**Will Your References Seal the Deal?**

**Who Do I Ask and How?**

- **ASK is the key word. Never assume** someone will be a reference for you. You must ask them! "Do you feel you know my work well enough to act as a positive reference for me?"

- **Ask people who can provide positive feedback** about your work or educational skills and experience. They should validate and reinforce the accomplishments and skills on your resume. Consider:
  - Former and current supervisors (most preferred)
  - Contacts from volunteer work / community activities
  - Professors / Academic Advisors
  - Coaches, Mentors, Colleagues
  - Customers / Clients

- **Provide each reference with the following** to help them address the employer’s questions and be prepared to provide a solid reference for you.
  - Your resume, portfolio, licenses, etc.
  - Specifics on how long you’ve known them (include dates)
  - Description of the job(s) you’re applying for
  - Examples of your skills, knowledge, achievements, and personal qualities that show you’re qualified for the job.

*Most employers require three references, however, at times more or less may be needed.*

**Maintaining Contact with References**

- Contact your references each time you give their names to an employer. Tell them about the position you applied for and why you think you’re qualified.

- Take time to thank your references and update them on your job search.

- Once you receive a job, share the good news and let them know their time and assistance paid off.

- Continue to maintain contact with your references to prevent stress in having to rebuild these relationships in the future. If you haven’t already, connect with them through LinkedIn.

*Reference cultivation as a career-long process*

**Example Reference Sheet**

**DO NOT LIST REFERENCES ON YOUR RESUME**

**CHRIS RODGERS**

555 North South Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 00000
(414) 555-5555  chris@abc.edu

**REFERENCES:**

Benson T. Burns
Customer Service Manager
ABC Manufacturing
555 North Street
Sunnyville, Wisconsin 00000
(414) 222-0000
bburns@burns.com
Previous Employer

Dr. Steven Habrausch
Director of Social Services
Memorial Hospital
125 East West Avenue
Somewhere, Wisconsin 00000
(414) 252-5555
Best time to contact: Mon & Fri 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Supervisor

Dr. Lee Beacher
Dean of Educational Studies
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Room 911, Energy Hall
555 Lincoln Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 00000
(414) 229-0000
beacher@xyz.edu
Academic Professor

**When Do I Submit My References?**

- **Do not provide references until the employer requests them,** however, plan ahead so you are prepared to submit them at any time during the application process.

- **It varies when references are requested.** They may be asked for with the application materials or later after interviews.

- **Most employers don’t request or contact your references until after the interview and are considering you for the job.**

- Show you are prepared by **bringing your reference sheet to the interview.** If the interviewer does not ask for it, then offer.

*Updated: 5/15*

Career Planning & Resource Center • Mellencamp 128 • 414-229-4486 • uwm.edu/careerplan/