



# Assess Advantage

HIRE TOUGH • MANAGE EASY

## 7 Reasons Why Reference Checking Fails (And How to Rectify)

STOP playing telephone tag! The failure of today's Reference Checking process can be blamed on the use of the telephone. All of the seven reasons below can be addressed by changing your strategy. Like most of your other business processes, online technology is your panacea.

**1** – Reference checking (RC) is a pain! It is time-consuming, and in today's business environment, hiring managers are struggling to meet the daily organisational goals. Dedicating hours of time to conduct RCs is just not a priority (although it should be!). The recognised time it takes to RC a role is a minimum of 90 minutes. That is an unnecessary cost of administration time.

**2** – The usual process of gathering RCs is via the telephone. If you have two final candidates and need three RCs for each (our recommended minimum), that is six people you have to chase down. Moreover, cold calling these people rarely achieves contact on the first dial. So, in essence, you are embarking on a game of telephone tag.

**3** – Compacting on the game of telephone tag, is that many hiring managers struggle to pick up a phone and dial a stranger. Reluctance to use the phone correlates to an individual's personality. If you are a person that prefers to always communicate via email as opposed to picking up the phone, you would fit into this group, and the reference check never gets done.

**4** – When telephoning a stranger you obviously have no established relationship, so the conversation lacks trust and honesty. Many referees are reluctant to give you the real 'bottom line', they do not want to be perceived as a spiteful, callous person, this leads to receiving only positive, glossy comments about the former employee. The negative traits and poor performance are often watered down particularly if the candidate was made redundant. The former manager feels uncomfortable at having taken that step and wants to rectify this by getting the ex-employee a new position.

**5** – RC is usually unstructured. You are not asking questions aligned to the competencies related to the job you want the candidate to perform in your organisation. This allows each RC call to drift off into different directions that end up being a general chat about the person. The information sort or received by the hiring manager does not correlate to the ability of the candidate to perform the competencies required for your job role.

**6** – Telephone RC is open to the 'Trust Bias', that is, we trust everything the referee tells us about the employee, often there is a lack of challenging positive information. Also, you have put much time into the process so far, you have entered this final check with a positive frame of mind – you want to hire. This mind set will have you discounting negative information because you believe you can manage or fix these (this is rarely the case).

**7** – When in the process do you conduct your RC? Most hiring managers do RCs as the final step in the hiring process. The reason for this action is because of the time-consuming nature of telephone RCs. A valid RC can filter out candidates efficiently. By doing the RC last, you are more open to number 6 above. Because RCs are very good at screening out candidates, it would make sense to conduct RCs earlier in the hiring cycle.

### **How to rectify the above 7**

Overcoming the above seven is easy, like most actions in today's work environment, use technology. Taking your reference checking online makes it simple for all parties. Because it is simple, you can perform your RCs earlier in the hiring cycle. This enables you to select out those people that don't demonstrate past performance behaviours specific to your job.

Apart from cutting out telephone tag and unstructured RCs, you speed up the process and get a scored result. Reference checking questions based on your job means your RCs become truly predictable of future job behaviours.

Find out more and take a test trial of our online RC platform (conditions apply). Go to

[www.assess.co.nz/reference-check-trial](http://www.assess.co.nz/reference-check-trial)

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