

The Use of Testimonials and Endorsements in Your Job Search

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

When I was in my final year of [high school](#), one day the English teacher handed me back a paper I'd written and it had a B+ on it. While there were a lot of classes that I would have been incredibly happy if I received this grade in, English was not one of them. In fact, with the exception of a horrible play I'd written for one English class, I hadn't received a grade of less than an A- in any English class for years. I decided I needed to meet with the [English teacher](#) and go over this. After all, I figured something must be seriously wrong.

The teacher asked me to meet him for lunch, so a few days later, I was sitting there with the teacher having lunch. We spoke for some time before the grade came up and when it did I said, "Listen, I haven't received a grade this bad on any paper I've ever written in any English class. There has to be some mistake."

I then proceeded to list all of the other teachers I'd taken classes from, including this teacher's boss who was the head of the English department of the school, and rarely if ever, gave "A's" in any of his classes.

Incredibly, the teacher looked at me for a few seconds, grabbed the paper and crossed out the "B+" grade and changed the grade to an "A."

"I know that grade was 'out of line' I guess," the teacher said. "I just wanted to motivate you to try harder. Of course you are also going to get an "A" in the class. Just keep up the good work."

I will literally never forget this episode because it was something I used in college as well. I would take a class with the head of a department and work my tail off. Then I would take classes with the people who worked for the head of the department. If I got a grade less than an "A," I would meet with them and tell them about how their boss had given me a perfect grade and how well I had done in this class or that class. In addition, the more classes I took, the more ammunition I had. In every single instance where I did this, I ended up getting my grades raised from "B's" to "A's." I didn't know anything about psychology at the time. All I knew was that this worked. The principle was very simple: other people's opinions about my academic work mattered more than the opinion of the people who were my teachers at the time. This sounds incredible and hard to believe, but this is something I quickly learned. Teachers seemed to believe that the opinion of others were more important than their own.

I can still remember some of the teachers' faces to this day. When I would bring up the judgment another teacher had about my work who was considered better known, more influential, or more powerful than my own teacher, they would suddenly look uncomfortable. They would make loose statements justifying why they had given me a grade lower than an "A." It was an incredible thing to witness, and it's something I did several times.

Why was this occurring? Well, a paper is a subjective thing. The differences among them relate to things like the logic used in reaching conclusions, writing style, the ability to understand details of what is being written, and more. However, when it comes right down to it, the grading of a paper is pretty subjective. There are many obvious differences in the quality of given papers but, for the most part, the grading of papers is subjective. Therefore, the person grading the papers is often in a position where they are questioning reality and are unsure they are evaluating reality correctly. When this person is provided "cues" that outside authority thinks something is exceptionally good they will then follow these cues. The idea is that reality is something that's quite subjective and providing testimonials or outside authority for people to understand reality is something that can be of tremendous benefit to helping you convince someone of your way of thinking.

In fact, all of us are somewhat confused about the actual state of reality and how to judge various things. We are always looking for the opinions of others, in most cases, to help us make up our minds. We use what other people think and believe to form the basis of our own opinions. We do this because it helps us make sense of the incredible amount of information out there.

I would like to reveal to you one of the most incredible tools for success you have available to you. I have personally witnessed numerous businesses and careers transformed by this tool. This tool can work for you no matter who you are and no matter what you want to do. If you employ this tool, you will have many more interviews than your competitors. You will get more job offers than your competitors. You will also look upon your job and the work you do as an opportunity to constantly build on your expertise and self-ability. You will alienate fewer people along the way, and you will be more confident in everything you do in your career. The tool I'm talking about is PROOF.

About every 1 in 1,500 to 2,000 résumés I review has letters of recommendation attached to them. Some of these résumés also have one or two pages of references attached. Others have quotes from various people who have worked with this particular individual. These résumés always stand out to me. They are incredible because they give life to the résumé and much, much more depth than they would have without these "letters of recommendation" and other testimonials. Any evaluation I have of a particular individual is given even further credence by the recommendations of other people. In fact, one of the most helpful things is when there are recommendations by famous people. For example, if someone attaches a recommendation from a Congressman or a Senator, I am generally very impressed. The idea that a senator is writing a recommendation for me to review makes me feel important. We give a tremendous amount of weight to the opinions of others and even more to the opinions of well-known, important, and famous people.

If you do nothing else as the result of reading this article, get people who can be solid and important references for you in your [job search](#). Get testimonials on your résumé or attach a page with testimonials describing what a good worker you are, what good work you do, and so forth. If you do this and nothing more, your job search will become ten times more effective than before. By this I mean that for every résumé you send out, you will be ten times more likely to get an interview than if you didn't send the résumé. It is that simple. Testimonials and positive references are something that can bring you

incredible results.

