



## **How to Prepare for your Reference Check**

**Maryann Boychuk**

**Y**ou've aced the interview and now your prospective new employer is asking for references. I've been recruiting for a decade and have seen more than one candidate who blew the job offer by neglecting this critical stage in the hiring process. I have contacted references who said they didn't know the candidate, and references who casually identified the candidate as a buddy: "Oh, yeah, we were out drinking together last night". The most astonishing was an employer who told me never to call again because he was in the process of going through arbitration with the candidate.

The reference check is the last stage before you receive a formal job offer. Don't treat it as an inconsequential formality. Brief your references in advance so they know your work history and have examples at hand of your best qualities. Here are five key suggestions to guarantee you receive the most supportive recommendations:

- 1) Provide each reference with your resume and highlight your work accomplishments.
- 2) When you are in the final stages of your job interview send each of your references the description of the job you are seeking. Point out the skills necessary for the position and explain why you'd be a perfect fit.
- 3) Let your references know the name of the person who will be contacting them. Explain the person's role in the organization (hiring manager, human resources manager or a recruitment agency).
- 4) Ask your references for the best times for the recruiter to contact them and how they can be reached (office number, cell phone, e-mail, in person).
- 5) Show your appreciation. Send your references a note, once they've completed the referral, and thank them for their support. Let them know when you'll be starting your new role and provide your new contact details.

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