

Carrot Peelers, Sales, Personality and Your Job Search

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

A couple of years ago, I saw a bunch of articles in *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, and other publications about a guy named Joe Andes. Here is a portion of one profile of him from the May 2006 *Vanity Fair*:

In the early 90s a man named Joe Andes began showing up in the bar at the Pierre, Manhattan's famously posh hotel on the corner of Fifth Avenue and East 61st Street. Joe liked the crowd at the Café Pierre, but the real draw for him was Kathleen Landis, the dimpled, piano-playing house chanteuse who still entertains there five nights a week. Joe was a five-nights-a-week man as well, always seated at the same round table with a front view of the baby grand and a back view of Landis. He drank only champagne, and never alone. His usual brand was Veuve Clicquot. On most nights he casually ordered a bottle, which always appeared with two champagne glasses—one for himself, the other for Landis.

Even by the standards of café society, Joe cut a noticeably *soigné* figure in his classic, British-made Chester Barrie suits and bold shirts and ties from Turnbull & Asser. The clothes went well with his English accent and late-period Sean Connery salt-and-pepper beard. He looked so distinguished and was so free with the bubbly that the Café Pierre crowd, Landis included, at first had him pegged as one of the "owners"—the tycoons who actually live at the Pierre in stupendously high-end co-op apartments.

The Café Pierre was way off about Joe, or so it decided after some probing. If no one was brave enough to ask him where he lived, quite a few people asked him what he did for a living.

Holding his glass of champagne by the stem, Joe would say simply, "I sell potato peelers."

The probers had a good chuckle over that. "Right," they all said. "Now pull the other one."

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Joe pushes his gear through the streets on a hand truck, which he in his English way calls a trolley. He and the trolley are often stopped by strangers ready with a heartfelt line: "Sir, you're the greatest salesman in New York!"

The reason so many magazines and publications were paying so much attention to Joe was because he is someone who was able to make a great living selling carrot peelers on the street. When Joe died a few years later, publications all around the world ran obituaries about him. The idea that someone could live in a giant apartment on Park Avenue, dine in the finest restaurants, and do all of this while selling carrot peelers on the street seemed to be something that was unusual to many people.

There is nothing unusual about Joe at all. In fact, I am about to tell you what Joe knew that 99% of all job seekers and people out there don't. It is easy to be like Joe if you know what you're doing.

I want to tell you one of the most powerful and fun [job search](#) and employment strategies you will even learn. In fact, this is an extremely simple lesson and it's something almost no one ever learns. I have no idea why people don't do this because it can make a gigantic difference in their career and job search. If you understand this secret, you can dine in the finest restaurants and live the life you always wanted. You can [get the jobs](#) you want, and you can live and work wherever you want. The most successful people out there in just about every single profession understand this secret, and you are about to as well.

The secret is salesmanship.

That's right. Nothing more than [salesmanship](#).

People who know how to do this never fail. You can drop them in the middle of the most expensive city in the world, and they will succeed. You can put them anywhere, and they will succeed. People who understand salesmanship always do well. Every single time. You need to understand this as well.

It's very simple and basic: your number one weapon in [looking for a job](#) is salesmanship. This is the number one and most overlooked thing that people miss when looking for a job. You need to find out what your potential employer needs and desires ... you need to establish trust and credibility, and you need to stand out when the employer sees your application and sees you in a way that makes the employer want to act and hire you.

The best marketers and salespeople in the world understand this, and it can be learned. Learning to sell is incredibly important to your job search and life.

It's really easy to create a résumé, go into an interview, and get the employer to think to themselves, "Hey, this seems like a nice person, they'd be a good employee." But this doesn't mean the employer will hire you and offer you a job.

What you want the employer to say after seeing your résumé and interviewing you is -- "Wow! This person sounds fantastic. When can you start!?"

Most hiring decisions are made in an emotional part of the employer's brain. People will explain their purchase in terms that are rational and will give reasons why they think the person is a great hire.

But getting someone to commit to hiring you, spend time with you each day for what could be years, entrust you with the future of their business, pay you a salary rain or shine, provide you and your family health insurance, and give you vacation time each year is a much more complex process. There is no need for you to understand everything that goes on in your potential employer's brain when trying to get the job, but you do need to realize that getting hired and closing any deal requires some salesmanship.

None of this is difficult. It's just that most people don't do it. The potato peeler, Joe, did it. You can do it, too.

I'm about to teach you some essentials of salesmanship that, once you understand them, can change your career and job hunting experience forever. I want to teach you how to close the deal and get hired.

