

Careers

+ MONEY



Is Bad Credit RUINING your JOB SEARCH?

We can help ...

BY KESHA BOYCE WILLIAMS

THE JOB SEARCH IS ALREADY TOUGH ENOUGH THESE DAYS, BUT CREDIT WOES CAN MAKE IT EVEN TOUGHER.

It's a catch-22 of unemployment: You need a job so that you can pay your bills, but you might not get the job because you haven't been paying them. It's a story that financial educator Harrine Freeman hears more and more these days.

"I talked to a woman who said she hasn't had a job for the past two years because of her credit," says Freeman, founder of H.E. Freeman Enterprises and a personal finance expert. "I'm hearing these days that bad credit might even get you fired."

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Why does credit count? Employers use it as a measure of character. Blemishes might cause a potential boss to question your dependability, decision-making skills, loyalty and follow-through abilities. Many jobs require a background check, but those in the financial or health-care industry might require a credit check as well.

Such checks are usually not a deciding factor when it comes to hiring, however, credit may be used in conjunction with references and previous work experience for an overall candidate assessment.

A credit check might even be a factor if you want retail-industry work.

"If a candidate has a low score, it may call into question whether [he or she] would lift a few dollars out of the cash register or give some unauthorized discounts. Again, it's a question of responsibility," says David Mitchell, president of the Greenville, S.C.-based Talent Management Solutions.

Mitchell's recruitment firm places clients in management, engineering, sales and marketing, finance, accounting and information

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technology services positions.

He says it is best to let employers know what they might find up front.

"During the hiring process, ask if they are doing a background check," he suggests. "Then ask if they are doing a credit check. If you already know what your report looks like, be forthcoming to the employers and let them know what they might find. Be willing and ready to explain any issues that come up."

Now, some good news.

Freeman says you can deal with the issue.



Freeman suggests:

1 | REVIEW YOUR REPORT

Pull your credit report from the three reporting agencies (Experian, TransUnion and Equifax) and review each to ensure it's error-free. Dispute any errors. It may take as long as seven years to improve a low score, but what you do today starts the process.

2 | EXPLAIN YOURSELF

You can add a 100-word statement to your credit report to explain an issue with a particular account or creditor, especially if it is related to unexpected job loss or natural disaster that started everything spiraling downward.

3 | FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

Don't be discouraged. Continue your job search. Network and let people know that you are looking. Remind yourself that you have great skills and that there is more to you than your credit score. A positive outlook is likely to shine through in your candidacy consideration.

Cool Job | Director of Race and Sports Book

BY ADRIENNE SAMUELS GIBBS



LAMARR MITCHELL

WHAT DO YOU DO, EXACTLY? Five percent of what I do deals with sports. The rest deals with being a manager. I'm responsible for budgets, expenses, hiring, disciplining, firing. I'm responsible for generating as much revenue as I can.

IS THERE A FUN PART? The fun part about my job is dealing with the guests and dealing with numbers, point spreads and payouts.

DO YOU SET THE ODDS? Before we became a satellite property, I was able to set

the lines and come up with the point spread. I don't do that anymore. [But] there are times when I'll suggest what events to offer wagers on.

ARE YOU CERTIFIED IN SOMETHING?

If you understand the theory of bookmaking, that's basically all you need. There [are] no college courses for it. You learn on the job. There's a lot of math.

WHAT KIND OF MATH? We have computers that tell us certain things, but you need to be

THIS IS THE GUY WHO OVERSEES SPORTS AND RACE BETS AT THE MGM GRAND CASINO IN LAS VEGAS. He's essentially in charge of the entire live betting department, which means managing the people and the process of wagering on the Triple Crown, *Sunday Night Football* or that Pacquiao versus Mayweather matchup.

Mitchell, 42, didn't go to college for this. He understands the concepts behind point spreads, payouts and how much money the house, i.e., the casino, makes. He knows pretty much all there is to know about football, baseball, horse racing, boxing—all events that generate wagers. He can't talk about all aspects of his job, but he can answer a few questions about this sportscentric gig.

able to calculate them yourself in case the system goes down. For example, if the guest has a transaction for \$26,500 and pays with \$30,000 in cash or in chips, how much change is due back to the guest? Or, another example is the guest wants to win \$5,000 on a baseball team where the money line is -150. This means the guest would have to bet \$7,500 to win \$5,000. That is the math I deal with on a day-to-day basis.

CAN YOU BET? Yes, but not at [MGM] properties.