

References

An employment reference is someone who can verify your credentials and all or part of the information you have written in your resume. References are usually contacted in the final stages of the hiring process. In some cases, a job offer is conditional upon receiving satisfactory references.

In either case, you have to know your references well and be sure that they can provide meaningful feedback to a potential employer asking questions about your professional performance. Note that, while a letter of reference is 'nice to have', it does not carry the same weight as a personal telephone conversation.

Employment references can be:

- Former supervisors or managers
- Former or current co-workers
- Industry contacts
- Former/present clients

It is important to ask potential referees about their willingness to provide you with a reference PRIOR to providing your potential new employer with their name and contact information. In addition, qualify each potential referee. Each referee should be able to speak confidently about your experience at your past/present employer and should be able to comment on your suitability for the prospective new role. To that end, you should discuss the role you are considering with your referee. Discuss the challenges you foresee in the new role and why you think you will succeed. It is also a good idea to save your referee some time by providing a copy of your current resume and preparing them to answer questions on the following topics:

- Professional Conduct / Personal Character
- Academic Qualifications
- Work Experience
 - > Job titles
 - > Responsibilities
 - > Employment Dates
- Communication Skills
 - > Oral
 - > Written
- Strengths and Weaknesses/ areas needing improvement
- Management / Leadership Skills
- Ability to work in a team as well as independently
- Attitude
 - > Attendance
 - > Punctuality
 - > Dependability

If your referee seems to have any hesitation in providing you with a suitable recommendation, pursue other referees. It is very important to confirm what your references will say about you BEFORE you use them.