The world is littered with people that failed because they didn't know how to get people to hire them. These poor people live in poverty or, at least, in a state where employers and others haven't hired them for jobs of which they are capable. They don't achieve everything they are capable of, don't get the jobs they should, and don't have access to the same opportunities others do who understand salesmanship.

If you understand the basics of salesmanship, you can persuade an employer with the desire to hire you more than any other person they interview. Whatever results you are getting in the job market will be multiplied several times over when you understand how to sell.

You could fill a large library with books about how to sell. I'm not going to waste your time teaching you any of those tricks or boring you with long treatises about salesmanship. If there's anything I've learned about salesmanship it's this ...

You Need to Have a Personality. If you have a personality, everything else will come into place.

Someone who goes into an interview and is completely normal and like the next guy will not stand out. The same thing goes for someone who makes their cover letter like the next guy. People that have personalities end up getting hired and getting lots of jobs. You need to stand out. There's a way to stand out and sell yourself, and it's simply to have personality.

I spent almost a decade being a [legal recruiter](#). I cannot tell you how many "suits" I have interviewed throughout my career. These boring lawyers show up and they all look the same. They talk the same and act the same. Boring! The first interesting attorney I interviewed I actually ended up marrying ... she was so different I was like, "we need to go get something to eat and hang out!" I'm not kidding. A couple of years later we were married. When I meet an attorney who has just a modicum of personality, I'm so psyched because I know I can get them hired in a jiffy. If you have personality, and it comes through, then you're going to go to the moon. You are going to get more jobs. You are going to be someone who gets more promotions.

I had the strangest experience several years ago. I was hired by a particular [law firm](#), an extremely prestigious law firm, to go out and find them a certain type of attorney. They paid me like \$45,000 up front as a retainer to find them the attorney. After I received the retainer, I went in and met with the law firm and the managing partner of the entire firm. He was a very powerful guy and one of the most powerful attorneys in the United States. He was also very young and in his 40s which, for a job like that, is quite unusual. He was also very tan, so tan that his teeth appeared to glow. The managing partner was a very animated guy and seemed a little too happy to be an attorney. I had a very interesting meeting with this guy and, after the meeting, I had a long discussion about him with another partner in the law firm.

"What is he interested in?" I asked the partner.

"Tanning," the partner said.

"Excuse me?"

"He is interested in tanning. He loves tanning beds. He has a tanning bed in his home. He goes tanning at lunch sometimes. This is what the guy is about. Tanning! He is passionate about it!"

We were speaking in a wood panelled room inside the law firm that was so quiet the only noise you could hear was the faint sound of the ventilation system. We were surrounded by all sorts of expensive looking art, and the law firm atmosphere was as serious as they come. However, what I was hearing seemed so at odds with all of this. Their leader who was ostensibly supposed to be reflecting these values was interested in tanning! In fact, the guy had an obsession with tanning.

When I started calling people around Los Angeles about working in the law firm they said stuff like, "Hey, I know that firm. Isn't that the one where the managing partner loves to tan? Ha, ha! Sure, I'll talk with them. That place sounds hilarious!"

It was the strangest thing I ever encountered. A powerful lawyer who was well-known throughout the legal community due to a love of tanning beds. But you know what? This guy stuck out and people knew who he was. He was one of the youngest managing partners of a major law firm in the entire city. People loved him. They thought he was funny because he liked to tan. He gave his firm a personality. People remembered him.

When you think of tanning, you think of a guy concerned about his looks, but who also loves relaxing and enjoys life. The image is completely at odds with what most people think about when they think of an attorney who captains one of the most important law firms in the world. But it's an image that sells. It makes the guy stick out, as strange as it seems!

Here's what most people do when applying for jobs and going out on interviews: they act like they think they should. They are not themselves and instead act like some cardboard cutout who is like everyone else. When you decide to be someone interesting and be yourself, unique stuff starts happening in your career. If you put some personality into your résumé and interviews, you will be far, far ahead of everyone else you compete with for a job.

Personality and being unique works. It will increase the number of interviews and job offers you get by a huge factor. Employers are inundated with boring résumés and interviews all day long. Put yourself in the shoes of the person who's interested in hiring you. Would you want to interview someone who's not interesting? Would you want to hire someone with no personality? If you had to spend an hour of your time interviewing someone, I bet you would prefer to spend that hour interviewing someone extremely interesting compared to someone who's boring.

