

Selecting & preparing referees



References play a critical role in a prospective employer's decision to consider you for a position, so it's important that you choose the right mix of professional and personal referees and ensure they are properly briefed when you are applying for a new role.

Selecting referees

Your choice of professional and personal referees could set you apart and influence your chances of securing a role.

Just as you tailor your work experience for a role, the same level of consideration should be given to your choice of referees. Different people will work better for different roles so as a rule of thumb identify 4-5 referees to have on hand as a start point.

Select referees who:

- You have had a close working relationship with; ideally someone you have reported to in a professional capacity (within the last 5 years). Also consider colleagues and direct reports
- Are able to articulate your strengths and will speak highly of you
- Can verify and discuss your employment experience, skills and achievements in detail

Always secure permission from your referees before sharing their contact details with a prospective employer. Prior to listing a person as a referee also check all contact details are up to date. A referee caught off guard or not providing correct contact details can work against you.

Briefing referees

Preparing your referees for a phone call from a prospective employer will put you in a strong position for a positive reference aligned to a specific role.

Provide referees with information on the role you are applying for, why you're looking to leave your current role and why you believe the role is the best next step in your career. Share pointers that they may like to consider in a response relating to your achievements and ask them to highlight skills and strengths relevant to the role.

It is equally important to close the loop on the outcome of any interview progress and remember to show your appreciation for their support.

Recommended reads

Succeed by surrounding yourself with the best - Claudio Fernández-Aráoz

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