I know what you are thinking: what if you got fired from your last job? What if you don't have any testimonials and solid references? What if you didn't get along with all of your coworkers? Then remember you will have to fix this in your next job. You want to build up a long line of references and positive testimonials. Your entire career can be built upon a steady stream of outstanding testimonials. The more testimonials you have, the stronger your applications will be. You want the ability to stand out and get the same jobs others aren't getting, and there is no more powerful way than with testimonials.

There is something in our genetic makeup that makes us extremely influenced by testimonials. I've loved watching how various people use testimonials for the longest time because of an experience I had when I was younger. My father and I used to take trips to New York from Detroit about once a year because he would need to go there for business and would bring me along. I was around ten years old. While I loved going to New York, the trips were exhausting because we would spend hours walking around. My father loved walking the streets and seeing all the sights and sounds. I will never forget one day when we passed a man who'd set up a small table on the sidewalk. He was playing a game where he would shuffle a ball between three different cups then have people guess which cup it was under when he was done. There were two or three people gathered around him who looked as if they kept winning money.

"This is fantastic! I've already won \$150!" one man said to my father.

"And I've won \$200!" a woman exclaimed to my father.

We sat there watching this sidewalk spectacle for a few minutes before someone said to my father:

"You ought to try it too!"

"Yes, start out with \$40!" the man shuffling the ball around said.

It made no sense, of course. The man shuffling the ball appeared to be just standing there losing money hand over fist. My father reached for his wallet and put his hand on some \$20 bills and was prepared to put them down. Instinctively, however, I knew it didn't seem right. Sometimes young people can see things that older people cannot because they haven't been so jaded by the world. I grabbed my father by the arm and pulled him away from the game. The man in charge of the game started coming after us.

"You have to try this!" he exclaimed.

For someone apparently losing so much money, he certainly was eager for new players.

I am in Las Vegas today and went to see Chris Angel last night. Chris Angel does all sorts of magic tricks. Over the past several years, I've been purchasing various books to learn about the sort of tricks he does and have learned several of them. The same books I read studying many of his tricks have also taught me about the simple science behind what was going on with the man with the ball under the cup on the street corner in New York. The man was using an ingenious tool of "social proof" and testimonials from others out there to convince my father it really was possible to win. He was giving fake testimonials, in effect. I've seen this sort of act occur on street corners in New York more times than I can count in the several decades since I first saw this. The reason people keep doing this scam over and over again is because it works. We are influenced by testimonials.

When you see an infomercial on television, they are using testimonials to influence you. Every advertisement you see on television, with limited exceptions, uses testimonials. The advertisements that run in magazines and are successful are almost always using testimonials to make their point. All of these people use testimonials because they work. The testimonials work because we are influenced by what others believe about something. You've been influenced by testimonials and are probably being influenced by them on a daily basis. I'm not just talking about testimonials found in advertisements. I'm talking about a friend of yours who tells you they used something and it works exceptionally well. I'm talking about someone you know who appears to enjoy using a certain product or service, which you also decide to use. We are incredibly influenced by testimonials and, like it or not, we cannot help it. Most of us give other's opinions about things almost as much weight as our own--if not more.

If you don't make use of testimonials, references and so forth in your job search, you're straining to get work and convey your specific virtues in a way that makes no sense. You can have people do the heavy lifting for you by talking up your various virtues. This isn't a job you need to do yourself. Let other people talk about how great you are. Others can easily make your case, and this is a heck of a lot more effective than if you try and do this yourself. Allow others to make your case.

Another powerful thing you can put into your application materials is information about your performance ratings. For example, "I was the top-rated executive in my division 7 out of 8 quarters." There are numerous techniques you can use in this regard, but talking about what others have said about you that's positive is enormously helpful. Including comments by supervisors in quotes such as "What Others Have Said About Me" then listing numerous positive statements that coworkers and supervisors may have made to you formally, or informally, can be incredibly powerful in making your case to a potential employer.

From the time I was 18 until I was 27 years old, I always did asphalt work during the summer. A good part of this work involved selling my asphalt service door-to-door in residential neighborhoods. I thought this was the easiest job possible. All I ever needed to do was show up at a door and tell people I'd like to do their driveway, and that I'd done work for numerous neighbors of theirs over the years and continued to do so. While it was more involved than this, using "inferred testimonials" of others was something that worked like magic for me.

I can't tell you how many job seekers, salespeople, and others I've instructed about the power of testimonials. However, this is still something hardly anyone uses in their job search. I can't understand why, but it is what it is. For someone in the sales industry, for example, using testimonials like this might double or triple their income. For someone [looking for a job](#), they might get three or four times as many offers--or even more. The power of these testimonials, references, implied endorsements, and so forth is like gold. You should use them every single chance you get.

THE LESSON

Proof is itself a tool in your job search and if you employ it effectively, you will stand ahead of your competition. Reality is subjective, so providing proof in the form of testimonials can do a lot to sway someone to your way of thinking. Testimonials, references, and endorsements are worth their measure in gold, and you should employ them whenever possible.

