



### **Choose the Right Employment References**

As I discussed in my previous Career Notes article, many job seekers focus primarily on their resume and may overlook other critical components of the job search process. One of these components is choosing references, which seems to be an afterthought for some job seekers. However, the people you choose as your references can have a great deal of influence over the outcome of your job search. A glowing recommendation can be the last piece of the puzzle that convinces an employer to hire you over another candidate, but a lackluster one can mean a lost opportunity.

Whether to include references with your resume or provide them later in the process can depend on personal choice, circumstances, and the confidentiality of your application. Either way, you should put considerable thought into who you choose to help advance your career.

Here are some considerations:

- Select a diverse group of references. While it's easy for PGA Professionals to fill their reference list with fellow PGA Professionals, most employers are also looking for people who know you in a different context. Current and former employers typically make logical references, as well as club presidents, committee chairs, general managers, superintendents, golf instruction students, golf industry and community leaders, good amateur players, etc. It's also a good idea to have both men and women on your reference list.
- Make sure your references know you well enough to speak comfortably and enthusiastically about you and your credentials. Nothing sinks a candidate's chances quicker than a reference who gets a call about someone they barely know and is not able to provide any information.
- Ask permission in advance. You don't want your references to be caught off guard by receiving an unexpected call about you. This also gives you an opportunity to gauge their reaction to your request. If they are less than enthusiastic or seem hesitant, you may not want to include them on your reference list.
- Provide your references with a copy of your resume and brief them on your career and the job you are applying for. Let them know what the employer is looking for, how you fit their needs, and why you would leave your current job. In particular, if you have been unemployed for a while or were let go from your last job, provide them with details so they can answer appropriately. Don't leave anything to chance – you want your references ready and prepared.
- If your current employer does not know you are applying for a position, make your references aware of this and ask them to keep your job search confidential.
- List your references on a separate page from your resume, with your name at the top. Include each person's name, title, company or business, address, and their telephone and email contacts. If their connection to you is not obvious, you may want to include the context that the reference knows you.

A sample reference page is available on the PGALinks Employment homepage.

### **GOLF 2.0**

Golf 2.0 is one of the most important initiatives undertaken by the PGA of America, with a goal of creating a more vibrant and sustainable golf industry, making golf more welcoming to new players, and converting millions of people interested in golf into regular players. In addition to increasing participation and growing revenues, benefits of a successful Golf 2.0 initiative will be an enhanced value of the PGA Professional and better PGA employment opportunities.

The Golf 2.0 strategic plan will focus on three strategies:

- **Protect the Core** – Knowing and nurturing current golfers is crucial to guiding them to be our most loyal customers. Delivering enjoyable and memorable experiences to each segment and utilizing

best practice customer service will protect this group from further erosion and give us time to grow new customers.

- **Engage the Lapsed** – Welcoming former golfers back to the game is vital to the success of Golf 2.0. PGA Professionals must understand how to engage various market segments including women, seniors, and the entire family, as well as overcoming time and cost barriers by utilizing creative formats and price points.
- **Drive New Players** – Understanding how to reach the 84% of American households who do not play golf is essential. This represents the “building blocks” of our future to show how golf can be enjoyed by everyone including the nation’s growing minority population, using tactics successfully used by soccer and other team sports as well as through non-traditional means.

Beginning with the launch of Golf 2.0 at the 2012 PGA Merchandise Show, the PGA of America will provide PGA Professionals with a set of strategic initiatives, tools, and education programs designed to address current consumer preferences and grow participation. Understanding and embracing this plan and developing the skills to bring more customers to the game and to our facilities are essential. To learn more about Golf 2.0, please explore the interactive website at [www.golf20.net](http://www.golf20.net)

#### **Reminder – Your PGA CareerLinks ProFile**

To help CareerLinks work for you, I would encourage you to periodically review and update your personal CareerLinks ProFile, located on the PGALinks Employment homepage. This is especially important if you have recently changed jobs or PGA classifications, gained additional experience, or would like to modify your future preferences. In particular, make sure your PGA employment history is correct and all facility information is complete. If you have not updated your ProFile within the past 18 months, you will receive an e-mail from the PGA asking you to do so to remain active in CareerLinks.

#### **PGA Professional Report**

Will you be involved with an upcoming performance review or contract negotiation with your employer? Or would you like an effective way to communicate to your employer everything you have achieved at your facility in the past year, as well as your plans for 2012? If so, I would encourage you to utilize the PGA Professional Report, available on the PGALinks Employment homepage. The Report Builder tool allows you to create a professionally formatted year-end report that highlights your accomplishments and value to your facility. The tool provides a variety of sample reports and a worksheet of Key Performance Indicators to help you get started.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me by phone or e-mail if you would like assistance with any PGA employment programs or services.

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