
Letters of Recommendation

Who Can Give You a Letter of Recommendation?

The strongest references come from previous employers who can vouch for your knowledge, your integrity, and your enthusiasm towards work. Your best bet is to get a reference from an immediate supervisor, manager, or co-worker. The higher the title, the better. But remember, your recommendation writer must know who you are and what you did.

Keep in mind that you don't have to have been a full-time employee to get a letter of recommendation. Consider requesting letters from places where you were employed part time, interned, volunteered, or freelanced. Ideally, you should begin gathering letters of recommendation either just before you leave a position or soon afterwards, while the quality of your work is still fresh in the mind of the potential letter writer. Request letters only from people who think positively of you. If you believe that your manager is unlikely to give you a good letter, consider asking your immediate supervisor or even a co-worker. Other potential letter writers may include your teachers, leaders of organizations or clubs, or other people familiar with your work. However, they should all be professional contacts. Personal references from friends, neighbors, or relatives should be rarely used and only in cases in which the employer might need a character reference such as a position in childcare or law enforcement.

How Do you Get a Letter of Recommendation?

The easiest way to get a letter of recommendation is to ask your supervisor or manager. Tell that person about the type of position you plan to apply for so that the letter can be better focused towards your objective.

Remember, although some people are quite adept at letter writing and will be more than willing to write a reference, others may find the task challenging or be so busy they can't do it within your time frame. A tack you can take to help speed the process along and ensure content of the letter is to follow these steps:

- 1.) Prepare a draft of your letter of recommendation.
- 2.) E-mail the draft of your recommendation letter. No matter how you choose to submit your materials, be sure to include a cover letter that invites your reference to review your draft, edit it as desired, and return the final draft on company letter head.
- 3.) After receiving your letter of recommendation, make copies of it. Don't send the original to a prospective employer; you may not get it back.
- 4.) Send a thank you note to the person who wrote your letter.

How Many Recommendations Are Enough?

Three to four references should be sufficient, but even one or two can help to sway a prospective employer. Rather than quantity, focus on quality. Be sure that the letters present you in the best light and are consistent with how you describe yourself in your resume and interview.

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Fennel Corp.

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To Whom It May Concern,

Sandra Braxton worked as a human resources coordinator for two years in my department at Fennel Corp. During that time, Sandra has diverse responsibilities. She reviewed resumes to identify qualified employment candidates, conducted preliminary applicant interviews, and documented hiring-firing policy decisions for distribution to Fennel's various department supervisors.

Sandra is bright, articulate, and hard working. Her enthusiasm for the job comes through in all she does. She has a positive attitude that makes her a pleasure to work with and is one of the reasons she was so well-liked by her coworkers.

I highly recommend Sandra for any job she is considering in the Human Resources field. She would be an asset to any employer. If you have further questions about Sandra, please do not hesitate to contact me at (404) 55-1121, ext 200

Sincerely,

Kenneth Swipe
Vice President, Human Resources