

**FIRSTPOINT**  
Background Screening Resources

**FIRSTPOINT IS THE  
RIGHT FIT FOR  
YOUR CUSTOMIZED  
HR SOLUTIONS.**

DRUG TESTING

CRIMINAL RECORDS

EMPLOYMENT SCREENING  
TENANT SCREENING

VOLUNTEER SCREENING  
STUDENT SCREENING

VERIFICATIONS

MOTOR VEHICLE

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# ABOUT

## OVER 100 YEARS OF INNOVATION & INTEGRITY

FirstPoint, is a leading national provider of information and operation services, offering revenue cycle management, decision data and association management.

For over 100 years, businesses have trusted the FirstPoint companies to provide the highest level of information and operation services with a focus on compliance, integrity, innovation, and a stellar customer experience.

With roots going back to 1906, FirstPoint is a national provider of information and management services. FirstPoint prides itself on offering customized solutions based on client needs as opposed to pre-packaged plans and products. FirstPoint is committed to FCRA compliance, data integrity, ease of use and a stellar customer experience.

# WHY CHOOSE US

## HOW OUR CLIENTS RATE US

TIMELINESS



4.49

PROFESSIONALISM



4.53

SENSE OF URGENCY



4.48

OVERALL IMPRESSION



4.42



# COMPANY HISTORY

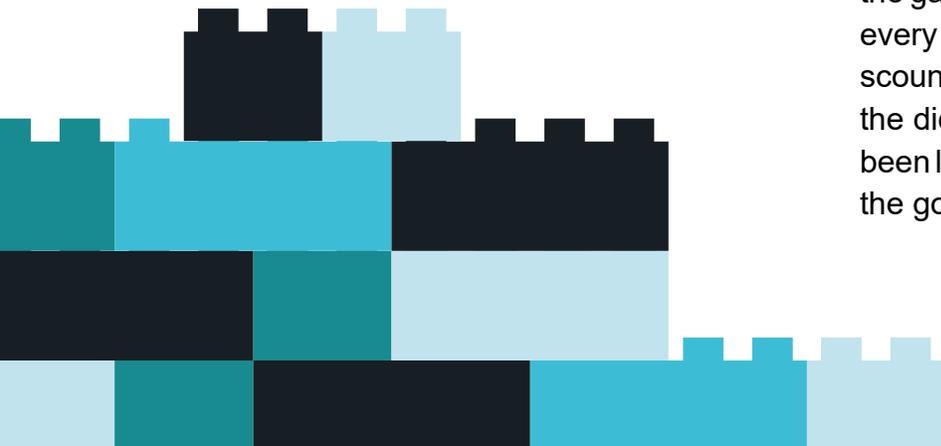
FirstPoint, has its roots in the formation of the Greensboro Merchants Association (now Guilford Merchants Association). GMA was established in February, 1906, succeeding a rather loose organization or group known as the Retailer Dealers Protective Union, which had been in existence as far back as 1886. The old organization published the “Books of Ratings” which listed individuals by name and gave a code letter designating how the debtors met their obligations. These books were supplemented by monthly addendums which were then incorporated into the yearly book.

Consequently, the “Credit Bureau of Greensboro” has been in existence almost one hundred years. In February, 1906, however, a stricter local organization was set up and, in quoting from its constitution and bylaws, it said: the Association was to “establish and conduct a Central Bureau of Credits for the collection from and dissemination among its members of information concerning the responsibility

and reliability of persons seeking credit and, to this end, to establish and maintain, for the members and the use of its members, a rating system and report to its members from time to time, and as they shall require the same, list the delinquent debtors against whom claims have been placed for collection with the corporation.”



In an interview with the first president of the Association in 1941, Mr. J. M. Hendrix was asked, “What in your opinion was the greatest contribution of the newly formed Association in the commercial life of the city?” Mr. Hendrix stated that, in his opinion, the organization was instrumental in building a spirit of fellowship and friendship among the business people of the city which was nonexistent before its formation. “Back in the gay nineties, each merchant regarded every other merchant as a rascal and a scoundrel. The word ‘ethics’ was still in the dictionary, but its meaning had never been looked up. If you would misrepresent the goods of your competitor and create



public distrust, it was considered fine business. Many merchants up and down the street of the struggling village known as Greensboro were not on speaking terms. If a customer owed a merchant and wouldn't pay, it was quite all right to recommend the customer as a good risk to some other merchant.

