

Q&A

Actualise Consulting principal consultant Samantha Hepworth has all the answers to your career questions

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Secrets of Entrepreneurs Under 40

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DO GOOD REFEREES REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHEN APPLYING FOR JOBS?

Gone are the days when written references were a vital part of your curriculum vitae. In today's labour market, employers and recruiters need referees to contact in order to confirm an applicant's employability and history. If you're considering changing jobs or giving your resume an overhaul, be sure to take some time to review your referees. Here are some tips to optimise your use of referees in your resume and job seeking:

- A rule of thumb is to include at least three referees. The other, lesser known, rule is that the more you have, the more favorable it looks for you, and the less likely the reader is to contact any of them;
- It's optimal to have at least one referee who was an immediate supervisor or manager, but don't discount the importance of also including people who you may have worked with on special projects or in a team with who can make commentary on your ability to be a team player, day-to-day work ethic, innovation, ideas and reliability;
- If possible, it's also preferable to include referees from your last three jobs (if you've changed jobs more than three times over the last three years) to give a consistent account of how great you are, and alleviate any concern the potential employer may have that you've moved on so frequently because you're a flaky employee; and
- Finally, the most important point to remember when considering your referee seems obvious, but has caused grief and cost jobs for countless applicants in the past: ask the people listed in your resume if

they agree to referee you before you submit your resume to anyone. Also get their preferred contact number to add to your list. Believe it or not, many a job in the bag has been won by an employer contacting a referee who has given a more than-glowing reference to an applicant. Always check your referees before you can rest easy knowing you won't have any final hiccups in your selection process once it comes to checking referees.



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