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nation, but the level of criminal data included in the national repositories varies by region. If you are in a region with limited data, you may want to include supplemental local or county-level criminal searches into your screening process. Your screening provider should be able to offer this option as part of your customized package.

The key to success is to discuss the options with your screening company, truly understand what you're buying, and select a package that makes sense for you.

**2. Customize the Criteria**

Once the appropriate applicant data components are selected, the next step is customizing the criteria. Work with your screening provider to develop applicant scoring parameters that are tailored for each segment of your portfolio, then implement those in your customized screening program. You should fully understand the customized applicant scoring criteria; criteria should be transparent and offer the ability to be fine-tuned over time.

**3. Configure the Screening Workflow**

When we talk about configuring the "screening workflow," we're referring to how different steps in the screening process are controlled and triggered within the screening system. For example, one management company may configure a tiered workflow so that for each new applicant, the credit screen runs first; if the applicant fails the credit criteria, the process stops. If the applicant passes the credit criteria, the system automatically triggers criminal and civil court searches.

The advantage of this type of workflow is that the screening process is locked, loaded, and automated to ensure consistency in the leasing office. The user doesn't have to select any options; with one click, the

product already knows the sequence of steps to take. This helps you minimize the "clicks" and choices for the user, and also helps you minimize costs – if 20% of your applicants fail the credit criteria, you save money by not running criminal and civil court searches for those applicants.

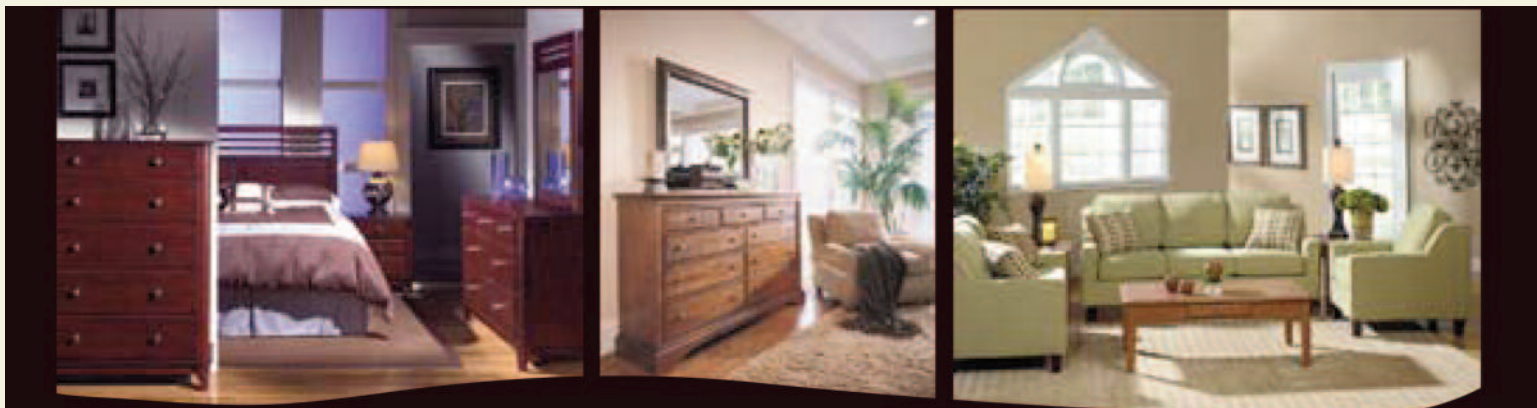
This workflow example makes sense for many management companies, but not all. Some companies may choose to sequence the steps differently. Some companies prefer to run all data searches at once, while others may prefer an "à la carte" step-by-step format. Your screening company should be able to accommodate these variations; the most important thing is that your workflow is automated, consistent, and customized for your business.

**4. Take Advantage of Interfaces**

Everything we have talked about up to this point is within the realm of the resident screening module. An additional, highly beneficial way to streamline your overall leasing process is to utilize an interface between your screening system and other systems, such as property management software and online portals. This eliminates double data entry and ensures a smooth leasing flow from guest cards to applications through the resident screening process.

If you follow these steps, you'll have the framework in place to ensure a truly comprehensive, consistent screening process throughout your portfolio. The engine of the system is sophisticated "under the hood," but very simple and smooth for the end-user, while improving confidence, compliance, and cost control for the management company.

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