

Zarb Graduate Business Career Services

JOB SEARCH REFERENCES TIP SHEET

It is inevitable that at some point in your job search you will be asked for references, and when you are, you want to be sure you have a great group of **advocates** who are prepared with answers that will help rather than hinder your chances at landing the position. Obtaining people that will be a reference is something you should think about at the beginning of your interview process and not just at the end when you are under immediate pressure to provide potential employers with references.

Most business employers that check references, will make a phone call or e-mail your references. Written references are not typically requested during an interview process by business employers.

Make a list of all the possible people you can use as a reference: Former employers, Former Clients, College professors, Deans, Advisors, Colleagues that have seen you in a professional setting, Association leaders, and possibly Peers that are professionals that worked with you in a team/group setting and can discuss your abilities.

How to select references?

It is very important that the individuals you choose, know you well enough, have experience working with you in some capacity, and are willing to vouch for you. In short, you are looking for anyone who can communicate your experience, skills, integrity, professionalism, and can-do attitude to any potential employer. Once you have a list of approximately three to five potential references you will develop a written list that will be offered to potential employers when asked or after a first round interview, you may offer to provide your list. You will look extremely professional and prepared if you have it with you on an interview. In some cases, you will be asked to provide references on an application form, so this list will assist you when completing this request.

Requesting References and developing a Reference List

1. Ask them for their permission to be listed as a reference in advance of interviewing. Get the correct name spelling, current title, place of employment, complete address, phone numbers and e-mail.
2. Ask for their preferred means of contact whether it is by personal or office phone, or if they would rather be contacted via e-mail, so if there is a preference, you only include that on your list.

3. Develop a "References" page, with your name and your contact information in the top heading, similar to your resume format. You may write the word "REFERENCES" following your header. List your 3-5 reference names with contact information in one or two columns (side by side) in block format including:

REFERENCES

Name

Title

Department

Employer

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Work/Home/Cell Phone #'s

E-Mail

Discussions with References

Discuss your career goals, positions/job titles of interest, industry interests and any specific employers of interest **in advance of developing your reference list.**

Once you have been called for an interview and asked for your references or provided your reference list to a potential employer, be sure to alert- E-mail or call the references that they may be contacted. Advise the references about the details of the opportunity. The more information that you provide your reference such as the position title; department; employer; why you liked the position/employer; how your skills fit; what you felt your weak skill areas were during the interview the better prepared a reference will be to provide a thorough and positive referral when contacted. They may even be able to highlight and reiterate your matching skills or overcome your weaknesses.