

PART 3

Doing your job well



**"Whatever the job you are asked to do at whatever level,
do a GOOD job because your reputation is your resume"-**

Madeleine Albright

Training and Learning on the job

Most employers want you to do your job well. If they are honest, for a new starter, they want you to do your job well with the least amount of training.

Training you is a cost to the employer. When you are in training you are probably not adding value to the company, and if you are training in a team environment, you are probably slowing down the team while you complete your training, but that's OK.

The boss will be OK with the cost of your training provided that you are enthusiastic, dependable, honest, positive, hard working, team player: all the things we discussed before.

Training is different to self-improvement. Training (in a work sense) is about getting you up to speed on the specific skills to do the company tasks you have to do as part of your job.

It's not about adding value to you as an individual, or making you more valuable to another employer, except where you are gaining work experience.

Because training is a cost, businesses are generally not resourced to be training organisations. A lot of businesses outsource some training to other companies. This is especially true of statutory training, where there is a legal obligation to train a person to a "competent" level. Mostly you will experience this outsourcing with Health and Safety. So you may find your first work training is with a Registered Training Organisation "(RTO)", who has prepared a training course that results in you receiving a certificate of competency.

If a business is large enough to have a training officer, the position is usually administrative, involved in the placement of new starters, keeping track and records of existing employees etc, mapping of competencies etc., making sure the employer meets his legal responsibilities etc.

A small business owner is unlikely to have training skills employees available to train the new co-worker.

In very rare cases is training about "making you excellent at work"; more likely, it's about making you competent at work.

In some cases a training department or RTO will be aligning the trained skills with the business needs. But it would be unusual to find a training department that aligned the critical tasks of the business with attitude or cultural development training.

So you will find that even when a formal training course is complete, there will probably be a deal of learning before you can effectively contribute to the company.

Induction and early training

Your first experience of work training is likely to be an induction process. Sometimes this is contracted out to another company who may not be related to the company that you are going to work for. Quite small businesses will try to do this while you are doing your job.

A most important part about all inductions is Health and Safety; that is why there is legislation that says the employer must provide a safe place of work. So employers (to demonstrate that they are providing a safe place of work) will usually have all employees go through a Health and Safety induction where they are shown the ropes. The rules and regulations of the company. After the induction, there will be a test. You must pass this test to show that you have understood the rules and regulations and to proceed to the next stage of work.

Coming out of training

On completion of your training you should be ready to add value to the business. Businesses (and jobs) live and die by numbers - not because they are nice places to work.

Jobs exist not to keep people busy but to add value to the owners of the business. Not to add value to the workers, notice, but to add value to the owners.

For some businesses and jobs it's relatively easy to see where value is achieved. For example in a coffee shop, if you are not selling coffee the business numbers are going to tell you to improve or shut up shop. If you are in a larger company, your job may not involve dealing directly with the customer. Most large companies have more people in support roles than they do dealing with customers. Your local pizza shop may have 5 guys working the oven, but only one at the counter taking the orders and the cash. All have important roles to play in adding value to the business.

Every job in a company is about adding value to what they do. At the "top" of the pyramid are the leaders who set the direction for the company, what they make, how they make it etc. These roles will require people who are skilled in making strategic, operational and financial decisions. These people generally take a long-term view of several months or many years.

As you move down the pyramid, there are many more workers carrying out the tasks that support the business activity. These people see a different horizon, planning maybe only a few days or weeks ahead.

All of these workers have tasks to do. As you move down the pyramid, so the tasks become more predictable and repetitive. However, don't confuse predictable and repetitive with not adding value.

Let's discuss one of these jobs, a waiter.

On first glance it's a pretty repetitive job. In fact it's probably the most important job in the business. Why?

