

10 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CONDUCTING A REFERENCE CHECK

An efficient process is essential to successful recruiting in today's job market. Any part of your process that creates delays chips away at your ability to compete for top talent. Reference checking is one area where a lot of insurance organizations need to improve. Start with these three questions to determine if references are a valuable hiring resource or a cog in the wheel:

- Do references lead to new information that you didn't previously have about the candidate?
- What is the average time it takes you to complete reference checks? Has that time helped or hurt your ability to bring the hire to completion?
- Do you use reference information for any reason other than deciding to make a hire, say to increase new employee onboarding, training, management, or retention success?

If you believe reference checks are very important, then you want to extract maximum value from the process. This starts with asking the right questions. When Capstone is asked to conduct reference checks for a client, here are the 10 questions we use to gain valuable insight into the person and their potential.

Culture Questions

Your goal is to find out what the candidate is like on a day in, day out basis.

- 1) What comes to mind when you think about your experiences working with this person?
- 2) What kind of environment or structure do they thrive in?
- 3) How do they typically interact with other employees including colleagues, subordinates, and managers within the office?
- 4) Tell me a little about their general personality, and how is that received by clients as well as internal and external partners?
- 5) How do you think their peers would describe them?



Professional Development Questions

Start by sharing information about the job to get the reference's opinion on the candidate's potential success.

- 6) Can you give an example when you saw this person encounter a difficult situation? How did they handle conflict resolution?
- 7) Was there a time when this person went above and beyond to get the job done?
- 8) What should their future manager know about ways to help this person grow professionally?

Endorsement Questions

You need to know if this person's first-hand insight makes for a valuable recommendation.

- 9) With what I've shared about the job, plus what this person brings to the table, do you think this position is a good match for them?
- 10) If given the opportunity, would you hire/rehire this person? Why or why not?

"Ask the Insurance Recruiter" is a monthly column written by Mary Newgard, Partner, and published in partnership with **Insurance Journal Magazine**. Visit Insurance Journal Magazine's website for a complete list of previous articles. For questions and comments, email Mary at mnewgard@csgrecruiting.com.

