

## Reference Check

Founder/Candidate:

Date:

Startup/Position:

Phone:

Referee's details:

Title:

Reference check conducted by:

*\*Sentences in italics serve as explanations\*, \*Sentences in red should be replaced by founder's/candidate's/referee's name\**

### Introduction

Hello Mr./Mrs. *<enter referee's name>*, my name is *<your name>*.  
I am calling to conduct a reference check for *<candidate's/founder's name>*, in who's startup we are considering investing. Your details have been provided to me by *<candidate's/founder's name>* and I would first like to check whether you are prepared to provide a reference?

**Yes**

**No**

The reference check will take approximately 20-30 minutes. Is this a good time for you? If not, when is a convenient time for us to continue this conversation?

**Call back**

**Proceed**

Please note that this reference will be used in the overall evaluation. The information you provide may be given to the candidate if requested. Do I have your permission to proceed?

**Yes**

**No**

DT Scorecard	Questions
<b>General introductory questions</b>	
<b>Referee's experience w/ founder</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could you please tell me a little more about the nature of your relationship with &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; and for how long you have been working together?</li> <li>• What is your experience of working with &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt;?</li> <li>• What was &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; position and his/her complementary responsibilities and duties?</li> <li>• (In what capacity was the candidate/founder employed by your business?)</li> <li>• (What were the candidate's/founder's reasons for leaving?)</li> </ul>
<b>Team has &gt; 5 years sector experience</b> <i>In case professional experience does not become clear through CV →</i>	
<b>Skills (technical)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could you please provide further insights into the industry knowledge and network of &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt;?</li> <li>• What technical expertise did the candidate/founder introduce to your company?</li> <li>• Name a situation in which the candidate/founder was able to shine with his/her professional expertise.</li> </ul>
<b>Team has deep technical knowledge &amp; background</b> <b>Skills (technical) – see above</b>	
<b>Team has highly complementary skills (sales/technical/product)</b>	
<b>Skills (sales, product)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sales:</i> In which manner did he/her convince former clients and business partners of his/her angle?</li> <li>• Does &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; possess any particularly outstanding sales techniques and communication skills, that you can highlight?</li> <li>• How easily does the candidate/founder establish new contacts? Would you rather describe him/her as someone that approaches others or that lets others approach him/her?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Product</i>: Did &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; launch any products while working at your company?</li> <li>• To what extent was he/she involved into the whole product planning, customer discovery, product discovery and product development processes?</li> </ul>
<p>One founder/C-Level is a serial founder (ideally +\$10m exit)</p>	
<p>Team has 10x/growth mindset</p>	
<p>Team is keen to learn &amp; coachable</p>	
<p><b>Growth mindset /Achievement orientation/ mastery orientation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; receive any promotions during his tenure at the company?</li> <li>• Did &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; have any major accomplishments while working for you?</li> <li>• Would you please comment on the candidate's/founder's goal setting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Achievement &amp; Mastery goal orientation: high goal setting, seeks to extend mastery, high performance &amp; achievements</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Did the candidate/founder try to deliver the best performance at all times?</li> <li>• Which new skills, knowledge, and competencies has the candidate/founder developed while working in your company?</li> <li>• How did the candidate/founder adapt to new challenges? How would you describe his drive to learn new concepts and solve difficult tasks?</li> <li>• How fast does the candidate/founder grasp new information and implements the gained insights into his/her work?</li> <li>• In what way did the candidate/founder contribute to the company's growth?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Feedback capability/coachable</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; respond to feedback?</li> <li>• Did you ever have any issues with the candidate's/founder's performance or within you're cooperation? How did &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; react when you discussed those issues with him/her? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What effort did he/she put in in order to improve and what progress has been made since then?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the candidate/founder in feedback discussions able to evaluate him-/herself realistically?</li> </ul>																												
<p><b>Team can tell their 'story' with clarity, conviction &amp; energy</b></p>																													
<p><b>Communication/ sales/ soft skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In what way did he/her convince former clients and business partners of his/her angle? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Uses convincing facial expressions &amp; gestures, manages to transmit a feeling through his speech</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Does <b>&lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt;</b> possess any particularly outstanding sales techniques and communication skills that you can highlight?</li> <li>Right now I would like you to comment on some of the candidate's/founder's skills on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating a low value and 5 a high value. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How would you evaluate his/her ability within... <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>low</span> <span>high</span> </div> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> </li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Storytelling</b></li> <li><b>To-the point</b></li> <li><b>Structured</b></li> <li><b>Simplifying complexity</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	5		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	5																							
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																								
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																								
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																								
<p><b>Team has connectedness up and down the value chain</b></p>																													
<p><b>Soft skills/team interaction/ cooperating</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did he/she get along well with his/her co-workers, clients and supervisors? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What was their interaction, assed from the outside, like?</li> <li>Was he having trouble getting to know co-workers and being involved in new social circles?</li> </ul> </li> <li>Could you please describe the candidate's/founder's experience of working as a member of a team? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did he/she support team members?</li> <li>Did he/she establish behavioral and performance expectations?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>																												