The waiter has the opportunity to add or destroy value. These are the ways in which a waiter can DESTROY value:

- Ignoring customers
- Being rude to customers
- Having poor presentation
- Getting orders wrong
- Making billing errors
- Lacking clear communication skills

Just to reinforce how critical this job can be, it is said that if 1 person receives bad service he will tell approximately 20 people. How can a waiter ADD value to a business? In addition to doing the reverse of the above a waiter can generate growth by:

- Responding to everyone entering the store within an agreed time
- Being cheerful
- Establishing relationships with customers to gain repeat business
- Suggesting specials to customers
- Recognising repeat customers by a pleasant personal greeting
- Delivering small but meaningful "extras" (biscuit on side, water, etc.)
- Prompt but unobtrusive service, keeping watch on tables
- Asking for feedback on meals
- Making sure drinks are full
- Providing feedback to back office (owner, chef) on customer requests that currently are not met on menu

So you can see why good waiters are in such demand. Sure, it is a difficult job dealing with the public, but it is an important job. Likewise a receptionist or any job dealing directly with customers can ADD or DESTROY value by doing critical tasks well or badly.

As a new start employee try to understand what your critical tasks are. Ask your co-workers or boss. Find out ways to add value and become an important member of the work team.

Everybody Serves a Customer

In the 1980s there was a Quality Assurance program that advised that everyone you meet at work is to be regarded as a customer.

The idea was to improve service between employees by recognising that everyone at work is part of a value adding chain. And although it's not so popular a model nowadays, it is still very true.

Most everyone you meet at work is part of a team adding value to the company.

Customer service

So when at work it's not a bad idea to treat everyone you meet as a customer, and for you to recognise that you are also a customer, so be clear about what you want from those around you.

I'll talk about critical tasks later, and in this area it's essential that everyone is clear about co-commitments from co-workers (i.e. customers).

Some business gurus talk about excellent customer service or being the "customer's hero." You will have met him. He's the person in Bunnings who is talking to customers and who knows where everything is!

Being the customer's hero means:

"Be there when the customer needs you and make the personal interaction with the customer as memorably positive as possible".

Adam Toporek American Management Association. AMACON 2015.

Who is the customer?

The short answer is everyone you meet at work. The only reason you are at work is to engage with these people to make some product or service. To do that everyone needs to give something (usually a service) and get something in return.

Customer expectations

Many books have been written about customer service. Why? Because there are a lot of places where customer service is just awful.

But as a new starter, this is good news. It means that you don't have to be so great to look better than the next guy!!

In a nutshell, customer service is about meeting the customer's expectations. Simple. So if you know what the customer expects, and give it to him, all will be fine.



- Disinterested workers
- Workers more interested in following the system than meeting customer expectations
- Poorly trained workers
- Poorly trained management
- Boss never feeds back when there is bad service so everyone thinks it's OK
- Boss never feeds back on good service so no one knows what good service is
- Workers accept mediocrity: "Near enough is good enough"
- Workers don't understand what their job is, or where value is added or destroyed
- Uninspiring work environment

1. Being ignored
2. Being abandoned
3. Being hassled
4. Being faced with incompetence
5. Being shuffled between people
6. Being powerless
7. Being disrespected



So my advice is to always treat co-workers and customers with respect. Try to put yourself in their shoes, anticipate (if you can) what they might want, but always listen carefully to what they are saying.

So, if you are OK with JUST meeting the customer's expectations, you can skip this bit. However, if you want to be excellent at work - read on.

If you exceed customer expectations, you are exceptional and will stand out from your co-workers. So what do you have to do to achieve that, remembering that a customer could be a co-worker himself?

So, if you stay within the job guidelines, and deliver more than the customer expects, you will increase your reputation, and more importantly, you will be adding value to yourself as an employee.

Examples of exceeding customer / co-worker expectations could be:

- Anticipating what the boss will require - having it ready before he asks
- Using your initiative to complete a task
- Getting tools ready for a task ahead of time
- Adding a chocolate to a coffee order
- Remembering a customers' name and preferences
- Helping a co-worker with your special skills

Work Time

"My daily routine consists of getting up, being amazing then going back to bed" Anon

Work is a daily grind. It can sap your enthusiasm, so you have to get organised to fight it.

