

Reliable Referrals

Awaken from my slumping stooper, I answered the telephone. I found one of those cute perky voices on the other end asking me questions about a nurse I used to work with. Little did I know, she had written my name down on her application as a reference. This nurse is a friend of mine. I think her nursing skills are as good as any other nurse, but she's an emotional girl who calls in sick at the last minute. I have to admit.....I tried to be vague on the phone so as not to give her away. I don't want to be the reason, she can't work. Meanwhile, I try to give her constructive advice on not burning her bridges.

After the phone call, I began to ponder the question: how reliable are referrals? Travel companies ask for referrals all the time. It seems to me that almost anyone can find 3 friends to give them a good referral. Company referrals that don't have a personal connection with you are probably more reliable. Yet, even companies tend to have a fear nowadays about the liability of saying something incriminating about you. Companies are pretty much limited to saying whether or not you are eligible for rehire and that's about it. If they say more than that, they risk legal consequences.

Nevertheless, travel companies will continue to ask you for referrals. Why? The hospitals ask them for the referrals. The hospitals don't know you at all. Initially, they haven't even heard your voice on the phone. Referrals are the only somewhat personal information they have to get to know you and how you work with other people. Therefore, when you travel, don't burn your bridges. Network and make connections. Collect referrals in writing as you go. Some companies will accept copies of referrals while others will require the referral form be sent directly to a company for evaluation. Regardless, any personal written referrals by colleagues along the way can be very helpful in obtaining an assignment, especially when you are competing for the same position by another competent traveler.