In fact, it got so that when a customer was said to be a good risk, it was a question of whether to trust the merchant doing the recommending instead of the customer for the credit." Mr. Hendrix's final remarks were, "Unless you lived back in the days when a merchant was regarded by competitors and the public alike with distrust and suspicion, you cannot comprehend the high standards of business ethics of merchandising which we enjoy today."

## OVER 100 YEARS OF BUSINESS INTEGRITY

In 1948, the structure of the organization changed. The members of the Greater Greensboro Merchants Association created a new affiliated organization, the Credit Bureau of Greater Greensboro, Inc. to operate the Credit Bureau Reporting and Collection Divisions. The creation of this new structure was necessitated in order for the Merchants Association to continue as a nonprofit organization.

Due to corporate growth and acquisitions, FirstPoint, was formed in 2001 as a holding company designed to maximize operating synergies and technology among the Credit Bureau and its for-profit subsidiaries. The new FirstPoint identity provided a unifying umbrella for the various business units- allowing joint marketing and growth opportunities. Today, the FirstPoint family of resources offers businesses a variety of information and operation services that include revenue cycle management, background screening services, residential tenant screening and mortgage solutions, as well as professional management of trade associations, professional societies and licensure boards. The company is continuing its successful growth strategy of vertical business development and acquisition.

## OUR MISSION

The FirstPoint goal is to provide the highest level of solutions with a focus on compliance, integrity, innovation, and a stellar customer experience.

FirstPoint is dedicated to:

- Providing unparalleled customer service with the highest ethical standards.
- Creating a corporate spirit of entrepreneurship by capitalizing on business opportunities.
- Providing exceptional levels of technology and skill to meet customers' needs.
- Inspiring, nurturing, and rewarding each individual employee's growth and development.



# SERVICES

## BACKGROUND SCREENING RESOURCES

Background Screening and Verifications  
Consumer Credit Reports (Employment)  
County Civil Search  
County Criminal Record Searches  
DOT Employment Verification  
Drug/Alcohol Testing  
Drug Screening  
Education Verification  
Employee Assessments  
Employment Verification  
Federal Criminal Record Searches  
FMCSA Clearinghouse  
Global Sanctions Report  
Healthcare Sanction Screening

Internet I-9 Form/ E-Verify  
Motor Vehicle Records  
Multi-State Criminal Records Index  
National Sex Offender Public Registry  
NC Keep Watch  
Personal Reference  
Professional License Verification  
Professional References  
Social Media Screening  
Social Security Trace  
Statewide Criminal Searches  
Student Screening  
([www.studentscreener.com](http://www.studentscreener.com))  
Volunteer Screening  
([www.volunteerscreener.com](http://www.volunteerscreener.com))

# SUCCESS STORIES

FirstPoint was able to set up the client's account quickly and get the background screening reports completed in the timeframe necessary to meet the client's deadline. While attempting to verify the education of an applicant for a director level position with a 100k+ salary, the FirstPoint team discovered that the candidate had provided education materials that had been purchased from an offshore "diploma mill." FirstPoint's background screening process saved the company from making a potentially expensive hiring mistake.

*"The bogus degree situation FirstPoint uncovered really opened our eyes to the importance of conducting comprehensive background screenings."*

## Secrets to Success:

- Integrity and reliability of Equifax consumer data
- FirstPoint's understanding of the client's needs and ability to offer a customized solution
- Referral from other satisfied client(s)

*"I've been with my company for a little over 2 ½ years and have been thoroughly impressed with the services provided by our background check vendor, FirstPoint(Background Screening), Inc. The turnaround time and accuracy of information received is phenomenal. In addition, the customer service they provide is highly commendable. My experience working with them has been very positive, and I would definitely recommend their company to others who are responsible for conducting any types of background checks."*

### Barbara L. M. Marshall

SPHR, SCP  
Manager, HR Business Partner  
Cardinal Innovations Healthcare



# Team Building in a Virtual Work Environment? Here's How

The pandemic has driven workers out of the office and back to their kitchen tables and make-shift home offices. Except for a slew of soulless emails, isolation rules and the death of team spirit is a real threat to bottom lines.



As HR professionals, the ball is in our courts to find ways to create synergy and make teams more united and productive. Telecommuting certainly complicates matters, but it's the new normal. So, how do you recreate moments of closeness, promote team spirit, and strengthen ties like old times?

