

REFERENCES

Sooner or later in the job campaign, you are going to be asked for the names of three to six references. Some may be former employers, and others may be contacts from non-work settings. In either case, your references and what they say about you may make the difference between getting a job or not. Here are some tips for making references a stronger part of your application.

1. Brief Your Contacts

Make sure the people that you are using as references know about your current, as well as past, activities and are also aware of the kind of work you seek. One of the best ways to do this is to provide them with a complete current résumé, possibly augmented by notes on things they may wish to mention.

2. Get Their Permission

It goes without saying that you should always request permission to use a person's name as a reference. You need not ask them every single time their name is used, but if you have not cited their name recently, check to make sure it is still okay. Many people combine the request to use a reference with the process of briefing, cited above. Give them a copy of your résumé so when they receive a phone call, they can easily summarize your experience and skills.

3. You're Judged by Whom You Know

To the extent that persons you list as references are well-known and respected in your community, what they say about you will carry more weight. Ideally, references should be people who are leaders in an organization at the management or professional level.

4. Provide Details on Your References

When you list references, give the name of the person, his or her job title, place of employment, address, phone number, and e-mail. It is best to use a work rather than a home address.

5. Pick the Right Kind of Reference

What relatives, ministers or rabbis, personal friends, and certainly therapists say about you is not going to do much for your candidacy. Conversely, what former employers, community officials, and other known leaders say about you will help your cause.

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6. Pick People Who Know Your Best Achievements

Were you honored in high school, college, or in your community for a particular achievement? Did you do something outstanding in a prior position? If you have had some major achievements in life, but do not want to tout them too highly yourself, use as references someone who knows and can report on them.

7. After They have Helped, Inform and Thank References

When you know they have given a reference for you, be sure to thank them and tell them what happened. To the extent that they become interested in your job campaign, they are more likely to give a more favorable report next time.

NAME

Street Address ♦ City, State Zip ♦ Phone ♦ Email

REFERENCES

First Name Last Name

Capacity, Relationship, or Position

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