

IKEA Reduces Extended Workforce Risks with Background Screening Partner



We recently sat down with Vic Jacinto, U.S. Safety and Security Manager for IKEA, to discuss his thoughts on First Advantage as a background screening provider and how this partnership has benefitted the retail giant.

Why did you select First Advantage as your partner in background screening?

Our extended workforce means what we refer to as “The Final Mile of Delivery”. It’s made up of the vendors we contract and the workers they hire to deliver IKEA furniture from our warehouses to our customers. We initially began having our Final Mile workers screened through First Advantage around 10 years ago. Prior to that, our vendors handled the screening needs of these workers completely, and although we had some visibility into what that entailed, we relied on the vendors to ensure everyone was cleared to work.

We initially didn’t realize the level of background screening First Advantage could offer versus what some of our vendors were using and what’s available on the internet; you know, low-level, low-quality background screens. Not having every candidate held to the same high standard resulted in a handful of incidents each year—incidents that put our customers and our brand at risk.

We wanted to limit that risk and protect our customers. That’s why we chose to partner with First Advantage—to maintain consistent screening standards across our vendors and to increase our visibility into how these workers were screened. Since implementing these more thorough screening practices, incidents have almost entirely disappeared.

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How do you continue to justify the value of leveraging First Advantage with your stakeholders?

Honestly, the statistics speak for themselves. For example, in 2019, we screened 3055 workers using XtdForce™. Of those, 14.2% had a criminal record that we previously identified as not eligible for hire—including theft, fraud, burglary and violence. Partnering with First Advantage gives us visibility into these records—visibility we didn’t have before.

Additionally, the people and services at First Advantage make our continued partnership a no-brainer. The Customer Success team is continuously helping us to improve our program—not just through contractor screening—but also by introducing us to new feature enhancements that make sense for our business. For example, digital badging and continuous monitoring are two services that we’ll be rolling out thanks to the team’s understanding of our business. Real solutions like these make things easier for our vendors and ultimately for front-line applicants. That’s huge.

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Value-added services can come at an increased cost; how do you make your case for program enhancements?

Increased costs of any kind are not something I take lightly. Everyone wants to keep costs as low as possible. I have to be able to explain to my vendors and internal stakeholders why a cost increase is worth it. I have to be able to say, "here's the value added; here's the decreased risk."

And at the end of the day, the true cost of the level of screening we require is outweighed by the value of partnering with us.

Do you think this partnership benefits your vendors?

Honestly, I think the benefits for the vendor are greater. These are not IKEA employees. They are contractors hired by our vendors. So ultimately, our vendors are getting high-quality background screens and high-quality service resulting in higher quality candidates. In markets where it's difficult to hire—whether the applicant pool is small or isn't particularly strong—our vendors are able to hire candidates that are thoroughly screened and vetted.

At IKEA, we KNOW that these workers have been screened, and we can sleep better at night knowing that our risk is lower than it otherwise would be.

How has your partnership with First Advantage benefitted IKEA overall?

We are a forward-looking company, and we think about the "what ifs"—the type of risk that can keep you up at night.

Working with First Advantage, we are able to limit that risk substantially. Some risk will always be there, but it's significantly lower, and that's made a positive impact on our business.

Our customers are ultimately benefiting from something they likely don't even realize is happening. As someone who works in the industry, I pay close attention to the screening services used by companies delivering products to my home. But some customers don't think about that. They are largely concerned that their orders arrive. At IKEA, WE KNOW that these workers have been screened, and we can sleep better at night knowing that our risk is lower than it otherwise would be.

IKEA-First Advantage Partnership Breakdown



10-year partnership



14% were identified as not eligible for hire in 2019 due to criminal records that included theft, fraud, burglary and violence

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We can help. For more information, contact First Advantage today:

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