

# TELL YOUR STORY

*Cover Letters, Resumes,  
References & Thank-you notes*

**Bluffton University Center for Career & Vocation**

*Just inside the main doors of Musselman Library*  
Monday—Thursday 9am—6pm; Friday 9am—2pm  
Evenings and weekends by appointment

**419-358-3030 | [career@bluffton.edu](mailto:career@bluffton.edu)**



On Facebook search “Bluffton CCV”



On Twitter @BlufftonCCV



Search *Shari Ayers* and *Britnie Loch* to connect with us on LinkedIn

**Find the sustainable you!**

# Best Practices for References

## PURPOSE

- Your reference list should match your résumé and cover letter in style and format. When placed side by side, they become a part of your job search “brand.” It should be clear that they are a family of documents.
- One sheet, one side is more than sufficient.
- Try a centered and a left-justified format to see which looks more visually pleasing.
- Include for each reference:
  - ⇒ Name
  - ⇒ Title
  - ⇒ Employer
  - ⇒ How you know the person (if not easily identified from the title and employer); occasionally an employer will ask you to identify how long you have known the person – watch for these kinds of specific requests and follow them exactly.
  - ⇒ Email address
  - ⇒ Phone number
  - ⇒ Mailing address

**SAMPLE**

## CHRIS JACKSON

987 Johnson St. Oahu, HI 96701  
Bluffton University, 1 University Dr. Bluffton, OH 45817  
123-456-7890 • chrisjackson@bluffton.edu

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES \_\_\_\_\_

### **Sue Smith**

General Manager, ABC Organization  
555 North St. Bluffton, OH 45817  
(555) 555-5555  
ssmith@abc.org

### **Dr. Jim Jones**

Professor of Business, Bluffton University  
1 University Dr. Bluffton, OH 45817  
(555) 555-5555  
jjones@bluffton.edu

### **Jane Brown**

Office Manager, XYZ Non-Profit Agency  
2222 South St. Findlay, OH 45840  
(777) 777-7777  
brownj@agency.org

## Some final thoughts....

- Submitting applications
  - ⇒ If submitting electronically, use pdf unless requested otherwise
  - ⇒ If submitting in person or by mail, use simple résumé paper. The Center for Career & Vocation has a limited supply of résumé paper for student use. Typically, we can provide you with 10 or so copies of your résumé and cover letter. For larger projects, check an office supply store
  - ⇒ Use a cover letter any time you are not handing your resume directly to someone
- If color is used on your documents, be sure to print out a black and white version to make sure everything is readable in gray tones
- If you struggle with *Highlighted Skills*, consider these:
  - ⇒ What does a teacher who knows you well think when they see your name on a class list?  
***“Oh Chris Jackson.... He always contributes to class discussion and gets everyone involved”***  
Possible Highlighted Skill: “Skilled at facilitating group conversations and soliciting participation”
  - ⇒ What does a former coach think when they see your name on a team roster?  
***“Chris Jackson... I’ve hardly seen a more dedicated player”***  
Possible Highlighted Skill: “Incredible work ethic with dedication to excellent performance”
  - ⇒ What does a supervisor think when they see your name on the shift schedule?  
***“Chris Jackson... I never have to check up on him. He’s great with the customers”***  
Possible Highlighted Skill: “Exceptional customer service skills and ability to self-supervise”
- If you struggle with resume bullet points:
  - ⇒ Think past just the tasks of the job and consider outcomes of your work  
*(“Cleaned restrooms and emptied trashes” vs. “Maintained safe and clean environment to welcome visitors”)*
  - ⇒ What was the bigger picture to which you contributed
  - ⇒ Think transferrable skills—Did you...
    - \* Train or supervise others?
    - \* Suggest Improvements to processes?
    - \* Manage major programs or projects?
    - \* Maintain records or documentation?
    - \* Work independently or self-supervise?