Reference checking is critical - some data to support this:

- The research indicates that the best predictor of future success is past performance.
- The statistics are staggering. One survey indicates 53% of information on applications/resumes is less than accurate and honest. Another indicates that it is as high as 80%.
- California has some new provisions regarding immunity for job references; however, the key is accurate information based on documented performance.
- The average defamation of character suit settlement is about $7,000. The average negligence suit settlement costs approximately $2 million.

* Source: Society of Human Resources (SHRM)

When Calling References

- Indicate that our application provides a written release/waiver (and offer to fax if that would help and/or read the language right off the application).
- Communicate only with individuals with first-hand knowledge of the individual.
- Have the finalist's paperwork in front of you to compare data provided.
- Record the date and time of the reference check on the form/page in addition to the name and title of the reference.
- Verify the "reason" stated on the application for the individual leaving the position. And, ask/infer that he/she came to them from (district/company) approximately (...) years ago. Verify history.
- Inquire about attendance patterns.
- Inquire about the level of successful participation with others (teams, committees, etc.). Is this viewed as a strength?

Sample Questions to Ask

- If we were to review his/her last application, what area would be noted for growth?
- Conversely, what area is viewed as a strength?
- If asked the same questions to his/her peers, what might the responses indicate?
- Can you provide me some examples of his/her activities related to professional growth (and/or improving skills, knowledge and abilities)?
**Always Ask**

- Was the prospective employee disciplined for any action related to workplace violence?
- Would you rehire this individual? If yes, would your college/company indicate this person is viewed in the top 25 percent of all employees or closer to average?

**When You Are Called As A Reference**

- Ask if the individual signed a waiver form. If you need a comfort level, ask that it be faxed and return the call upon receipt.
- Have documents in front of you. Usually, this means a return call which is an important verification piece as well.
- Do not volunteer information not requested. Do not give out any information that is not job related.
- Do not address ADA issues, workers’ compensation, grievances, etc., unless directly asked and you have specific data to support your statements. When in doubt, indicate that you do not keep records related to these matters. Do not lie if the individual does have issues in these areas.
- Log the date and time you spoke to the individual requesting a reference.