

# 5 Tips To Choose Your Best Job Reference

January 29, 2015 Posted by [Heather Huhman](#)

As hiring managers sift through candidates and prepare for the [interview](#) process, they'll often seek input from a [candidate's](#) list of references.

References serve as a powerful tool during the hiring process. Hiring managers often contact references to find out what a candidate can truly accomplish and what they're like to work with. This is why it's important for job seekers to carefully choose their references before applying for jobs.

Your references can have a huge impact on your [career](#). According to a survey by CareerBuilder, nearly 70 percent of employers have changed their mind about a candidate because of his or her reference. Forty-seven percent of the employers surveyed said they had a less favorable opinion of the candidate and one-third said their opinion about the candidate improved after speaking with a reference.

When selecting your references, there are a number of factors you must pay attention to. Here are some important rules to follow when choosing a job reference:

## **1. Think carefully before selecting a reference.**

When choosing your references, think about the type of reference you're looking for. Do you want someone who can speak highly of your work ethic? Do you want someone who can illustrate your personality to employers? When selecting a reference, you want someone who can speak highly of you as a professional, so make sure you choose the best reference for the position you've applied for.

The most effective references are those who've had the opportunity to experience your personality and witness your accomplishments first-hand. Don't feel like you need to have a former boss to serve as a reference. You can ask a mentor, college professor, previous co-worker, or professional colleague. Just remember, the people you've interacted closely through professional relationships are more likely to give you an accurate reference.

## **2. Ask for his or her permission.**

Never use a reference without asking for his or her permission. Regardless of how you perceive your relationship with the reference, not every person is comfortable giving recommendations for employment opportunities. While in most cases your colleagues will be flattered to serve as references, it's always respectful to ask for their permission first.

## **3. Collect important details about the reference.**

Once you've secured a job reference, collect their contact information. Record their full name, current title, phone number, email, and work address. These details will be required by most employers during the interview process.

## **4. Coach your references.**

It's important to make sure your references have a copy of your current [resume](#) and samples from your portfolio. You should also explain to them your skills, important projects you've worked on, and your best accomplishments. This will help your references give you the best and most relevant recommendation to employers.

## **5. Keep references informed during your job search.**

As an active job seeker, it's essential to keep your references informed during your job search. No reference wants to be requested to give a reference when they least expect it.

When you include a reference on a job application, follow up and let him or her know to expect a phone call or email from an employer. This will help them prepare to provide a better reference for you and stay informed during the hiring process.

These are a few of the most important rules to follow when choosing the best references for your job search. By maintaining a positive relationship with your references, they'll be able to give you more glowing recommendations in the future.

*How did you find the best reference for your job search?*