Providing professional references

Employers may ask for a list of references when considering you for a position. Think of three to five individuals who can attest to the skills you want to highlight for the opportunity.

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.

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.

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

Don’t list references without their knowledge or permission.

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.

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

Do thank your references.

Example

Jill Smith, Director of Marketing
ABC Marketing Company
Relationship: Supervisor
480-555-0123
j smith@abcmarketing.com

Formatting references

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