



Petstock Group secures new talent fast with Referoo

Petstock Group, owner of leading pet specialty retailer Petstock, has several interests in pet and animal care, including retail, veterinary, doggy day care and equine supply brands across Australia and New Zealand.

Recruitment across the brands sits with Petstock Group's Talent Acquisition Team, led by experienced recruitment leader Katrina Tolomaki. Responsible for recruiting retail operations, veterinary, animal specialty and support roles across Australia and New Zealand, the team fills around 1,000 roles annually.

The Challenge

Typically collecting two references for each preferred candidate, the five-person team performs 2,000+ reference checks yearly. Manually doing these checks was a productivity drain and often left the team in a difficult position.

"It took 15–20 minutes to do the actual reference, but that didn't account for the time spent in admin and compliance before and after, not to mention the phone tag. It was holding us up from making an offer or leaving us in the difficult position of deciding whether to go ahead and make an offer because we simply couldn't get the person on the phone," Katrina explains.

Criminal history and background checks also added significant delays, sometimes up to eight weeks.

"We compete with a lot of other retailers for leadership talent, and our regional managers would constantly be calling to ask if they could make an offer, eager to get new team members up and running. We would have to keep saying no as we awaited criminal history checks, and we had no control over how long it would take."

Petstock Group is proud of its culture and connections with its people, and an elongated candidate experience didn't align with these values. It also left vacancies open for longer and increased the risk of candidates dropping out.

Then, there was the compliance piece. Katrina needed the functionality to audit references and confirm they were being done in the right way.



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The Solution

Enter Referoo. Katrina searched for a better solution and said, Referoo beat the competition on price and customer service.



I initially chose Referoo for two reasons – it was the most cost-effective option, and I liked the account manager and the service he provided better than that of the competition. [Referoo Account Manager] Chris was very proactive and responsive, and it really stood out over our other options.

And when it came to implementation, Katrina was sure she'd made the right choice.

“When we implemented Referoo, it was very, very simple. It pretty much revolutionised our referencing process. Within our team to store manager level, everyone could see the value it would add in terms of time, so it was easy to get everyone on board.”

There was no intensive training required either.



Referoo put together a customised how-to video for us along with a written step-by-step guide, and everyone was able to get on and use the platform very easily. It got positive feedback immediately, with people saying, ‘Gosh, this is amazing, it’s so quick’, so we knew it was going to work for us from the beginning. And we still use this video for new users today.

The Integration

A few years into the successful partnership with Referoo, Petstock implemented Workday, a human resources information system that gives them full visibility across the employee experience.

“The great thing that has come from Workday is the fact that it is such an integrated 360-degree employee experience. It means that the stores must go through the same recruitment journey and all of the pre-employment checks, so having it in place really ensures every store has a consistent process.”

Petstock wanted to continue the partnership with Referoo and asked the team to build an integration that would allow the business to continue the automated process of completing reference and background checks directly from Workday.



We wanted to continue the partnership with Referoo as we'd been very happy with the outcomes. The level of support Referoo provides is incredible and that flowed into the Workday integration process, too.

“I provided the required information, and Tim, Michael and Ryan at Referoo did all the work from a technical perspective and ensured a streamlined process for our Referoo reference and background checks, all from our new Workday system.”

“When we got to a roadblock, Tim and Michael would come up with a solution.

“The result was a streamlined process between Workday and Referoo that delivers a consistent, compliant and high-quality candidate experience across our store network, with Referoo and Workday working seamlessly.”



The Outcome

With Referoo firmly embedded in their hiring process, Petstock Group is doing their reference, criminal history and background checks all in one place, in a fraction of the time.

“With Referoo, most of our references come back the same day or within 24 hours. One of our regional managers put ten references into the system at 5pm, and they were all back by the time she got in the next morning. It took her five minutes to put the details in, and it was all done overnight. It’s easy and fast, and we no longer need to worry about reference turnaround holding us back from making an offer.”

The team also appreciates having both SMS and email functionality. “We get most of our responses back by SMS, and having the option to do both is great,” she said.

The wait time on criminal history checks has reduced too.



The fact that Referoo does criminal history checks is incredibly beneficial for us too. During our pilot with the criminal history check function in Referoo, our turnaround dropped from 6–8 weeks to 3–4 days, which is significant.

Katrina says the in-built fraud detection tools have given her piece of mind too.

“We haven’t picked up too many potentially fraudulent references, which is good news for us, but it’s great to know that it’s on in the background and flags anything that looks amiss, so it’s been beneficial in that respect.”

Petstock Group has recently started using Referoo’s Talent Pooling Module, too, asking referees if they are interested in job opportunities.

“We do so many retail sales associate references, and usually, the referees are retail managers. In retail leadership, there is high demand for talent, so these roles can be a struggle to fill because there is so much competition. Referoo’s talent pooling functionality gives us a shortcut to get our brand in front of potential candidates, so it’s something we are really going to utilise,” says Katrina.

In conclusion, Katrina says the entire experience has been as easy as using the platform itself.



From the start, the Referoo team made a great impression. They were proactive and responsive to our needs, and that hasn’t changed in two years. I’ve found the customer service and the partnership approach excellent compared to other providers. It’s all just been so easy.