You need to have the résumé that is read. You need to have the cover letter that people pick up and read. People don't want to deal with those who are all stiff and make them uncomfortable. People are human and want to deal with other humans and this is exactly what happens when people start considering hiring you. When a potential employer understands you are someone who's also human and has passions, fears, and is able to communicate that as well, you will do well.

I used to sell asphalt services door-to-door and I did this for over a decade. I loved doing this and was very good at it. I didn't start getting exceptional at it and making the big money, however, until I learned how to sell and brought some personality to my work.

When I didn't know what I was doing, I showed up at someone's front door and said:

"Hi. My name is Harrison Barnes. I would like to know if you are interested in having your asphalt repaired and sealed."

"No thank you!"

"No thank you!"

"No thank you!"

"No thank you!"

That's all I heard again and again and again. However, when I changed my approach, I did much better. I showed up and said something like the following:

"Hi. My name is Harrison Barnes. You may not recognize me because I'm usually covered with tar, but I'm sure you've seen me around your neighborhood doing driveways. I'm not in a very good mood today because I just got in a bad argument with my girlfriend but, like all of us, I have to work. So, here I am."

This would open up a conversation. My girlfriend would be discussed. People would ask me how I got the tar off my body at the end of the day. We'd discuss the neighbors' homes I'd worked on and the neighbors themselves. Gossip was shared, and I'd get the job. Always.

I went from making maybe \$1,000 a week to making **\$5,000 to \$10,000 a day** just by injecting personality into what I did and how I sold my product. I did this when I was 20 years old.

Having a personality and selling yourself is easy. Anyone can do it.

When I was 27 years old, I was living and working in Northern Michigan and decided I wanted to move to Los Angeles. I got multiple jobs in Los Angeles within a few weeks. There was a horrible job market at the time. I hadn't even taken the California Bar Exam. I wrote all of the best law firms in Los Angeles a letter. Here is what it said:

Dear [I added the name of the hiring partner here],

I would like to work for you.

Sincerely,

A. Harrison Barnes

P.S. I am committed to practicing law at the highest level.

Huh? Yeah, that was it. It worked like hotcakes. I'd written one page letters, two page letters, and more, but none of them ever even came close to this one. My phone rang like mad. I got numerous jobs. I went into interviews and everyone mentioned my cover letter. They thought it was very funny. No BS or anything. Just personality. Let me be clear with you: moving from Northern Michigan to Los Angeles to get a job is no easy feat. Law firms in Los Angeles have almost no reason to hire you because they have their pick of locals. But I was able to stick out and get a job here. What was the reward?

- I tripled my salary
- I got to go to the beach each weekend
- I got out of a cold climate
- The firm I chose to accept a job from paid my moving expenses
- The firm I chose to accept a job from paid me for four weeks while I studied for the Bar Exam
- I was given a \$10,000 starting bonus

I can assure you with almost 100% confidence that none of this would have happened unless I'd injected some personality into how I looked for a job. My silly little cover letter made me stand out and it was something employers remembered.

Personality works and it can work wonders for you too. There is no greater skill than selling, and it all starts with your personality and making sure this personality comes through in everything you are doing. Your life and career will begin to change when you inject some personality into your job search. Nothing sells like personality.

A few days ago a guy sent me his résumé to review so I could help him get a job. In case you're wondering, I get emails like this several times an hour and I just cannot respond to them. I guess my email address is out there in cyberspace somewhere. However, there is one email I received a couple of days ago that I can't stop thinking about, and I really want to respond because I'm so impressed with how this guy approached me. In the subject line of his email he wrote:

"THE GREAT JOHN SMITH!"

I made up the name, but this is what he wrote. I thought it was hilarious and brilliant. I cannot personally spend the time with this guy that it will require to get him a job, but I can tell you that if I had a job opening, I'd bring him in right away. He is memorable. If I met him and he was memorable as well, I'd also bring him in. Personality and people who have personalities sell because they get our attention.

You need to have a personality in your application materials and this needs to come through when looking for a job. People with personalities end up winning every single time. I want you to stand out and get jobs. People want to hire those with personalities. People like others with personalities. A personality is something that sells and can get you a job every time.

THE LESSON

Salesmanship is one of the most important skills you can have in your job hunt. You can use personality as a means of standing out and selling yourself, making sure that it comes through in everything you do. By injecting personality into your job search, you will soon notice changes in your life and career. People with personality succeed in sales because they draw attention. Employers want to hire people with personalities, and a good personality can be your best job hunting tool.

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