



# THOUGHTFOCUS BUILD

## When 240,000 Hours Vanished The AI Evolution That Bolstered a Background Check Giant

A case study

### THE BIG TAKEAWAY

Because speed, scale, and compliance were paramount, a background check leader turned to us to build “hands off” automation and grow market share without proportional staff increases.

Our AI Workforce strategy eliminated 240,000 manual hours, 120 FTE-equivalents, and cut processing costs by 90%. Critical workflows were automated, delivering \$2.4M in annual savings all while maintaining FCRA compliance.

### Measures & Key Results

- Scalability
- Reduce staffing
- Reduce error rate
- Automate most processes
- Realize ROI from investment

 **8,736 hours**  
Annual lights-out capacity gain

 **90%**  
Case processing time reduction

 **60%**  
Adjudicator workforce reduction

 **50%**  
Human capacity increase

**\$2.4M**  
Annual cost reduction

### CLIENT PROFILE

A leading background verification company with \$100M+ revenue and 800+ employees processes hundreds of thousands of criminal checks annually for enterprise healthcare, finance, and staffing clients.

Despite their FCRA-compliant reputation, 200+ adjudicators manually reviewing records couldn't scale with increasing demand, and created turnaround bottlenecks. They needed infrastructure transformation to capture share of projected market growth, from [\\$15.5B to \\$39.6B by 2032](#).

### OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

Our client faced a perfect storm of operational inefficiencies threatening their revenue, market position, margins, and ability to efficiently scale.

**Manual Process Bottlenecks** Criminal record adjudication required human review of 11 complex process areas, each involving numerous dynamic steps. With 500,000+ annual checks, manual errors created massive liability exposure. This created cascading delays:

- **Inconsistent processing speeds** - cases varied from 30 mins to 8+ hours
- **Quality variance** - decisions differed between adjudicators reviewing identical cases
- **Capacity constraints** - peak demand created 72+ hour backlogs
- **Training overhead** - new adjudicators required 6-8 weeks to reach competency
- **Knowledge silos** - expert adjudicators became bottlenecks for complex cases

**Skills Mismatch Crisis** Workforce allocation created operational chaos:

- **Expert adjudicators** (10%) wasted time on routine decisions
- **Junior adjudicators** (60%) escalated 40% of cases, creating review backlogs
- **Mid-level adjudicators** (30%) over-researched simple cases, reducing throughput by 35%

**The Breaking Point:** Their largest client (30% of revenue) demanded 18-hour turnaround times or face contract termination. Manual processes couldn't scale, forcing a choice: massive workforce expansion or transformative automation.

### REQUIREMENTS

Flawless integration with legacy systems, airtight SOC 2-compliant security, and regulatory precision across FCRA and 150+ local, state, and national laws. In addition, must pass Fortune 500 audits, encrypt sensitive data, maintain audit trails, and meet 99.9% uptime demands to protect against class-action liability, operational disruption, and the high cost of compliance errors.

## STRATEGY



We approached this transformation with a surgical precision strategy: preserve human expertise where it adds value, automate routine decisions at machine speed, and create a foundation for continuous evolution.



**The AI Workforce Architecture** We designed an AI workforce that amplified human capabilities:

- **Fully automate** routine cases (70% of volume, rule-based decisions)
- **Human-in-loop** for complex cases requiring contextual judgment
- **Hybrid processing** for mid-complexity cases with AI assessment + human verification
- **Reposition select adjudicators** from manual processing to quality assurance and client service
- **Enable 24/7 processing** without fatigue, breaks, or capacity constraints
- **Scale 3x volume** without proportional workforce growth
- **Process routine cases** in less than 2 minutes vs. previous 2.5 hours
- **Create fixed-cost scaling** where additional volume requires minimal incremental costs

## IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

 CHALLENGE	 OUR SOLUTION
<b>Data Standardization Chaos</b> Criminal records from 3,000+ counties in dozens of formats - PDFs, handwritten notes, inconsistent terminology/acronyms.	<b>Universal Data Translator</b> Built adaptive preprocessing system that standardizes jurisdictional variations while preserving original record integrity.
<b>FCRA Compliance Precision</b> Every AI decision must meet stringent Fair Credit Reporting Act requirements. Single compliance error could trigger class-action lawsuits.	<b>Compliance-by-Design</b> Embedded FCRA compliance into AI decision-making with complete audit trails and automated adverse action workflows.
<b>Legacy System Integration</b> AI workforce needed to communicate with 15+ year old case management systems and client portals not designed for automation.	<b>API-First Integration</b> Developed middleware enabling AI communication with legacy systems through standardized interfaces.
<b>Performance Optimization</b> Initial AI models made correct decisions but missed nuanced judgment of experienced adjudicators.	<b>Continuous Learning Loop</b> Expert adjudicators continuously refined AI decision-making through feedback mechanisms and performance monitoring.
<b>Client Confidence</b> Enterprise clients needed assurance AI decisions would maintain quality and compliance standards.	<b>Transparent Validation</b> Parallel processing during transition with detailed performance analytics and client-facing compliance dashboards.

## OUTCOMES AT A GLANCE

METRIC	BEFORE	AFTER	IMPACT
Annual Operational Costs	\$4.8M	\$2.4M	\$2.4M saved
Case Processing Time	2.5 hours	15 minutes	90% reduction
Daily Case Capacity	1,600	4,800	200% increase
Adjudicator Workforce	200 FTE	80 FTE	120 FTE reduction
Peak Market Turnaround	72 hours	18 hours	75% improvement
Routine Case Processing	2.5 hours	2 minutes	98.7% reduction
Complex Case Processing	4+ hours	45 minutes	81% reduction
Compliance Errors	3.2%	0.4%	87.5% reduction
Capacity Lift (Human)	500,000	750,000	50% increase
Quality Consistency	82%	97%	18% improvement
Escalation Rate	100%	30%	70% reduction
Client Onboarding Time	6-8 weeks	2-3 weeks	60% faster
Adverse Action Compliance	70%	98%	40% improvement