

References Etiquette

Although choosing your references seems like a simple process, a little courtesy can help to ensure that your references will give the best description possible of the talents you have to offer a potential employer. By following these tips, you can help optimize your reference list, and increase your chances of landing the job that's right for you.

1. Get permission before naming someone as a reference

Even if you are sure that someone would consent to be a reference for you, it is still essential to ask their permission before giving out their contact information to a potential employer. Also, this is your opportunity to learn what their preferred method of contact is, be it work phone, personal phone, or chosen email address.

2. Make sure the reference will be a good one

Check to see if your potential reference seems enthusiastic about acting as a reference, or if they appear hesitant. Be sure to ask if they would feel comfortable describing your job skills to a potential employer. If they seem reluctant to agree, it may be that they have some concerns about your job performance, or they are concerned about their own ability to adequately describe your skills.

3. Give information to your reference

Although it may seem that your references will give a glowing report about you no matter what, providing them with some information about the type of position you're seeking can assist them in framing their answers in a way that is most helpful to you. For instance, if they know that you are seeking a position in management, they will know to place emphasis on your leadership abilities and your knack for inspiring other employees to do their best.

4. Say "Thank You" and follow up

Be certain to follow up with your references on your progress, either with an email, phone call, or card, even if you did not get the job. Showing your appreciation this way may make your reference more willing to serve as a reference in the future as you continue your job search. Continue to keep your references informed of your experiences in climbing the corporate ladder and your educational progress.

*Sources: Kristen Welcome, "Reference Etiquette - Asking for a Reference the Right Way"
"Five golden rules for job reference etiquette" from The Triton*