USING REFERENCES

Most employers will eventually request your references before extending a job offer. The strongest references come from previous employers who can vouch for your knowledge and skills, your integrity, and your enthusiasm toward work. Ask current/past immediate supervisors, managers, or co-workers to be references. The higher the title, the better.

Selecting References
Your reference should know who you are and what you did. Request references only of those people who think positively of you. If you know that your current or previous boss won’t give you a decent recommendation, provide the name of someone else in the chain-of-command who will. Maybe your boss’s boss, another manager, or a supervisor who is familiar with your work. Don’t use family members or friends unless they can truly speak to your work-related skills and qualifications.

Generally speaking, you should only use business references unless the employer asks for personal or character references. Other potential references may include your professors, leaders of organizations and clubs, clients, customers, or others familiar with your work. They should all be professional contacts.

Preparing References
Of course, you should always ask for their permission beforehand and inform them of your job objective. You might also give them a copy of your resume, so they have something to refer to when contacted by an employer. Also, provide them with a copy of the job description of the position.

It’s OK to talk with your referenced beforehand about the company, the position you’re applying for, and your insights for employment with the company. This let’s your references know they should expect to be contacted soon and provides them with information they can use to provide the HR professional with tailored comments.
Providing References

Never include your references on your resume. Instead, prepare a separate sheet with the heading, “Professional References” or something similar. (See attached Example). You should list 3 to 5 references under that heading. Be sure to include your name, address, etc., at the top of the page – just as it appears on your resume. Unless otherwise requested, use work addresses and phone numbers. For each reference list the name, title, company or organization, company address, and work phone number. If the person’s title or company does not indicate your relationship, include in parenthesis after name (e.g., former supervisor). You can also include Best Time to Contact information for individuals that may have unique schedules.

Your Professional References should not be sent with your cover letter and resume unless the employer specifically asks for them at that time. Employers typically ask for references after an interview, so be sure to take a copy of your reference sheet with you to your interviews. It should be on the same paper as your resume – and as with any other job search correspondence, take the time to make sure your reference sheet is of the highest quality. PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, and PROOFREAD again.

Thanking References

When the interview process is complete—irrespective of outcome—be sure to thank your references for their time they took to assist you with your job search. Handwritten notes, notecards, and ecards are just a few thoughtful ways to show your appreciation.

Example formatting

Name (Professional Relationship)
  Position Title
  Company
  Company Address
  City, State, Zip Code
  Company Phone Number
EXAMPLE REFERENCE PAGE

YOUR NAME
1234 North 55 Street
Bellevue, Nebraska 68005
(402) 292-2345
iasample@aol.com

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Bernard E. Langer
Director, Human Resources
Attaboy Company
7833 Avenue G
Omaha, NE 68134
(402) 738-4467

Dr. Sandra P. Doolittle
Chemistry Professor
Bellevue University
1000 Galvin Road South
Bellevue, NE 68005
(402) 293-5543
Best Time to Call: M – F Before Noon

Gregory J. Throckmorton (Former Supervisor)
General Manager
Iowa Western Beef Company
234 6th Avenue
Council Bluffs, IA 51510
(712) 355-7865

Ernestine Freeling (Former Colleague)
Supply Coordinator
Iowa Western Beef Company
234 6th Avenue
Council Bluffs, IA 51510
(712) 355-7865