

[Career Strategies](#) Jan 27 2011

The Secrets to Getting Good References

By Kelly Eggers



JOB SEARCH TOOLS

- [Search marketing and sales jobs](#)
- [Sales and marketing career news and advice](#)

Companies are hiring. Demand is growing. Find out where.

Get the latest Sales & Marketing career news every day in the FINS Morning Coffee newsletter.

[Sign up for free »](#)

One of your first moves when considering a job change should be to review your professional network for people who can serve as references. Prospective employers are likely to ask you for three or four people who can endorse you as a professional.

How you ask is, of course, just as important as who you ask. There are a number of courtesies to keep in mind when you're choosing your references.

Related: [Choose Your References Wisely](#)

Tell Them You Are Listing Them as a Reference

The worst thing you can do is list someone as a reference without getting their permission first. The damage done here is potentially two-fold: It could scar the relationship you have with that individual; and if they were to mention the fact that they were unprepared while speaking with the hiring manager, it signals a lack of common courtesy. Make sure to give at least a week's notice.

Give Them Something to Go on

Asking someone to simply attest for you as a worker isn't enough -- you're better off calling them to discuss the job description and the projects you'd like them to mention.

"Being specific alleviates some of the stress of giving a recommendation," says Krista Canfield, a senior

public relations Manager at LinkedIn. "Directing people will help you get the most useful recommendations you're looking for."

Don't Take It Personally If They Say No

"A good number of companies have a policy regarding references," says Roy Cohen, a Wall Street career coach and author of *The Wall Street Professional's Survival Guide*. "For example, [Goldman Sachs](#)' policy is absolute; employees are not allowed to provide references."

There are many reasons someone might decline -- they don't know you well enough, they're busy, or they might not have anything good to say about you -- but regardless of the reason, it's better to choose someone who is ready and available to say positive things about you.

Say Thank You

"With chocolate or a bottle of wine and a thank-you note," says Rusty Rueff, a career and workplace expert with Glassdoor.com, a Sausalito, Calif.-based workplace culture website. "They are taking time, energy, and putting their reputation on the line for you," so make sure they know they are appreciated.

Write to [Kelly Eggers](#)

Related: [Choose Your References Wisely](#)

More Articles

- [The Secrets to Getting Good References](#)
- **Career Strategies** 6 hours ago
- [Choose Your References Wisely](#)
- **Career Strategies** 8 hours ago
- [Five Tips on How to Break Into Sales at Convergys](#)
- **Career Strategies**
- [Ten Interview Mistakes -- And How to Avoid Them](#)
- **Career Strategies**
- [How to Write a Resume That Could Make You Rich at a Startup](#)
- **Career Strategies**
- [Formatting Your Resume: Six Changes You Should Make](#)
- **Career Strategies**
- [Five Questions Recruiters Ask](#)
- **Career Strategies**
- [Seven Blogs for Sales Pros](#)