

WHICH REFERENCE CHECKS HELP YOU THE MOST?

PREP YOUR REFERENCES FOR THE CALL

When possible, references should not be provided prior to an interview. The best time to submit references is either during the interview or immediately following it for these reasons:

- You want an opportunity to learn the criteria of the position (what your responsibilities and accountabilities will entail). This allows you to determine whether or not this is a position you want to continue to pursue. There's no reason for having your references contacted unless you are interested.
- You want an opportunity to contact and communicate with your references regarding the positions for which you've interviewed before the interviewer calls. A prepared reference makes a better reference.
- This gives you a chance to address important issues discussed during your interview. If the hiring authority kept stressing a certain skill that was most important to them, you want your references to focus on your abilities in that specific area. If prepared by you, they can provide specific examples that can highlight your abilities.

WRITTEN REFERENCES REVEAL EXACTLY WHAT HAS BEEN SAID

Written reference checks provide a permanent record of your accomplishments and responsibilities for a specific period of time. A written reference often provides the strongest recommendation and is normally written by a supervisor shortly after you made a job change. Your abilities and accomplishments are fresh in your supervisor's memory and they can share details they may eventually forget. When you obtain a written reference check, you also know exactly what has been written about your performance.

Often, hiring authorities will want to speak directly to your supervisors. Make sure you provide the correct title and contact information. This type of conversation provides the interviewer with an opportunity to ask questions relevant to their position. It also verifies the information you provided during the interviewing process.

It's best to have both your written references and list of references ready to take with you to interviews. Most hiring authorities request at least three references.

Basic information to provide for each reference listed:

- Full Name
- Current Title and Company (where they are *presently* employed)
- Relationship To You (supervisor, employer, client) and the location where this association took place (name of company)
- Phone Number (your reference should determine which number you provide. Only provide phone numbers with explicit permission)
- Email Address

Job offers can be delayed waiting for reference checks to be completed which is why you want to make sure your information is accurate and your references are accessible.

WHICH REFERENCES CAN HELP YOU THE MOST?

When hiring authorities are checking references, they want to speak to someone who was in a position of authority. Too often job seekers are providing names of peers as references which is the reason why most hiring authorities verify the title of your reference prior to completing their reference check. For this reason, provide the correct name and exact title of the person you have provided as a reference check.

The best references are individuals who can provide details on your accomplishments and the impact enjoyed by the company, as a result of what you did. You want your references to show where you saved the company money or streamlined processes saving time which can also equate to money saved.

References that are prepared by you and understand the criteria of the position you are pursuing can provide the best information. It's also important to coach them on possible questions they can ask the person checking the references.

For example:

- “What is most important to you in the person you hire?”
- “What is the greatest challenge the person you hire will face?”
- “Is there any other information I can provide that will give you insight into (your name)”

These questions open additional conversation that can reveal more of your talents and attributes from the individuals providing reference information.

WHY PERSONAL REFERENCES CAN HURT YOUR CHANCES

Hiring authorities will often request personal references. The most common person listed is your best friend who often knows you best. Unfortunately, your friends are not aware of employment laws and often have no filter. They may share information that can result in you being screened out make.

If you do provide personal references, you need to prepare your friends to answer questions professionally and in a manner that will enhance your chances of being employed. Too often the conversation gets personal and casual. Information is shared that may be inappropriate. Share the credentials required by your position and explain which skills and experience you have that qualify you for this position.

Often personal references focus on your personality traits more than skill sets. Share words that describe you best with your personal references. Some examples could include: hard working, ethical, high achiever, confident, dedicated, and other traits you feel would be most important to this hiring authority. If you spend time with the individuals you list as personal references they will be in a position to help not hurt your chances.

Follow this advice and the references you provide will help you attain your dream job!