So how are you going to organise yourself on a daily basis so that you are setting yourself up to be excellent at work?

Well, you should have some sort of job description. It will no doubt be slightly different to the role that was described in the job ad that you replied to.

Also you should have picked up a few clarifications to your job. These will be additions to your allocated tasks that may have come up during your orientation. Now is the time for you to set out what your job actually is.

Best thing to do is to write down what must get done as part of your job. Not what you are going to do, but what **MUST** get done and **PRIORITISE**.

The difference is:

"My duties"

Keep the reception area clean and tidy

Provide good customer service

Get out weekly report

"What I am going to do"

- Wipe down the surfaces
- Empty waste bins
- Stack any loose documents
- Fill up the printer with paper
- Follow any outstanding issues from yesterday
- Check with boss on any new priorities
- Type it up
- Check my typing
- Give to boss to check (after I have checked it)
- Print out 20 copies
- Take them round to every boss
- Keep a copy for my file

Daily work day

Time is money, and it's limited. If you are like millions of others, your workdays are going to be repetitive and predictable. Don't think of this as a problem. It's an opportunity for you to get some organisation into the things that must be done for the boss. So set yourself a routine, be dependable and therefore predictable to your co-workers.

Something as simple as your start time for example: demonstrate that you always catch the 7 o'clock bus and are at work 15 mins early every day, likewise at knocking off time, have a routine to close off the day, and prepare for the new one before you leave.

Business runs on repetition and predictability, so get used to it and use it to your advantage.

Time management

Let's start with some generic rules on time management.

Starting time

Be early. You are enthusiastic and optimistic. So you are there early and raring to go. As a junior you don't have to be too early, but certainly in enough time so that you are at your place of work in sufficient time to receive any tasks for the day. Greet your colleagues, never be late.



During the day

As a new starter you will probably find that people have their established routines at your workplace. It will take you a few weeks to notice the routine of your new workplace, but you'll pick it up.

Things like where they go for lunch, where they sit for lunch, who they sit with, what they talk about etc. A new starter can find it difficult to fit in, especially if there is a generational gap, and new starters are generally shy and lacking in self-confidence until they find their feet.

Be patient, your co-workers are in a routine, and it will take a while for them to get used to you.

If it is a large company there may be other new starters that you could buddy with until you find your feet.

Otherwise it may be an idea to bring in a magazine or a book that you are interested in. This can lead to conversations with other workers, so leave yourself open to putting the mags down and chatting.

Also try and get some exercise at lunch breaks so that you are not sitting all day at your bench or desk. You can grow stale if you don't get out. Also drink water at your desk; you will dehydrate in an air-conditioned office.

End of the day routine

Don't be a clock-watcher. For one thing time won't go any quicker, and people will notice you doing it. Clock watching will damage your all-important reputation.

Don't rush out the door at knock off time. Don't be in a great hurry to leave. Unless there is a bus or a train to catch start clearing your work area at finishing time.

Don't leave a messy desk when you finish. Put any work away, preferably out of sight and leave the desk clear for tomorrow. Wait till everyone is starting to leave before clearing your desk.

Bosses like to come around at the end of the day, and you don't want to let the boss see you at the empty desk strumming your fingers waiting for knocking off time.

Allow yourself some time to clear your desk and jot down the things that you want to get done tomorrow.

As you get into this routine of writing down what to do the next day, you will be able to cross off your accomplishments from today.

Don't hang around for too long either, no point in being a suck up. Just be known as someone who meets their employment obligations and is ready for the next day.

Electronic Media

"There are three sides to every online interaction. Yours, mine, and the view of everyone watching us. Act carefully." Mack Collier

The use of electronic media is expanding so rapidly new starters often do not realise its importance to the work situation.

Starting with your application for work, where an HR recruiter may have checked you out on Facebook or other platforms. Be aware that you and your reputation are on display to the world when you are online.

