

Career Lounge

Employment References, Who Needs Them?

Many job seekers will spend hours and hours polishing their resumes but give little or no thought to the references they list. Your resume and job search techniques will get you an interview....your references will get you the job!

What is a Good Reference?

- Someone who has known you for at least one year or has worked with you closely.
- Someone who will offer positive feedback about you – your work ethic, skills, experience, attitude, schoolwork.

Who should You Ask for a Reference?

- Former/current supervisor, volunteer work peers, coaches, teammates, co-worker/classmate, customers, and teachers.
- Remember to call them first to be sure they are willing to give you a positive reference.
- Verify their contact information with your references – name, phone number, job title, place of business.
- Let your reference know what you've been up to and inform them of where you plan on applying for work.

Improving you Employment References

- Don't burn bridges when leaving a company. Give at least 2 weeks advance notice before leaving. Avoid criticizing your job, company or supervisor when leaving a company.
- Ask your immediate supervisor for a reference – providing that you are leaving on good terms.
- If you are leaving on bad terms – it is important to confirm with your manager what will be the standard in releasing information to potential employers, e.g. dates and title information only. You may prefer not to use this employer as a reference.
- Find out if you can obtain a reference letter from the manager/company to add to your application package for your next job.

A good reference can give you a leg up in your job search!

