Professional references back up your story after an interview.

Employers use references to check their impression of you after the interview process. They are hoping for an honest conversation about your strengths and weaknesses as they relate to the job. It's important to list people who really know you, want to see you succeed and can speak about your current job or career goals.

Reference FAQs

How many references do I need?
List at least 3 professional references. In some cases you will only need 2, and in others you may need as many as 5.

Who should I choose to be my reference?
Choose people who are not related to you and can speak about your work and education history. Employers prefer supervisors and managers, but you can also use coworkers, academic faculty or advisors and, in some cases, clients.

Do I need their permission?
Yes, absolutely. Not only that, but you need to keep your references informed. Let them know about the positions you are applying for and any changes to your resume and cover letter. It also helps to thank them for their assistance.

What contact information do I need to list for my references?
List all their contact information, including name, title, work address, phone number and email. Also, ask your references how they prefer to be contacted. Sometimes they will encourage you to list their cell phone or a different email address.

What if I don't have current or good references?
When you have gaps in your employment, left your job on bad terms, or are changing careers, you may not have the references you need. Consider getting new references by volunteering or doing some temporary work.

When do I give references to an employer?
It depends. Many online applications will ask you for your reference information when you apply. You may also be asked for your reference list after an interview. Either way, employers don't tend to contact your references until you are a final candidate.

YOUR NAME

Your Address, City, State, Zip Code, phone, email, (LinkedIn)

(NOTE: Use the same heading that is on your resume)

REFERENCES

First Name Last Name
Title
Company/Organization Name
Company/Organization Address
City, State, Zip Code
Work Phone
(Cell Phone)
Email

First Name Last Name
Title
Company/Organization Name
Company/Organization Address
City, State, Zip Code
Work Phone
(Cell Phone)
Email

First Name Last Name
Title
Company/Organization Name
Company/Organization Address
City, State, Zip Code
Work Phone
(Cell Phone)
Email

Office of Workforce Development