



Tips for Gathering References

So you've got your resume just the way you want it. And you're prepared for your phone and face-to-face interviews.

But what about your references?

References remain an important part of the hiring process for companies. Although they don't get as much "press" in this modern age of technology, references are a tried-and-true, old school method of determining which job seekers are worth hiring—so you don't want to overlook them.

It's no longer common practice to list your references on your resume. Although writing "references available upon request" on your resume is now preferred, you must have a solid list of references . . . in case they *are* requested.

Below are tips for gathering such a list:

Make your initial list as large as you can.

Once you do this, you can always pare the list down to your top three references, the ones about which you feel the most confident. As a bonus, you'll be prepared in case an employer requests more than three.

Use references in your area of specialty.

Start with previous supervisors. The key is to list people to whom you've reported, either directly or indirectly.

Identify and use *only* viable references.

It's important to use only references that are willing or able to take the time to help you. After all, if you list somebody as a reference and they don't return the phone calls of a hiring manager, that doesn't reflect very well on you.

Ask previous coworkers.

It is assumed that you will include your past bosses on a list of references, but you do not have to stop there. You can also include coworkers and other people you have worked with – even if it was in a semi-professional capacity. Volunteer groups or community organizations count. Avoid using a friend or relative as a reference. If you do, be certain they can speak directly to your work qualifications.

Contact the people on your list.

If you're not already in touch with these people on a consistent basis, you should re-establish contact with them. For starters, you should ask if they would be willing to provide a reference for you! If they agree, tell them who will be contacting them, as well as the position for which you're applying and the key qualifications. Last but not least, make sure that all of their contact information is correct.