

Interview: One look at the impact of COVID-19 on HR

By: Mike Wiley and Melissa Sims

To gain further insight on the impact of COVID-19 on our Human Resources profession, the following are interview highlights conducted by Melissa Sims, Thought Leadership VP at Philly SHRM and Mike Wiley, President of Chane Solutions, a Nationwide Talent Acquisition & Recruiting Solutions firm headquartered in the Philadelphia, PA area.

Melissa: Hey there, Mike. Thanks for joining me for virtual coffee this morning.

Mike: Sure thing!

Melissa: I will skip right to the chase. The world has changed dramatically in the recent months- -as evidenced by our having coffee "together" in two separate locations. Tell me a little about your line of business and how the pandemic is impacting your line of work in the Background & Drug Screening space?

Mike: Sure. To answer your first question, my company, Chane Solutions, is a Consumer Reporting Agency (CRA) that is accredited by the Professional Background Screening Association (PBSA) and based in the Philadelphia suburbs. Only about 1 in 10 CRAs in the United States are currently accredited. Chane provides all aspects of employment screening throughout the US and Internationally. And we further differentiate ourselves with a platform that is fast, easy to use, mobile-friendly and able to integrate into most ATS or HRIS.

To your second question, we should consider a "pre-Covid-19" procedures and a "post-Covid-19" world.

Melissa: Yes, good point!

Mike: In this respect, nuances of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) guidelines and being an accredited CRA requires that we maintain strict compliance regardless of Covid-19. At Chane, we validate each component of data for accuracy before returning it to our clients. Other CRAs pull data from their researchers or databases and submit it as-is to customers.

"Pre-Covid-19", our clients would run their checks through our portal with a complete report generated within 24-48 hours enabling a hiring decision. In a "Post-Covid-19" environment the courts are closed by direction of State Governor's offices and many educational institutions have temporarily closed their doors. This makes all other information being successfully collected (i.e. criminal checks in areas where courts have not closed, drug test results, sanction checks, employment verifications, etc.) even more important to evaluate the individual.

Employers screening applicants who reside(d) in areas with closed courts will decide on hiring them with only the most current information available at that time or wait until all data is

received. Most companies cannot wait indefinitely on applicants starting and therefore should recognize there may be “temporary gaps” in the screening process while closures from the virus remain.

Melissa: I can relate! I am in the Federal sector and we’ve had to re-engineer how we bring on many of our employees as well. Places where applicants would have gone for fingerprints to initiate a background check have been turned into makeshift hospitals.

Mike: Think about the education verification process. Schools and Universities are closed, leaving this as a gap for employers to consider. Validation of a high school or college degree is a critical necessity for certain positions, especially for hospitals, nursing homes and other caregiving centers. No one wants an unqualified nurse to slip through the system!

Melissa: Especially during this outbreak!

Mike: Exactly. Additional challenges for many HR departments include learning that all screening providers are not created equal. Some providers do not have the ability to function with a delivery/service model in our current environment. With the stay in place orders all over the US, some companies have tremendous bottlenecks for new hires related to these concerns.

Melissa: So, tell me, Mike, how is your company able to continue providing services despite these unique challenges?

Mike: While leveraging vendors, a robust technology platform allows us to pull all available court records. The records are validated by matching to the applicant, contemporaneous information collected. Before releasing to the client, researchers review each and every report for accuracy. Reports influenced by court closures due to the COVID-19 crises are then tagged. As courts become available once again, our clients can choose to pull a final component or decide that the report is complete and sufficient as is.

Melissa: I have seen a lot of that with our current situation—employers having to make the best decisions given the information that they have available at that point in time. Mike, I want to thank you for your time this morning. It was good to commiserate and get a sense of how your company is adapting during this time of crisis.

Mike: Thanks for your time, too. It was good to connect up!

BIOS:

Mike Wiley is a serial entrepreneur with nearly 30 years in HR, Compliance and HR Technology space. Mike brings expertise in finance, operations, sales, risk as well as strategic M&A activity. His success started while working for a Global Professional Services firm overseeing Business Development and Operations in the North East Region of the US before venturing into the

startup world. Mike has launched several successful businesses and JV's. Mike's has a track record of assembling industry leading talent who are passionate and laser focused. Mike has been recognized in the PBJ's 40 under 40, #2 Fastest growing Company, Emerging Business of the Year and many other annual regional and national awards for business success. In his free time, Mike enjoys coaching youth lacrosse, his backyard chickens and especially spending family-time with his wife Jolene and two sons Chase & Shane. Connect with Mike at mikew@chanesolutions.com

Melissa Sims is the Chief of Policy and Strategic Initiatives for the National Park Service. She is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Sociology and Systems Engineering. Melissa also holds a Master of Science in Human Resources, as well as an MBA. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Communications. Melissa serves as a Vice President for the Thought Leadership arm of Philly SHRM. If she had spare time, you would find Melissa on the Schuylkill rowing or reading for leisure on her roof deck, in the flight path of her beehives. Melissa can be reached via her LinkedIn profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/melissa-sims-21b63247>.