



SELECTION AND JOB OFFERS

the easy complete guide for employers

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CHAPTER 1 – REFERENCE CHECKING

ACT IN HASTE, REPENT AT LEISURE

Since employment is a long term commitment, it pays to remember that often, when you act in haste, you save enough time to repent at leisure. **Make sure that you do a reference check on an applicant before offering them a position.** The purpose of a reference check is to validate the information that you have gathered on the applicant during the selection process. As this a time-consuming process many employers shortcut the process by not doing a reference check. This can be a fatal and costly decision.

WHAT TO CHECK

Many employers are loathe to give information about past employees.

To increase the accuracy of the information given, structure the references check to –

- Confirm the information provided by the applicant, such as employment dates
- Get the referees' views of the applicants in terms of the essential performance factors e.g. sales ability, attention to detail etc. Ask them to rate the applicant on a scale from excellent to good, fair, and poor.

Other questions you could consider are –

- How did this person perform relative to other people in this position?
- Would you re-employ them if you had an opening?
- Why did they leave your company?
- The applicant is applying for XYZ position; in you opinion is he/she qualified and able to do the job?
- Any other comments that would help us in our assessment?

In view of the Privacy Act, is always advisable to obtain the **applicant's consent** before approaching referees or other sources. Give the applicant time to contact their referees before you contact them.

If a referee provides CONFIDENTIAL information on an applicant, the applicant does not have a right to see that information.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

In certain positions, for example where large amounts money are handled, it is also necessary to do other relevant checks, such as credit checks, convictions etc.

The Department of Courts can be contacted for information on previous criminal convictions. There are also specific organisations that will conduct these background checks, eg debt collection companies, private investigators and security companies.

CHAPTER 2 – CHOOSING THE BEST APPLICANT

STEP 5 – CHOOSING THE BEST APPLICANT

Once you have gone through all the stages of the selection process, systematically filtering the applicants in terms of the essential and desirable performance factors, a final selection decision can be made.

WHO CROSSED ALL THE HURDLES?

Hopefully one or two applicants have come through the process head and shoulders above the others. In this situation the hard decision will be to decide which of the applicants best match the essential and desirable performance factors and what other bonus performance factors each applicant has.

Remember that you do not have to make an appointment. If your assessment were that none of applicants meet the essential and desirable performance factors, then it would be best to start your search again. Do not get caught in the trap of “hiring the best of a bad bunch”!

Also, if circumstances change during the selection process and you have not made an offer, you can terminate the process. Simply let the applicants know that due to unforeseen circumstances the position has fallen away.

REJECTING APPLICANTS

In the hurdle approach to selection, applicants are systematically “knocked out” at each stage. Those applicants that have not made it through to the next stage, should be sent a letter informing them that they have not been successful. This process is very important – remember that every person that you reject is a **potential customer**. The way in which the rejection process is handled directly affects the image of your company. The rejection letter should be brief and to the point.

CHAPTER 3 – OFFERING THE POSITION

STEP 6 - OFFERING THE POSITION

Once a decision has been made to hire an applicant, it is important to clarify the terms and conditions that you will offer the person. Be sure that you do want to offer the person the position before contacting them, as a verbal offer of employment can be enforced.

So either put the offer in writing or present the offer in terms of an offer for discussion. The applicant may wish to seek independent advice about the agreement and its terms.

The contract and any bargaining around the offer has to take into account the Employment Relations Act of 2000 and any collective employment agreement that is in place in your workplace.

Ensure that the contract is signed **before** the person starts work.

STORING THE SELECTION INFORMATION

Information gathered during the selection process should not be kept longer than the purpose for which it was collected. If it is to be used for another purpose, the person concerned has to agree beforehand.

A FINAL COMMENT

Selecting the right staff is fundamental to the success of your company. Mistakes are extremely costly. So remember –

- The nature of the future relationship between the employer and employee will depend on the extent to which both parties have acted in good faith and have been open and honest in their interactions.
- The privacy and confidentiality of the applicant has to be maintained throughout the process.
- The selection techniques and tools used must be accurate, fair and legally defensible and cost effective.

See the Documents tab for a comprehensive checklist to help you navigate your way through a systematic selection process - SAMPLE CHECKLIST USING A SELECT-IN APPROACH. Good hunting!