The Secrets to Getting Good References

By Kelly Eggers

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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*

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