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## **The Importance of Strategic Partners: Technology Platforms**

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As the pre-employment screening industry continues to develop and evolve, so does the surrounding technology that many groups have come to embrace. A growing trend amongst research providers is the need for 'Strategic Partners', which can be used to make doing business more enjoyable. In recent years several groups have come to the forefront of this strategic partnership movement, focusing specifically on technology.

There are many buzz words that exist to define these groups, which simply are not accurate. The term 'applicant tracking system' has come to define the nature of what these groups offer, but this term is extremely limited and often times misleading. A better definition would be 'technology platform', or perhaps 'background screening technology provider'.

Examples of such groups are: AccioData, BackChecked, ClearStar, deverus, FRS, ISS, and TazWorks. Although each group has a fundamentally different perspective in terms of the services they provide, the one common thread is that they provide a technological solution for providers to successfully integrate with their clientele, through a language called Extensible Markup Language (XML).

From the provider's perspective, a strategic integration with a technology platform offers a definite advantage in providing the best service possible to their client base. Some of the many benefits include reducing the risk of human error in data transmission, reducing overall turnaround times, and enabling a greater focus to be on providing customer service.

This industry revolves around people, and a known fact is that humans make mistakes. With integrations in place to technology providers, the rate of human error for transmitting results and updates is greatly reduced. Often, errors on manually generated results come about from items being misread or simply illegible. These problems all but vanish while using a technology platform.

The ability to receive requests and send results varies greatly amongst providers. With technology platforms this ability can be customized to allow multiple data transmissions throughout the day, even allowing continuous transmission of data to occur. This no doubt doubles or triples the amount of data that a research provider and their clients can exchange. This can instantly improve upon the overall turnaround times between provider and client, as there is a significantly reduced interval between data transmissions.

With the many benefits of these strategic integrations, the research provider can now focus more time and energy towards customer service, rather than tracking down missing data and correcting continuous errors. With XML transmissions, there is always

a trail of where the requests and results are going, or have been. This is the exact opposite of experiencing lost emails or faxes. Greater attention can be paid towards the specific needs of the client, whether its generating a daily pending list with updated information, or contacting investigators or courts to provide certified copies of research materials.

It is readily apparent that the presence of technology in our industry will only become greater in the years to come. The ability to adapt with this growing trend will serve to benefit groups that can successfully integrate with technology, while it will certainly hinder those that cannot. In terms of business logic, each technology platform possesses unique solutions and perspectives on various issues that research providers, CRAs, and end-users all deal with on a day-to-day basis. It is the belief of the NAPBS Provider Committee that readers of this article should reach out to these providers in an effort to see how they might benefit from their services. Information regarding each of these groups is currently available in the NAPBS Directory.