## The Psychological Effects Of Working Virtually When That's Not What You're Used To

The impact of the virtual work environment on employees is affected by several factors, including the degree of support provided by management, social connectedness, colleague support, and conflict in the workplace with the

family. Generally, working from home where morbid statistics are repeated ad nauseum on the news has triggered some of the severest psychological impacts in the history of the working class:

### 1. Greater difficulty in taking time off from work or turning off the switch, which risks destabilizing the family and the personal sphere:



- Increased interruptions and distractions
- Increase in expectations and demands from those around you
- Greater need for organization

### 2. Lack of detachment from work with negative emotional implications for the couple:

- Decreased marital satisfaction
- Fatigue and despair
- A feeling of emptiness or loss of meaning
- Decrease in the emotional quality of the couple in the evening

### **3. Negative influence on the bonds between the employees, which leads to:**

- Increased isolation and loneliness
- Depression and anxiety
- Sleep disturbance
- Loss of interest in activities you enjoy
- Irritability

### **4. Decreased sense of belonging to the organization and to a group, which reinforces isolation.**

The need to belong is fundamental to all humans. Virtual team-building strategies are needed to minimize the lack of belonging and build engagement, inclusion, and team spirit. But how do you rewrite employee culture for a digital zero contact world?



## **How to Maintain a Good Company Culture in a Virtual Environment**

Company culture is all the knowledge, values, and behaviors shared by the members of the same organization. This culture facilitates and influences the

operation of the company and the decisions made by its members. The company culture is unique to each organization and is, in a way, its personality. It unites and brings together employees.

Values such as trust, work tools, management methods, reference documents, know-how, and relationships between employees or even ways of communicating are the constitutive elements of the corporate culture. The below approaches may help strengthen the culture in the virtual world.

### **Team chat apps**

For effective team management remotely, effective communication is crucial. This must be frequent and be done through the right platforms. Whether it's Slack, Fuze, Skype, WhatsApp, or more, the important thing is to stay in touch and continue collaborating.

### **Small talk and spontaneous conversations**

By working remotely, there are no more discussions around the coffee machine or during the lunch break. There are no more spontaneous and impromptu conversations in the open space. In a normal office, these moments are essential to promote team cohesion. Therefore, it is essential to take advantage of phone or video conversations to chat with colleagues-instant messaging apps like WhatsApp or Slack are also great tools for keeping up with colleagues outside work topics.



## Reference documents

Sharing knowledge can also be easy when working remotely. One solution is to establish a reference document bringing together as much important information as possible to which the company's members can refer to carry out their activity. This reference document then makes it possible to obtain information without overloading the mailboxes quickly.

## Autonomy and trust

The transition from office work to teleworking is sometimes a source of complications, both for teams and for managers who must change traditional management methods and implement new strategies to manage their teams remotely. Presenteeism policies and permanent supervision are replaced by other management methods based on trust and autonomy.

Thus, instead of counting the hours of connection, the manager should set up a results-based management system and measure the objectives achieved and the results produced by each person. By

giving the autonomy and confidence they need to carry out their missions, teams learn to take responsibility.

## A New Approach to Team Building

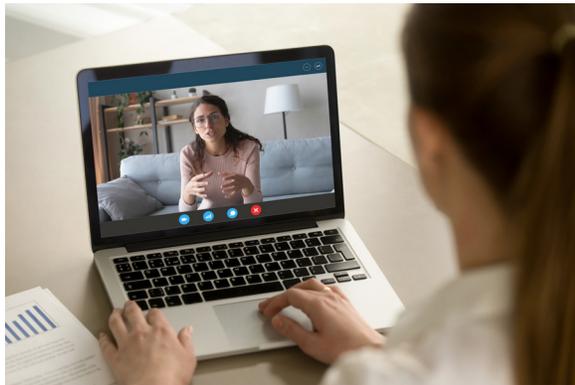
Companies should support anything that creates a safe work environment for employees and provides team members with a social outlet. Here, we've put together a list of strategies that you can start using today.

**Make systems talk to each other:** Make communication a part of your culture. It is essential to prepare your team for a virtual workplace so they can succeed. Your virtual team needs to have access to the proper communication and working tools in a central place.

**Personalize communication:** Leading well means learning about each of your employees and understanding the importance of feeling like you belong on the team at work. Adapting management styles to the personalities of specific employees has proven effective in promoting productivity. Take the time to learn how each team member communicates, and your virtual workplace will thrive with esprit de corps.

**Talk more, text less:** The good thing about collaboration tools is that they help increase team harmony, but if you're not cautious, they may also isolate your team. If you can, call your coworkers and get to know them better.

In many cases, spontaneous phone conversations can be more effective and faster than email chains. Having regular verbal interactions with your employees allows you to monitor their work and well-being.



