HEART TALENT COLLECTIVE

A GUIDE TO WORKING WITH REFEREES

Reference checking is an important part of the recruitment process for employers. It's usually the final stage before they offer someone a job.

Choosing appropriate references is quite important.

Let's take a quick look at why. For the hiring employer, referees:

- are a third-party assessment of your skills, experience, strengths and weaknesses

- provide an opportunity to verify what they've learned about you during the interview/s

- enable an informed hiring decision.

Depending on the employer, role and how much competition there is, references can 'make or break' your job search.

Here are some of the things your potential new employer is hoping to learn from a reference check:

- a description of your duties and experience

- a view on your strengths and weaknesses

- confirmation of job title and dates of employment

- a description of your achievements

- a sense of your working style and

- a sense of how you work with others.

How to choose your referees

Your referees must be people you know in a professional capacity ie not friends or family members.

The best referees are people you have reported to in a previous job ie your manager. You could also choose a key stakeholder or client who can comment on the things listed above.

Tips on how to work with your referees

- Always seek permission. It's important your referees want to give you a reference.

- Keep them informed. When you're nearing the end of an interview process and it's looking promising, give them a 'heads up'.

- Brief them on the job (so they know what to focus on during the reference check).

- Ask them to focus on your achievements.

- Thank them afterwards (especially if you get the job!).

In most cases, reference checks happen at the very end of the recruitment process ie when you are very close to being offered the job. Regardless, don't underestimate the importance of having strong, reliable and appropriate references to support your application.

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