NEOGOV

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Questions to Ask to Optimize

CANDIDATE REFERENCES



An application, resume, and interview only provide limited insights into who a candidate is and how they operate within an organization. It's common to see an impressive resume, have a great conversation during an interview, only to find out after you've hired someone that they aren't as good of a fit for the position as you thought they'd be. However, when leveraged properly, **a candidate's references can help you uncover facets of a candidate's personality or work habits** that might not otherwise come out during the screening process.

To help you go beyond the standard questions and get a more well-rounded view of the candidate and their likelihood to fit into the culture of your organization, we compiled a list of questions to ask references.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS / SKILL SET:

1. What are the candidate's strengths and weaknesses?
2. What skills should the candidate develop in order to be effective in this role?
3. What was the candidate's greatest accomplishment while working with you?
4. For this position, we need someone who can [insert most important skills]. Does this sound like something the candidate is capable of? If so, can you provide examples?
5. What skills would we need to teach this candidate so they can be effective in this role?

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:

6. How dependable and reliable is the candidate?
7. How did they support their team members?
8. How did the candidate get along with their team members and other coworkers?
9. What is the candidate's communication style?
10. What was the reaction from the candidate's team members when they left your organization?

DISPOSITION / WORK ETHIC:

11. What work environment would the candidate thrive in? Why?
12. Would you recommend this candidate for this position?
13. Did the candidate complete all tasks and assignments given to them?
14. Did the candidate take direction well?
15. Did you ever have to provide the candidate with negative feedback and if so, how did they respond?
16. Did the candidate work independently, or did they require hands-on management?
17. What was it like to work with the candidate on a daily basis?
18. How did the candidate handle stressful situations at work?

POSITION FIT:

19. What makes the candidate a good fit for the position?
20. What advice would you give me to effectively manage the candidate?
21. If you could, would you rehire the candidate?
22. Who else should I speak with about the candidate to get additional insights?