

In the REFERENCE GUIDE you will find tips on what you should focus on when you request references from previous employers. In each section you will find Guidelines and Reference Questions. The Guidelines show which questions it might be advisable to pursue. Under the heading Reference Questions you will find examples of concrete questions you can put to the referees. The majority of the questions are based on the candidate's JobMatch result in relation to the profile chosen for the position. Among these are questions regarding non-matching characteristics but there are also questions intended to verify those characteristics that match the profile. Use the REFERENCE GUIDE for inspiration - choose the parts that you think are best suited and which you consider to be of importance.

## WORK STRUCTURE

### Guidelines:

- The person has no real interest in immersing herself in or getting involved with details. What problems might this bring with it in a position that demands a good deal of accuracy and thoroughness?
- The evidence suggests that the candidate is flexible and adapts well to new situations. However, it is also important to ascertain whether she prepares well enough and works according to an established plan.
- In all probability, this is not someone who could be characterised as meticulous, so it would be advisable to find out how great the risk that she will be unable to live up to your demands for order and structure.

### Reference questions:

1. Where there ever any problems with regard to poor planning or a lack of preparation when faced with various tasks?
2. How would you describe her ability to timetable her work, meet deadlines and prepare herself when required to do so?
3. To what extent has she been known to make unnecessary mistakes as a result of carelessness?
4. Do you believe that the person is suited to a job in which it is important to keep track of things, be accurate and hand over work that is in principle always correct?
5. Does this person easily become disorganized or mixed-up? If so, what have been the consequences?
6. How have things functioned in terms of any reporting, documenting and following the organization's procedures?

**STRESS INDEX****Guidelines:**

- It appears that the candidate may have a tendency to suffer from stress from time to time. How is this expressed?
- There are some indications that the person doesn't always have a stable disposition and it would be wise to find out what is likely to affect her negatively.
- This person has a tendency to worry about making mistakes and any criticism she might receive as a result. It would be advisable to find out how this effects her working situation and stress levels.

**Reference questions:**

1. Can she allow others to 'take the baton' without becoming frustrated or stressed?
2. Are there any particular circumstances that affect the person's equilibrium and influence her moods? If so, how is this expressed?
3. Is the person able to react professionally when put under a moderate amount of pressure or strain? If not, how does she behave when under pressure?
4. Is there anything in particular that needs to be considered with regard to giving her criticism or negative feedback?
5. Is the person always in a hurry, becoming agitated when things don't proceed at the fast pace she would like?
6. Do you think that routine tasks that need to be worked through methodically would cause her stress?
7. Does she work at such a hectic pace that it affects results or those around her in a negative manner? If so, in what way?

## DECISION CHARACTERISTICS

### Guidelines:

- She seems to be reasonably able to stand her ground. If strength of will is an important characteristic for the position it may be worth digging a little deeper into her ability to fight her corner and get others on board in an effective manner.
- The results indicate that the candidate is not particularly thoughtful or given to the kind of reflection that might be demanded in this type of position. It may be of significance to ascertain whether or not her decisions have proved to be correct in the long-term.

### Reference questions:

1. Is it apparent with hindsight that her decisions were not properly thought through? If so, has this had any serious consequences?
2. This person appears to have a good deal of willpower. We need to know if she sometimes has a tendency to trample on other people?

## MOTIVATION AND DRIVE

### Guidelines:

- How would the person function in a position in which there is an almost incessant demand to reach set targets and perform to the very highest level?

### Reference questions:

1. Is it your impression that she could do with being more self-motivated and alert?
2. Has there been anything lacking in her attitude to performing well and staying on the front foot?
3. How would you rate her chances of success in a position with a degree of influence?
4. Would you recommend this candidate for a position that demands the constant pursuit of results?
5. How self-motivated is she? Does she sometimes need to be reminded of what she needs to do?

**ENERGY AND WILLINGNESS TO ACT****Guidelines:**

- The candidate appears to find it easy to get involved and seems to enjoy being kept busy. It might be worth ensuring that the amount of work involved in the position meets her need for stimulation and engagement.
- Her ability to take the initiative is in the mid-range. Will she act to the extent required or is she too cautious?

**Reference questions:**

1. Do you think that she will find this position stimulating and interesting enough?
2. How does she react to unforeseen events? Does she ask for help, take the initiative herself or is she more passive, waiting for others to act?
3. How would you describe her stamina and physical capacity for work? To what extent does she have the necessary reserves of energy to cope with any occasional high workloads?
4. Has she displayed a tendency to become frantic? She seems to want to maintain a high tempo and I wonder if she has made unnecessary mistakes in her haste?

**COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION****Guidelines:**

- Does the person communicate in a manner suited to this particular job?
- How high a level of candour and openness can one expect?
- Investigate whether the position can satisfy the candidate's need, or lack thereof, to have contact with customers, colleagues or other people.
- Is there anything particular to bear in mind with regard to her ability to collaborate?

**Reference questions:**

1. It is desirable that someone in this position enjoys being around people. How would you describe her social skills?
2. Did the person complain often while working for you? If so, was this done directly to the "right" person/you or did she beat around the bush?
3. Does she prefer to remain in the background or is she willing and able to take centre stage when the situation demands it?
4. Is she often the one who raises issues that aren't working as they should? How does she go about this?
5. She gives the impression of being communicative. Has there been any downside associated with her willingness to speak to others?
6. Has the person been known to say something in such a way that others have really taken offence? If so, how did she resolve the situation?
7. What is her attitude to things she finds disagreeable or uncomfortable?
8. What is your opinion on the person's ability to be articulate and self-assured in relation to this position?

**FURTHER QUESTIONS****Guidelines:**

- There are a couple of things in the results that may suggest that the candidate is in a somewhat pressured situation. It may be of value to find out if this is temporary and to what degree it may affect work performance.
- The person has a relatively low value for Answer Realism. There may be a variety of reasons for this; please refer to the JobMatch Talent Manual under the heading K- Result Index (under Tools in your JobMatch Center) or ask our consultant in conjunction with feedback.
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**Reference questions:**

1. Is there any reason to believe that the person may give the impression that she can handle more than she actually can?
2. To what degree would you say that the candidate is aware of her own limitations?
3. Do you think there's a risk that she might be unwilling to acknowledge shortcomings or find it difficult to admit to mistakes?
4. If she says that she's capable of doing something - is this really the case?
5. Could it be that the person is currently in a stressful situation? If so, how has it affected her work?
6. Has she had any personal problems and if so has she required extra consideration, support and help because of this?