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did he/she naturally take on leadership roles and provided clear directions?</li> <li>● How did the candidate/founder manage conflict with co-workers, team-members, supervisors?</li> <li>● What characterizes &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; in his/her cooperation with his/her team-members?</li> </ul> <p>Overall, did &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; prefer to work independently or as a member of a team?</p>
<p><b>External impression</b> (co-workers/team-members)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do you think his/her colleagues would remember him/her?</li> <li>● Which 3 attributes would his/her colleagues use to describe him/her?</li> </ul> <p>Would you and your colleagues want to work with the candidate/founder again?</p>
<p><b>Team can manage hundreds of people</b></p>	
<p><b>Leading</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; naturally tend towards leadership roles?</li> <li>● Did the candidate/founder have to manage co-workers and their work during his/her tenure? How was his performance in doing so?</li> <li>● How would you evaluate the candidate's/founder's ability developing strategic plans? Did &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; always keep their contribution to the company's bigger picture in mind?</li> <li>● Could you please comment on the candidate's/founder's problem solving efficiency?</li> <li>● Would you please provide some insights into the candidate's/founder's resource management?</li> <li>● How did &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; manage upwards and downwards?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Team has fiscal discipline i.e., reasonable burn rate &amp; salaries</b></p>	
<p><b>Team has excellent references</b></p>	
<p><b>Role-specific questions – (optional)</b></p>	

<In this section, you should prepare your list of questions based on the skills or attributes required for the job, for example:

“In this role, the candidate/founder is required to be \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in the most important things]. How would you rate <enter candidate’s/founder’s name> on each?

- In your judgement, where do you believe <enter candidate’s/founder’s name> is going to be more naturally?
- Which tasks are going to be particularly challenging for him/her?

**Personality – (additional)**

<b>Strengths/weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there any area where &lt;enter candidate’s/founder’s name&gt; would need additional support?</li> <li>• What unique skills, knowledge, competencies, and strengths did the candidate/founder contribute to your organization?</li> </ul>
<b>Resilience (neuroticism)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does he/she handle time pressure?</li> <li>• Is the candidate/founder able to cope with pressure in general or stress? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In what way changes his/her emotionality in stressful situations?</li> <li>○ <i>Remaining calm &amp; positive, able to manage strong impulses &amp; feelings → resilient</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>High emotionality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was he/she a good listener &amp; communicator?</li> <li>• Does he/she possess the capability to recognize another person’s needs and non-verbal messages?</li> <li>• Was he/she able to verbalize his/her emotions and communicate them externally?</li> <li>• Was the candidate/founder able to control his/her emotions during stressful situations?</li> </ul>
<b>Self-starting/proactive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could you please provide a situation in which the candidate/founder saw and seized an opportunity to realize his/her work ambitions?</li> <li>• In your opinion, how strong is his/her his urge to implement change?</li> <li>• Name a situation in which the candidate has succeeded in establishing something new in the company.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Dutifulness, self-discipline, orderliness</b> (conscientiousness)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does he/she deliver work in a timely manner and perseveres working until the task is completed?</li> <li>• Could you please comment on the candidate's/founder's reliability, punctuality, attendance?</li> <li>• How did the candidate/founder ensure that he was working reliable and with few errors?</li> <li>• Please describe &lt;enter candidate's/founder's name&gt; ability to organize and structure his workload &amp; the work of others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adaptability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the candidate/founder able to make effective decisions in uncertain situations without having all relevant information at hand?</li> <li>• Does he/she possess the ability to deal with new customers, employees and even situations?</li> <li>• How did the candidate/founder adapt to new challenges? How would you describe his drive to learn new concepts and solve difficult tasks?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential personal risk factors</b></p>	
<p>What is one thing that would be worth keeping an eye on?</p>	
<p><b>Closing</b></p>	
<p><b>Recommendation</b></p>	<p>Would you rehire the founder/candidate? Why/why not?</p>
<p><b>Final comments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything you would like to share with me before I make my final decision?</li> <li>• Is there anything else that would be worthwhile for us to know about the candidate?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Farewell</b></p>	<p>Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback. If you wish to share any further information with me, you can contact me on &lt;your contact details&gt;.</p>