

When and How References Matter in Your Job Application

After a successful job interview, the next thing that will probably happen before your employer fully decides to hire you is an employment reference check. People tend to think of such job reference checks as afterthoughts instead of the very important factors they are in a job application. Having the right job reference can make all the difference between you getting a job and someone else getting that job. For employers, getting value for their money is an important issue and they want to be sure that the person they are hiring is as good as they claim to be on their application. These important tips should assist you when you are providing job references to a potential employer: Sometimes You Don't Need a Reference Letter Especially if it is an informal letter, potential employers aren't interested in your past and such letters do not have genuine credibility as they can be written by anyone. What employers need is a live and talking witness who can attest to your personality and whether you are suitable for the job you are seeking out, and they would preferably like someone they could easily reach on the phone. Write References on a Separate Sheet You should write your references on a separate sheet and not on your main resume. Only provide references when they are asked for, and you should have at least five references that can be easily contacted by the employer if needed. Sometimes when references aren't asked for in your application you may add the line "references available upon request" so that they know you have a list of potential references on standby. Choose References Wisely Don't choose someone as a reference simply because their title and job description looks good on paper, and don't choose someone because they are a friend. The best people to have as references are former superiors who were responsible for your supervision and whom you reported to. These references will be quite aware of your strengths and weaknesses in order to highlight why you would be the best possible choice for the job as far as your employers are concerned. However, if you are fresh out of college, getting up to five references in terms of work may be a serious problem so you can go ahead and contact co-students, your professors in college or other acquaintances you may have met by virtue of your brief work experience. Get Approval First You don't simply go and list someone as a reference without asking whether they are comfortable first. What if the employer contacts your reference and catches them unaware? It will not seem professional to an employer, and neither will your reference be able to provide a comprehensive answer to the questions of why the employer would want to hire you. Provide Contact Information That is Current The information which you provide about your reference should be current and up-to-date. The current nature of this information should include everything from the job description to the contact information entailing the e-mail address as well as the phone numbers.

About the Author

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