

# GET THE JOB

## Professional References

Many jobs require you to provide references, which is why you'll want to have them lined up before you start job hunting. Be prepared with a list of references who will speak glowingly of you.

### CHOOSING REFERENCES

The Harvard Business Review recommends that you create a list of colleagues who could provide you with good references. They suggest that the list include current and former supervisors, managers, co-workers and subordinates. Others suggest including vendors you have worked closely with, clients or customers.

Consider managers who have given you strong, positive employee evaluations, coworkers who have thanked you for your help on projects and people who have successfully worked for you.

### CONTACT YOUR REFERENCES

Before you provide a name as a reference, contact the person and let them know you are doing so. Ask their permission



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to use them as a reference — don't assume that they are willing to. Giving a reference a heads up lets them prepare for the call and think about what they are going to say about you.

Contacting them allows you to do several things. First, you can ask for updated contact information—an essential step in the process. You can also let them know what job you are applying for and why you want

it. If they are open to it, provide coaching on what you would like them to highlight. This could be a good time to mention your strengths, projects you've worked on together and what your professional aptitudes are.

Consider providing your reference with documentation that might help them such as a copy of your resume, a copy of the job posting that you are

applying for and relevant portfolio samples.

This is also a good opportunity to let your colleagues know you are searching for work. They may be able to provide you with additional leads.

### FIND OUT WHAT THE HIRING MANAGER IS LOOKING FOR

If you are being asked for references after an interview

or as part of a pre-interview process, ask the hiring manager what specifically he or she is looking for. This can help you determine which reference is the best fit. Do they want to know about your leadership skills? Then provide them with someone who has worked for you. Do they want to know about your reliability? Provide them with a current or past supervisor. Do they want to know about your team-work ability? Provide them with the name of a co-worker.

### PROTECTING YOUR CURRENT JOB

If you are currently employed and don't want your organization to know that you are looking for another job, let the hiring manager know this. It's a common situation and likely to be understood. It can explain why you don't have any references from your current employer. You can offer to provide references at your current company once a job offer is made.

Also, if the hiring manager asks for a reference from your current supervisor and you think that person might give you a negative reference, be upfront about that. Tell the hiring manager that they are likely to get a negative reference and explain why in as positive and professional a manner as possible.