**Face to face is an antidote for isolation:** A video conferencing system paired with screen sharing and recording capabilities is invaluable when working in a virtual environment. The most obvious use is to simulate a conference room. Screen-sharing can also be employed as a virtual whiteboard.

**Recognition events:** And why not a gala recognition? Employees love recognition. Create an official, chic and glamorous event online. Please take the opportunity to order meals online and have them delivered for the team and eat together. A great way to celebrate!

## **Virtual Team-Building Ideas**

Times are challenging even for experienced companies that jumped into the remote world many years ago. Virtual team-building experiences being

contactless make it hard to replicate what we are used to in the material world. At First Point Background Screening, we've had our struggles, but we've learned that the greatest ideas are the simplest.

Our Human Resources Manager Terri Scannell sheds light on our journey and the ways HR professionals can navigate team building and management in this new world.

### **How have you adjusted to integrating new team members remotely?**

It was a challenge in the early months of the pandemic. We learned quickly to utilize Microsoft Teams, and the software has proved effective for us. We began video interviews immediately and continue to use this format. We have video meetings for our new hire orientation and use Teams for training. It's not the same as meeting in person, but it has allowed us to connect.

### **Have you done any team-building exercises during the pandemic?**

We've focused on communication to keep our teams engaged. We've used various tools, including:

Emails: We communicated through multiple email messages to employees. We shared helpful resources on multiple topics such as the Employee Assistance Program, COVID safety, and tips on reducing stress, increasing wellness, and finding financial assistance.

Video messages: Our executive management team communicated throughout the year by sending video messages updating staff on the company's status and keeping them informed about its strategy in handling the pandemic. Employees wanted to see and hear from the leadership team, and these messages were helpful and resulted in positive feedback.

### **How do you maintain a good company culture in a virtual environment?**

Virtual face-to-face fun: All our managers conduct regular group meetings using Teams, and all employees have webcams so that they can see each other during the sessions. We had a lot of fun and tried different things like a Face Covering contest and Walking Challenge to encourage exercise. We celebrated birthdays, holidays, and other milestones using Teams.

Daily check-ins: We start the day with a 15-minute wellness check. We host regular webinars on topics focused on mental health issues, ergonomics, and tips for coping with stress with a focus to mitigate the psychological effects of working virtually when that's not what you're used to.

Adjusted schedules: Teamwork and flexibility go hand in hand, and managers and employees cooperated to adjust schedules, share workloads and assign tasks to help each other out. We accomplished what was needed for the

business to be successful as many of our employees juggled family issues like homeschooling, illness, and financial hardships. Everyone learned we could accomplish a lot together.

### **Was it a big difference from doing it in person?**

We all agree that meeting in person is preferred, but we have learned that we can adapt and stay in touch remotely and be effective in our jobs.

### **Do you feel your employees (new and old) have become more connected, less connected, or have had no difference in connection as a result of the pandemic?**

Our employees have learned to adapt and connect with the tools they have been provided with, i.e., email, teams chat, phone calls. Most have developed a new comfort level when participating in meetings on camera, using Team chat, and staying in touch with phone calls.

As a company, we have encouraged our employees to schedule "coffee breaks" together on camera using Teams to enjoy the same conversation they would have had in the break room. Many employees have reported how much they want this time.



We also made videos that have highlighted employees who voluntarily shared something about themselves. It was fun to see pictures of their families and pets, and we learned more about each other.

**What's one piece of advice you would give to someone who has no idea how to plan a virtual team-building exercise?**

We did not conduct formal team-building exercises and chose frequent

communication to keep our employees connected. There are multiple resources available online. My advice is to stay positive and don't be afraid to try new things. When something you try doesn't meet your satisfaction, be okay with that and try something different next time.

Whatever formula you choose, the idea is to keep in touch in an environment other than work. This is a great way to maintain morale and build team cohesion.

# How To Give Your Employees A Safe Return To The Office Post Covid-19

In recent months, policy in most developed countries has been aimed at trying to recover the economy that was so badly hit by the pandemic.

In fact, some of the phrases we hear the most at the moment are “return to normal activity”, “adapt to the new normal” and “return to the office.”

Even with the development and successful application of an increasing number of Covid-19 vaccines, the coronavirus still continues to spread around the world, mutating. This makes our fight against the virus to continue being as important as ever. Also, while the vaccines are a tremendous help to ending this pandemic, the vaccines are not perfect and there is still a large percentage of unvaccinated people.

For these reasons, companies that wish to assimilate back to “normal” need to go about it in a way that upholds good prevention standards to avoid a potential virus outbreak upon resuming what once were regular office activities.

