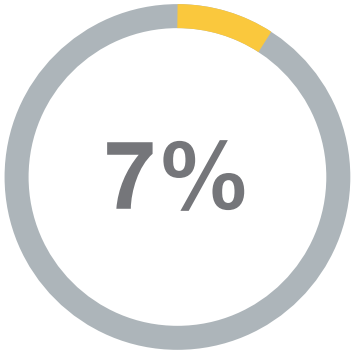

## PERSONAL CONTACT DETAILS

**17%** of personal contact details provided were invalid.



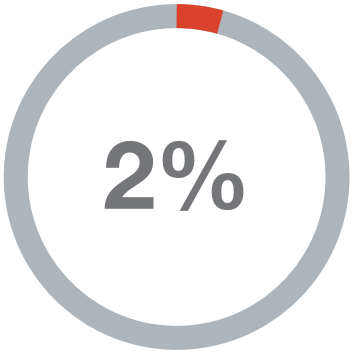

## WORK PERMIT VERIFICATION

**60%** of work permit verifications were flagged as invalid.




## PASSPORT VERIFICATION

**7%** of passports failed verification.




## ID DOCUMENTS

Whilst only **2%** of the ID documents verified by iFacts were fraudulent, it should be noted

Identity fraud is one of the fastest-growing forms of fraud globally. The old green South African ID book has a **34% rate of fraud**. SAFPS reported that ID theft increased by **400% from 2023 to 2024.**

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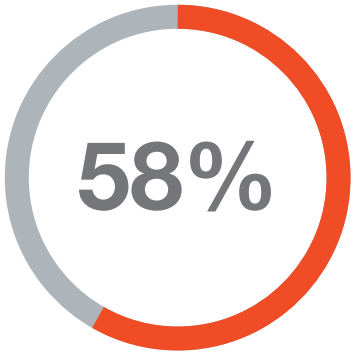
COMMON BACKGROUND CHECKS

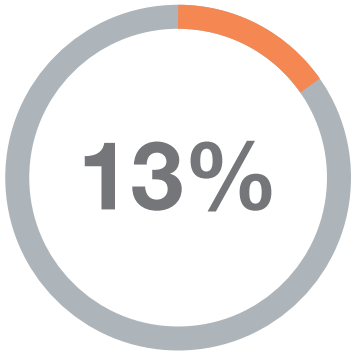
# INDUSTRY REGISTRATION VERIFICATION

Verifying industry-specific registrations is a crucial part of the employee screening process, particularly in regulated sectors like finance, security, education, and healthcare. Ensuring candidates meet required professional standards helps organisations avoid compliance risks and maintain credibility. Recent data highlights significant gaps in compliance, underscoring the importance of thorough verification practices.




## FAIS & DOFA REGULATIONS

**58%** of screened individuals failed to comply with FAIS & DOFA regulations, presenting a significant compliance risk for financial and advisory roles.




## SECURITY INDUSTRY (PSIRA)

**13%** of security industry checks were invalid (PSIRA)

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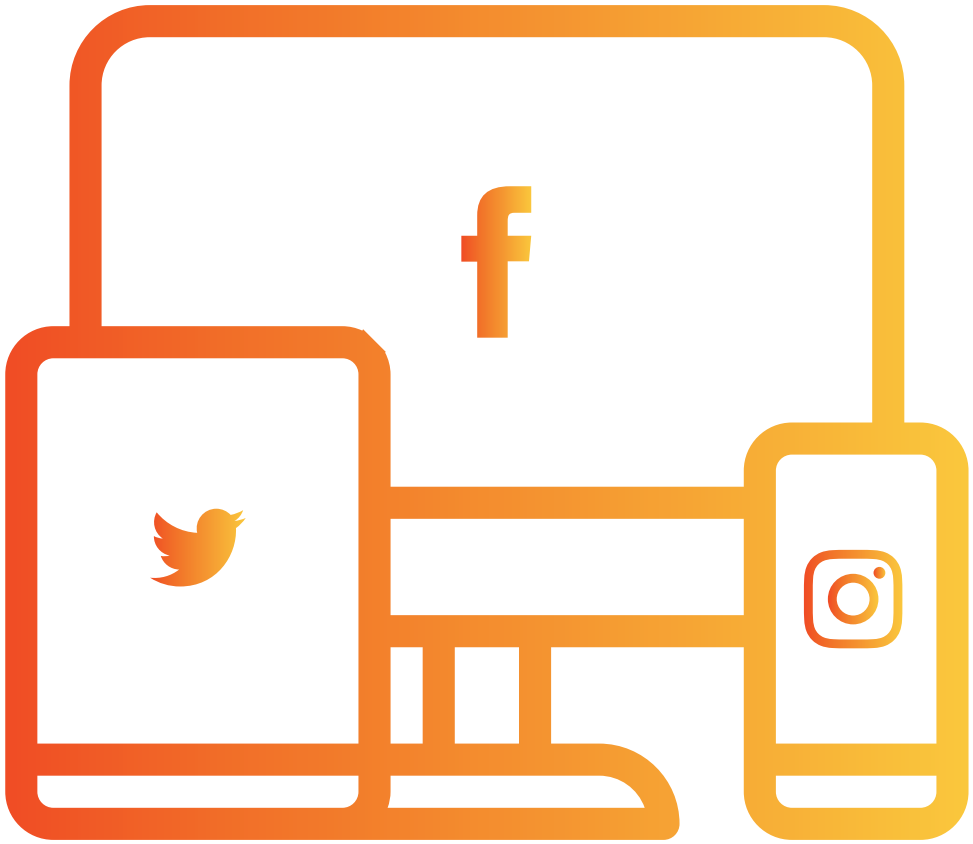
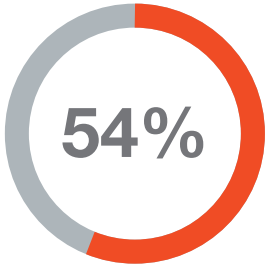
COMMON BACKGROUND CHECKS

