

BACKGROUND SCREENING

First Advantage Reference Checks

There is a right way to perform a reference check, and a wrong way. The right way is with the candidate providing a list of approved references. This is a hiring best practice. The wrong way is by conducting “blind” reference checks behind their back. This is bad news for everyone involved.

For this reason and others, today’s forward-thinking employers are rejecting blind reference checks, and instead, opting for the “right way” in support of a more transparent, modern reference checking process that helps them attract, hire and retain top talent.

The high price of blind checks.

Surprisingly, a positive reference check isn’t always a good thing. Some APAC employers can’t help but question it. *Did we miss something? Why can’t we find anything wrong with this candidate?* In fact, one expert boldly suggests that instead of using a reference check to support the hiring process, “every blind reference check we do is actively looking for a reason not to hire someone.”¹

Here’s why. Employers sometimes fear that “approved” references will only provide positive feedback, so they go behind a candidate’s back and blindly contact work references they find via their professional network or social media. This is a bad idea for several reasons.

- Imagine the repercussions of an unapproved referee providing personal and even damaging information to a prospective employer.
- It can potentially yield protected class information that employers are not allowed to use in hiring decisions, along with personal opinions, grudges and other subjective details that have nothing to do with the candidate’s skills and qualifications, or worse, they’re flatly wrong and inaccurate.
- It can damage a candidate’s career or cause them to lose their current job, if a potential employer contacts an existing employer or colleague without the candidate’s knowledge and permission.



3 Top Reference Check Sources

For the best reference check results, start with the following three types of references. They can help you understand the candidate’s work style, skills and other important hiring differentiators.

- **A peer or colleague**, who has worked alongside the candidate.
- **A manager**, who has supervised candidate.
- **A subordinate** who was managed by the candidate.¹

¹ (28) Avoid Blind Reference Checks | LinkedIn

A better way to perform reference checks.

Checking candidate-approved references can provide a healthy mix of insights, including both positive and negative information, that drives better informed hiring decisions. However, performing reference checks internally can drain administrative resources and slow down hiring.

Knowing this, more employers are turning to experienced background screening providers who:



Use a team of professionally trained verifiers.



Provide the most consistent, complete, and compliant reference information.



Deliver results faster.

Smarter, more efficient hiring.

Offloading reference checks to a qualified background screening provider is an easy way to fuel a smarter, more efficient hiring process. The background provider handles everything, which helps reduce the employer's administrative burden, enabling them to better focus on attracting and engaging qualified candidates.

Here's a quick overview of how First Advantage performs reference checks.

- 1 The employer orders a candidate background check.
- 2 The employer asks the candidate to complete a reference check form and consent form. It is typically recommended that employers request three (3) professional references.
- 3 Once the candidate has completed the forms, they submit the forms to the employer.
- 4 The employer then submits the completed reference check and approval forms to First Advantage.

The First Advantage operations team individually contacts each referee provided on the form, conducting an approximately 10 to 15-minute interview with each referee, using a standard script.
- 5
- 6 Results are immediately entered into our standard report and available for employer review.