With this in mind, we have prepared this guide, aimed mainly at employers and HR professionals, as an action and prevention plan for a safe return to work.

## General Safety Measures

The first objective should be to identify any risky situations that can generate an infection, therefore, the key phrase here is: minimize risk.

There are several safety measures that you can implement in your company both individually and collectively, and even within the workplace structures themselves.

### The Individual

The process of returning to work should be carried out in an orderly and staggered manner, starting with the areas that guarantee interpersonal distance and other preventive measures.

### The Data

Tests for the diagnosis of COVID-19 should be carried out as much as possible, in a massive and coordinated way. This is to be done with the intention of being able to modify your company’s health policy based on the results obtained.

### Mobility

Due to the risk that crowds on public transport can pose, it is important to consider a solution for transporting employees between their residence and the workplace.

### Protective Equipment

The installation and reorganization of

the workplace must be ensured with the necessary means to reduce the risk of infection, as well as monitoring their correct use in the workplace.



## Ways to Make the Office Safe

It's essential that your office staff is highly aware of the importance of following these safety measures.

The objective of this protocol is to ensure that no employee is a means of transmission for the virus, which reduces the chances that the office becomes a source of infection.

- If an employee presents any symptoms associated with COVID-19, they must report the situation and avoid physically reporting to work. They should go to their closest healthcare center to be evaluated.
- All employees must be screened upon coming into work each day (i.e. temperature check and answering covid exposure/symptom related questions)
- If an employee is in a risk group (over 60, pregnancy or medical conditions), they should have the option of remote

work instead of attending the company in person.

- Employees must give priority to a means of transportation that guarantees a minimum distance of 6 feet. In public transport, they should keep distance as much as possible.
- The use of disposable masks is recommended.



## Ways to Make Employees Feel and Stay Safe

This set of measures consists of protocols that you can apply within your company's offices and other work facilities.

These measures are related to collective activities that involve a certain degree of interaction with other people: meetings, customer service, and even hours of rest and lunch.

The key is to promote *social distancing* to guarantee office safety.

- Organize the distribution of workstations and other spaces to ensure the maintenance of the safe distance.

- Implement a shift plan to reduce the volume of people in certain work areas.
- Provide the remote work option for any of your employees, whenever possible.
- Implement measures to avoid the use of common equipment among staff - or facilitate their disinfection.
- Install physical barriers to maintain distance, such as telecommunications equipment, windows, and transparent curtains.
- Delimit certain spaces by means of security tapes or marks on the ground, in order to maintain the distance between clients and points of attention.
- Make sure that masks are worn at all time the employee is away from their office, cubicle, or other similar personal workstation.



Another way to make your employees feel safe is on a psychological level. Make sure your employees know how much their return to the office is appreciated. You can do this by:

- Providing counseling services to the staff.
- Regularly checking in with employees to see how they are adjusting to the new normal.

- Being understanding if an employee still feels unsafe returning to work, despite any safety protocols that may have been implemented.

## **Additional Measures to Increase Employee and Office Safety**

A hygiene protocol is another essential measure that you can implement in the workplace. These measures contribute not only to reducing the risk of infection but can also increase the peace of mind in your staff.

### **The ventilation system in general must be reinforced**

This includes upgrading the air filters and the HVAC system to increase the frequency of air purification, but also includes performing regular ventilation maintenance in offices and other enclosed work areas.

### **The frequency of cleaning tasks should be increased**

This means reinforcing the cleaning work on the most exposed surfaces, such as windows, door handles, office equipment and other machinery. Additionally, each individual work area must be cleaned each time a shift change occurs.

### **Apply a protocol to cleaning staff**

Cleaning staff should wash their hands with soap and water frequently while doing their job. In addition, it is important

to regularly verify that such personnel always have disposable masks and gloves, never reusable ones.



Upon completion of their work, the cleaning uniforms should be securely bagged and taken to the laundry room. The water temperature must be around 60 degrees.

### **Apply waste management measures**

Ordinary waste can be treated in the usual way, but other items such as tissues for drying hands, gloves or masks, must be disposed of separately in covered bins.

In the event that a worker presents symptoms while in the company, the container where he deposited his used products must be isolated with a double bag before throwing it away.

### **Final Words**

In the current health situation that our society is experiencing throughout the world, no security measure, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem,

should not be ignored, especially when it comes to preserving health and life.

The measures that we presented to you in this guide can go a long way towards maintaining the health of your workers until the pandemic passes.

Remember that you must not lower your defense at any time. The collaboration and sustained contribution of all sectors is what will help us to move forward as a society and as human beings.



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