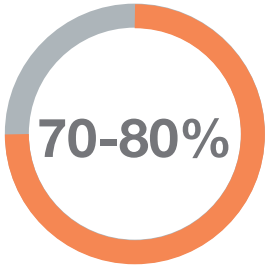
# SOCIAL MEDIA RISK ASSESSMENT






## SOCIAL MEDIA RED FLAGS

**54%** of employers have rejected candidates due to social media red flags




## SOCIAL MEDIA CHECKS

It is estimated that **70-80%** of companies do some form of social media checks on potential employees

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# 05 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

South Africa's background screening industry needs to address data access and verification issues, comply with legal frameworks, and protect personal data—all while striking a balance between efficiency, fairness, and security. The rapid digital transformation and informal employment sector further complicate these challenges, underscoring the need for innovative and compliant screening solutions.

One major issue that the South African industry could face is a massive increase in the verification of identity documents. Whilst this is necessary in the country, it will have a dramatic impact on the industry. Conducting verifications on documents without confirming the candidate's identity can be a pointless exercise. 45% of clients believe that the increase in cost will be worth it.

## Globally, the most significant challenges the employee screening industry finds today are:

Data privacy laws and compliance requirements **01**

Protecting sensitive data from cybersecurity threats **02**

Navigating different regulations across countries **03**

Avoiding personal bias and discrimination in screening processes **04**

Integrating new technologies like AI and automation responsibly **05**

Providing a positive candidate experience **06**

Balancing cost and time efficiency **07**

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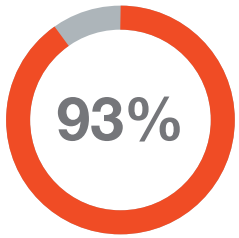
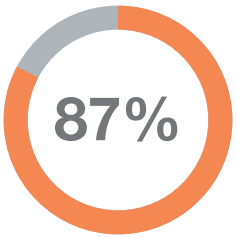
# CUSTOMER CHALLENGES AND COMMENTS



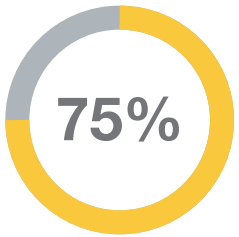

**TRUSTED HIRING SUPPORT**

**93%** of customers believe iFacts has helped them make good hiring decisions




**CLIENT SATISFACTION**

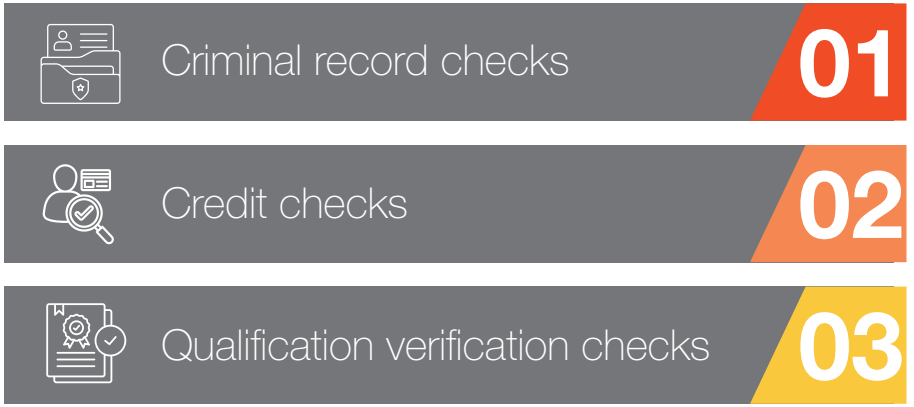
**87%** of customers are satisfied with iFacts service




**TURNAROUND TIMES**

**75%** of customers consider the turnaround times for checks outstanding

## THE MOST COMMONLY USED CHECKS:




## TURNAROUND TIMES:

Turnaround times are often a challenge for the recruiter and whilst this is addressed as efficiently as possible. Sometimes the data source is not automated and information is not available immediately. Accurate data is key and may take a little time.

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# 07 CONCLUSION

The employee screening landscape is rapidly evolving in both South Africa and globally, driven by technological advancements, regulatory changes, and shifting workforce trends. Organisations that proactively adopt innovative verification methods, leverage AI responsibly, and remain compliant with emerging regulations will be better positioned to mitigate risks, enhance hiring quality, and build trustworthy workplaces. As the industry continues to evolve, a strategic focus on tailored, efficient, and ethical screening practices will be crucial for achieving sustainable growth and success in the dynamic employment environment of 2025 and beyond.