

Creating a Successful Reference List to Market Your Skills

A Reference List is a marketing tool designed by you, the job seeker.

Reference Lists allow employers to verify any information you have provided on your resume, your job application, or during an interview. Here are some tips to follow when creating a Reference List:

1. References DO NOT belong on your resume. Instead, create a separate Reference List page that you can provide to employers when requested.
2. Keep the design of your Reference List consistent with your resume. That is, format your Reference List to look like your resume. Use the same heading and the same font. Uniformity not only makes your documents look nicer, but it also makes it easier for employers to read your work.
3. Title your Reference List with a heading such as, "Professional Reference List". Include references' names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. You might also include a short synopsis of your working relationship with the person and the number of years you have been acquainted.
4. Choose Reference who know the value of your work and will say positive things about you.
5. **DO NOT LEAVE ANYTHING TO CHANCE!** Contact your References before sending out your resume/Reference list. Ask for their permission to use them as a professional reference before adding their information to your Reference List. Speak to each Reference to ensure they fully understand your skills and accomplishments. Letting your References know what type of position you are applying for can make a difference in whether or not you are hired.
6. You don't need to confine your references to current or former supervisors. When selecting your references, consider the message you're trying to convey. For example, if you're a sales manager trying to prove your leadership and account management skills, you might select your supervisor, a contact from a key account and one of your employees. Other possibilities include vendors, customers, instructors, professors, advisors, community leaders, colleagues, mentors and other business acquaintances.
7. Avoid using family members and friends unless you work with them. Everyone—including employers—knows that dear Aunt Betty will only have nice things to say about you!
8. If you have been asked to provide a set number of References, it is always a good idea to provide a few more. That way, if an employer isn't able to reach one or two of your contacts in a timely manner, he/she can continue to try to reach others on your list.
9. The length of your Reference List depends on profession. Most job seekers usually provide 3 to 5 references but in some fields (such as medicine and academia), a longer list is typical.