SAP Fieldglass

Essential Questions To Ask During a
Reference Check

SAP Fieldglass Whitepaper

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The reference check is the home stretch in your effort to secure a Vendor Management System (VMS). After the Request for Proposal (RFP) process and product demonstrations, you're nearing a final decision and honest feedback from other users will help you further compare the differentiators that make one provider stand out from another.

Having conversations with the provider's other customers gives you an objective perspective on its ability to maximize the benefits of an external workforce program. Make sure you've got a solid understanding of whether or not the reference deals with the strategic, tactical or operational aspects of a program — having this baseline knowledge will give context to the reference's responses and maximize the experience.

During this process, you should inquire about the company background, the relationship with the provider, functionality and features, implementation and integration, and the type of ongoing support offered. As you connect with other users, come prepared with a list of questions to ensure you're making an informed and well-rounded choice.

This whitepaper outlines the essential questions to ask during a reference check and includes a checklist outlining the topics to discuss.

About SAP Fieldglass

SAP Fieldglass, a longstanding leader in external talent management and services procurement, is used by organizations around the world to find, engage and manage all types of flexible resources. Our cloud-based, open platform has been deployed in more than 180 countries and helps companies transform how work gets done, increase operational agility and accelerate business outcomes in the digital economy. Backed by the resources of SAP, our customers benefit from a roadmap driven by a continuous investment in innovation.

Having conversations with the VMS' other customers gives you an objective perspective on its ability to maximize the benefits of a external workforce program.

Background

Before asking questions about the provider and the solution itself, inquire first about the referring company's background so the reference's responses are in clearer context. Understand the scope of the program, the amount of spend going through the system and strategic goals. You can also clarify if the reference works in procurement, HR or another department to set the stage for their responses. Answers from a fellow procurement professional might resonate more than those from a HR professional, and vice versa.

1. What is your company's industry?
2. How long has your program been in place? Can you talk about the program's scope, headcount and spend?
3. Does your program encompass both external labor and Statement of Work (SOW) projects?
4. In how many countries is your program currently deployed? How many currencies and languages are included in your program?
5. Do you have a Managed Service Provider (MSP) or is your program self-managed? How many dedicated resources manage the program?
6. How did you select your VMS and what differentiated it from the others?

> ## " The complexities of implementation and integration can seem overwhelming, but the VMS provider who makes these processes as seamless as possible will truly stand out. "

Relationship with provider

After you have a better grasp on the program's structure and history, you can delve into the relationship with the provider. The reference can detail the evolution of their interactions with the vendor and what to expect after you've signed on the dotted line. If the reference's program has an MSP in place, you can also discuss the provider's role in that relationship as well.

1. What about the vendor's culture made it different from the others?
2. Did your company contract with the VMS provider directly or through the selected MSP? What does the contractual agreement look like?
3. Do you still have a relationship with your salesperson?
4. Is there a dedicated, reliable support team available for your program?
5. Do you have access to the executive team?
6. Do you feel like the provider delivered on what they promised? Do they deliver on their Service Level Agreements (SLAs)?
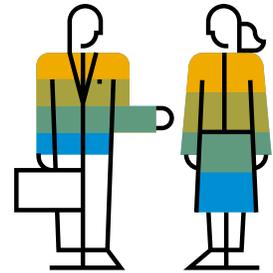
Functionality and features

Although the provider has already shown specific functionality and certain features during the product demonstration, references can provide "insider" knowledge that the demonstration might not address. Each customer uses the solution in different ways, and a reference call can help show how an actual customer uses certain features in real-life scenarios.

1. What did processes – such as job requisitions, approvals, timesheets, etc. – look like before they were automated through VMS use?
2. What is your new process flow now that the solution is in place?
3. How easy is it to configure/administer the application?
4. What sort of reporting does your organization use?
5. Do you find the solution easy to use?
6. Can you speak to its performance?

Implementation and integration

The complexities of implementation and integration can seem overwhelming, but the VMS provider who makes these processes as seamless as possible will truly stand out. Inquire about each reference program's type of rollout, number of integrations and length of deployment to gauge how your own implementation might look with the provider.

1. What was the timeline for implementation, from the contract signature to deployment? How engaged was the provider in the process?
2. Did you deploy with a "big bang" approach – a large, simultaneous deployment across multiple business units, geographic borders and/or languages – or a phased rollout?
3. Are you utilizing an ERP solution and if so, which one? Is the provider integrated with the ERP? Were there any other integrations and when were they rolled out?
4. Were you able to use the provider's standard integrations or did you use a custom integration? If it was customized, how long did it take?
5. How engaged were you in the implementation process?

Ongoing support

After implementation, the VMS provider's work should not be done. References can help you vet the provider's ability to offer continuing support and expertise as the program evolves. If the reference is regularly engaged with other users and is kept up-to-date on product releases through consistent communication, the VMS provider will likely have a vested interest in doing the same for you.

1. How did the VMS provider manage the transition from the implementation stages to ongoing account support?
2. What services are offered to the Program Office (PMO)?
3. Does the vendor provide a dedicated team of support staff who can answer questions and help troubleshoot any issues on a regular basis?
4. Is there a user community? Is networking with other customers encouraged?
5. How are you notified about new features? How are releases communicated?
6. What expertise does the VMS provider offer to ensure the program continuously improves?
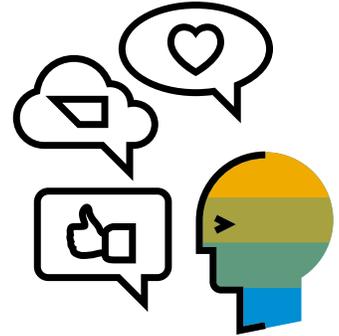
Take External Workforce Management to the next level

Connecting with current customers can augment the insights you obtained during the RFP process and product demonstration. This is the opportunity to vet the VMS provider's ability to not only provide a reliable product, but sustain a lasting, collaborative relationship. If you address these topics and get the answers you want, you'll be one step closer to selecting a solution and taking the management of your external workforce to the next level.

Learn more

The world of work is changing, and SAP Fieldglass is leading the way with innovative solutions that harness the power of the external workforce in driving the digital economy. Explore additional resources on www.fieldglass.com/resources to learn more about the external workforce and the way work gets done.

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