

Myths About Employing People With Criminal Records

Ex-offenders represent a cross section of the workforce. Many of them have useful skills and qualifications.

Employment myths are:

- Ex-offenders are only capable of doing manual or repetitive work. People with criminal records come from all areas of our society.
- Ex-offenders are not educated - nearly one in three have graduated high school and/or college.
- Ex-offenders are unreliable - they arrive late or not at all. In general, they are as reliable as other workers.
- Ex-offenders are a high risk - they are not a higher risk than the average employee. It is the policy of the U.S. Probation Office to notify employers of any third party risk.
- Someone will always have to be watching over them. Ex-offenders are people who have committed a crime and who have worked through their punishment. Most of them want to make a fresh start.
- Other employees will not want to work with them. There is no need for employees other than line managers to know of the employee's past. You'll be surprised how quickly an ex-offender will fit in, given the opportunity.
- The existence of criminal convictions is an indication of being untrustworthy. Many people assume that ex-offenders have a basic character flaw that is not found in the "normal" population. In the vast majority of cases, these are "normal" people who have made a mistake and are ready to put it behind them.
- An ex-offender would not be a conscientious worker and would only be working for the money. Not true. Most ex-offenders feel they have something to prove and will be loyal and conscientious workers.
- People do put their past behind them. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1 in 32 adults were either on probation or incarcerated at the end of 2001.
- Our company policy excludes ex-offenders because of the type of work involved or legal restrictions. It is a common misunderstanding that certain professions and trade licenses bar people with criminal records. In fact, refusal is determined by type of offense not by the existence of offense.