

Getting a letter of reference after a layoff

Feel like your career is on life support? You are not alone. There is a cure.

I was laid off. The company does not provide letters of reference other than the basics such as length of service and position description. I did very well in my role receiving bonuses and several commendations from my superiors. Not one thing was mentioned in the letter. I don't understand why this information couldn't be used in a letter of reference as it was backed by facts. HR advised managers if they want to make additional comments they could not use the company's letterhead.

As a recourse, I had gone through the Privacy Officer to get a copy of my personnel file. When I received the copies there was not one commendation in the file either. I went into the office to contest this with HR explaining to be awarded certain future opportunities it would help to have proper background achievements to prove my work history.

In November HR said they would send me another copy of my file at their earliest convenience. That was 5 1/2 months ago and I am still waiting. What more can I do to speed this process up?

Many corporations do not provide any form of performance based results in written form because they are afraid of being sued. Company A gives you a great letter of reference, and company B hires you because of it. You perform badly and something goes wrong, then company B sues company A for vouching for you. This has happened to companies in the past.

Verbal references are more acceptable on the part of the company because they are not in writing.

Strong Recommendation: Do three things. Document your achievements on your resume, list your former manager as a reference, and send the following letter immediately to HR:

“Thank you for your time on this matter. I accept that it is your policy to not provide letters of reference on my performance. I do wish to move on with my career and working for your firm has been an important and valuable part of my life. I will be including my achievements in my resume and look forward to offering my former manager as a verbal reference as a testament to my good work.”

If you continue to fight, you will win because you are entitled to your files. You will win the battle but loose the war. You will piss them off and that is bad for you.

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