

Providing professional references

Employers may ask for a list of references when considering you for a position. Before you start your reference list, think of three to five individuals who can attest to the skills you want to highlight for the opportunity. Make sure to list your strongest references first.

To help you prepare you for a reference list, here is a list of do's and don'ts for you to consider.

Career tip:

Job searching while currently employed? Make sure to gauge the appropriate time to disclose your search to your current employer. If you have a positive relationship, you may be able to use your current supervisor as a reference.

Tips for success

Do use references you have worked closely with such as mentors, supervisors, co-workers, and community leaders.

Do connect regularly with individuals whom you hope to use as a reference.

Do keep your references in the loop. When interviewing, reach out to your network and give them an updated resume, as well as the relevant job posting or information needed for that position.

Do thank your references.

Do use references who can speak to your capabilities not just impressive job titles.

Don't use family or friends. It's important your references highlight skills that are relevant to an employer or job with specific examples to draw upon.

Don't list references without their knowledge or permission

Don't put your references on your resume. If they are needed, the employer will ask for them later in the interviewing process.

Formatting references

Name & Professional Title
Name of Current Workplace
How you know them
Telephone Number
Email address

Example:

Jill Smith, Director of Marketing
ABC Marketing Company
Supervisor
480-555-0123
jsmith@abcmarketing.com