

## Managing Your References:

At some point in your job search, you'll be asked to supply a list of references. After numerous phone and onsite interviews, you've finally convinced the company that you are the one for them—and vice versa. Now it comes down to one last step before an offer can be extended—**references**. Many candidates take the approach that this phase is out of their control---which couldn't be farther from the truth. With a little ongoing (yes, even when you are not looking for a job) effort, you can cultivate references that are available and prepared to speak about you when and if you need them. Here's some advice on how to do that:

1. Establish good working relationships with your colleagues—supervisors, team members and subordinates alike. Always have at least one person you can rely on for a reference either now or in the future.
2. Identify the person(s) who know your talents and can best describe your background and strengths to prospective employers.
3. Ask for permission to use their name for a reference. Find out how your reference prefers to be contacted, and what is the best way to get a hold of them. Get current cell number and email address.
4. Prepare a professional reference sheet—name, title, company, working relationship and contact information. This can be emailed easily or handed to prospective employers in the interview.
5. Notify each person (email is great) each time you are job seeking and they may be contacted. Let them know the company, position and your interest level so that they may be prepared for the call. Thank them in advance for their assistance.
6. Offer to be of assistance to each of your contacts should they ever need it. People like to help those who are willing to extend the same courtesy.
7. A networking site, such as LinkedIn, allows you to gather testimonials and post them online for all to see. You can also make recommendations for others. This is another useful tool for references.