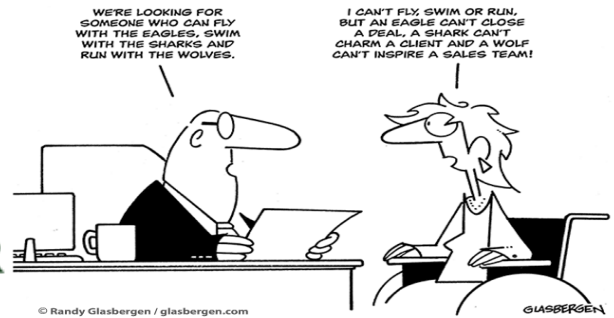


# HOT SHEET

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Full-Circle HR



## Did you know that:

- According to the National Committee on Pay Equity, in 2018 women worked 15 months to earn what men earned in 12?
- According to Bright Horizons Research, working moms get particularly high marks from co-workers for being calm under fire, multi-tasking, communication, & diplomacy?
- Employers considering hiring previously incarcerated candidates can access support in this process at <https://hirenetwork.org/sites/default/files/Best-Practices-Standards-The-Proper-Use-of-Criminal-Records-in-Hiring.pdf>?
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) we are experiencing the lowest unemployment rate in 50 years—making the already tough job of finding employees even more challenging?
- According to Aptitude Research, new technologies (such as video interviews by HireVue for one) have sped up the process of pre-hire screening and made it a more accurate assessment tool?
- Lack of training on remote work technology is causing some big employers to end the practice of remote work?

## Checking References

Checking references is a critical and oftentimes neglected part of hiring. Many employers may skip this step because they believe they will only get a biased (in favor of the candidate) view from the references a candidate provides, or they are concerned about legal restrictions on how to check references. The good news is that being creative in your reference checking process, while also avoiding any legal landmines, is probably easier than you think and can yield good information about your potential hire.

A good approach for setting yourself up for effective reference checking is to involve the candidate. During the interview, you can ask questions about what the individual thinks their references or managers might say about them—invite positive aspects and areas for growth. If the candidate balks or isn't very forthcoming, circle back to

the question later in the interview and maybe ask what a different manager or reference might say about them. Keep prodding until you feel you have a realistic picture. Once you have this information, you can use it while checking references such as: the candidate said that you might say this. What are your thoughts on this? Can you elaborate further? Oftentimes if the reference is not the one who introduces the negative aspect, they are more likely to be comfortable talking about it, but they often don't want to be the one to bring it up.

A frequent concern that employers have is whether or not to conduct 'back-door' reference checks. These can be a good source of additional information provided you have covered your bases by:

1. Candidates should have given permission for general reference checking that does not limit you to the

'official' reference list they have provided. This is usually done on the application form and there is standard language you can incorporate for this purpose. 2. Do not reach out to anyone the candidate has specifically asked you not to contact. 3. Do not contact the current employer unless the candidate has given specific permission to do so.

Additionally, as you are checking references, you can ask if the person can think of someone else you should speak with regarding the candidate. Each conversation can be a lead to more information that can help you make a better match for your organization.

Other suggestions include: Ask the reference to give an example of when the candidate went above and beyond or performed exceptionally well. If they can answer quickly, this is often a good sign. In gen-

eral, being aware of how quickly a reference attempts to get back to you and answers your questions can be an indicator one way or the other of the candidate's work history and/or interpersonal capacities. Listen to what is not being said and try to read between the lines. If the answers are vague and non-specific or the person can't recall much, attempt to draw out some examples or provide some specifics that the candidate provided to you to help prompt memory. If the reference simply says that the candidate was a great employee, ask what was great about him or her? If you find that you are getting conflicting information about the candidate, continue to dig more deeply or expand the reference pool until you have a sense of consistency in the messages you are receiving about your candidate's traits.

*There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle and the other is as though everything is a miracle.*

—Albert Einstein

## Social Security No-Match Letters

In 2012, the Social Security Administration (SSA) stopped sending No-Match Letters when information in their systems and payroll records did not agree. The practice has recently been resurrected. Since the letters do not provide data regarding who or how many of these no-matches have been found, some choose to ignore them. However, labor attorneys recommend that you not do this. In the event of an audit of your I-9s, you will be asked to provide copies of any no-match letters you

received and documentation of how you responded to them.

It's important to know that just because there has been a no-match, it does not mean that any of your workers are not properly documented. It could be an oversight, typo, identity theft or other issue. The first step is to find out who is on the list by registering online at <https://www.ssa.gov/employer/notices/HowToRegisterForBSO.pdf>. Next, inform affected employees of the no match and ask them to confirm

the name and social security number in your payroll records. Advise your employee to contact the SSA to correct their records. Give them a reasonable amount of time to do this, depending upon circumstances. Keep in touch with these employees to learn of their efforts to make corrections and document your contacts and the employee efforts. Review any documents the employee chooses to share with you showing the change has been made and contact SSA to make any necessary employer corrections.

Remember that while these letters may seem innocuous, in these times when immigration is a very volatile topic, it is important to address them promptly and to document your actions. Attorneys remind employers that they should NOT attempt to address the letter by having your employee complete a new I-9, requiring that employees produce specific ID or requiring that they show you documents resolving the issue.