

Property Management Reference Checks...Are They Really Necessary? © by Ernest F. Oriente, *The Coach*

According to the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), over 50 percent of the information presented on a resume by a job candidate may be false or misleading. These are alarming statistics, and as the executive of your property management company, it continues to be increasingly important to understand the mindset of the job candidates that are applying for positions within your company. This article will help you and your company strengthen your reference checking process and eliminate those who will not be a perfect fit, long before a position is ever offered.

Some Reference Checking Statistics

A recent SHRM survey at www.shrm.org was sent to 2,640 human resource members regarding reference checking. The survey concluded that job candidates frequently present misleading information about their length of stay with former organizations, their past/current salary levels and their college credentials. More specifically, 53 percent of companies involved in this survey discovered falsified information about length of employment from job candidates and 51 percent discovered falsified information about past salaries. In addition, 61 percent of job candidates falsify their college credentials...a credential that can be easily researched during the reference checking process.

Tip From The Coach: Based on the above survey information, conducting thorough reference checks must continue to be an important step in the selection and interview process of hiring SuperStars for your property management company.

Developing a Reference Checking Process

The first step is to determine how reference checks are going to be done in your property management company and to establish or strengthen your written policy for how reference checks fit into your interview process. With some of our property management clients, their human resource department handles this important step before a formal job offer is made. With other property management clients, all hiring executives handle their own reference checks, based on the specific level of position being offered or the compensation range being presented. As for references, three or more business references should be supplied by a job candidate as early in the interview process as possible. We highly recommend asking for references early in the interview process because this will give your hiring executives additional time to contact each organization submitted by a job candidate. This also means that your hiring executives will not be rushed to do reference checks in the final hours before making a job offer. This makes for a more thorough and complete reference checking process.

Tip From The Coach: In addition to reference checks, many property management companies are now asking permission to do background checks, credit checks and criminal checks as part of their hiring process. Based on the SHRM survey statistics above and your own professional experience, have you recently reviewed your reference checking process? This process will help to link talented SuperStars to compatible positions within your property management company and will reduce the chances of hiring low performers.

Questions to Ask When Calling a Reference

It has been our experience that all of our property management clients want to create their own custom reference checking form. Here are some sample questions to get you started with yours: How would you characterize his/her success with your company? How would you characterize his/her energy level? How was this person viewed by his/her peers? Describe the types of decisions this person made on a daily basis? How did this person manage their time? Tell me about a disagreement or a challenging situation and how this person handled it? Specifically, how was this person paid? Why did this person leave your company? Based on what you shared today, would you hire this person back?

Tip From The Coach: We know that many companies are no longer giving references on past employees based on legal and liability concerns. Most of our property management clients now ask a job candidate to sign a reference authorization form giving permission to their previous employers for a full and candid reference while also waiving any legal liability. In addition, we strongly advise our clients to call each reference given by a job candidate and

when the reference conversation is complete...ask this person, "Is there someone else within your company who can give me an additional reference on this job candidate?" Speaking to a second person within the same company is the secret to getting accurate and detailed references.

*Want to hear more about this important topic or ask some additional questions about how to build a custom reference checking form or to see a sample reference authorization form? **Send an E-mail to ernest@powerhour.com and The Coach will E-mail you a free TeleForum invitation.***

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