For example, while you may have a hilarious personal email address, this might not go down so well with your professional image and reputation.

Take precautions. Do not put anything on Facebook that you would not want your employer to see. This includes everything!

"Your online reputation is the most valuable currency in today's world" so says Andrea Weckerle, founder of CiviliNation, and author of "Civility in a the Digital Age" so take care.

Don't spend time at work searching the workplace Internet for personal interest items.

Reputation is Power

Your reputation determines whether a bank will lend you money to buy a car or a house, whether you will have a roof over your head as a tenant, whether you can get a job.

Online reputation tools are getting more powerful. Background checks are everywhere.

The sinister thing is that you may not even know that a background check has been done and perhaps come back negative, excluding you from an opportunity.

Large corporations are now using systems that are scoring you on the basis of your online reputation.

Reputation is permanent, cheap and ubiquitous.

Facebook stores every bit of information recorded. It's far easier to add than delete information. Every DAY Facebook stores 50 times the amount of data in the Library of Congress's print collection!

The US Library of Congress is storing every single public tweet, regardless of content.

Some experts believe that Facebook does not actually delete photos from its servers, even if the user hits the "Delete Photo" button.

You should assume that every bit of online data that you have created is stored in at least one location. Every review, every ATM transaction, every email, tweet, blog etc. etc. is being stored somewhere.

Obviously any blemish on your online reputation will live longer than you!

How to keep your personal life personal? Michael Firtsek, an IT guru, advises you to make your personal and Facebook feeds hard to find.

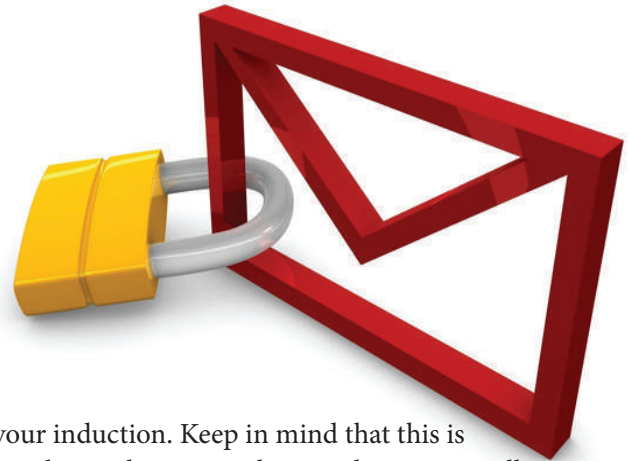
Lock your personal thoughts away from public view and create separate public personas that are not objectionable. Some Facebook users are renaming their personal profile to a variant of their name that friends will recognise but computers will not. MCHL FRTEK for example, and locking this profile to friends only. Others create duplicate accounts, one public, and one private, or creating false trails under their full name.

Likewise don't assume those apps like SNAPCHAT who profess to automatically delete after the recipient sees them. Other apps like Tigertext can be set to automatically and permanently delete texts. Be safe. Treat them all with caution.

On LinkedIn, algorithms that create phrases like "somebody you might know" are putting together your profile – a comprehensive picture of the type of person you are.

Some applications are now requiring Facebook to prove you exist. (Air Bnb assumes that if you don't have Facebook account, you are a scammer.)

Most of Worklife will be about the protection of reputation. If you want to know more about improving your online reputation, then you may want to read "The Reputation Economy" by Michael Firtsek.



Email

You will probably be given an email address as part of your induction. Keep in mind that this is not your personal email, and that the employer has ownership and access to this email account at all times. So it's a very good idea to keep your company email address separate from all personal communication. Don't give out your company email address to friends and don't link your personal email to your company email account.

Companies regularly scan emails. It is not unusual for employees to be dismissed for improper email usage. This can be as simple as improper language or just passing on images from third parties.

If you have to access emails during the workday, then limit it to your breaks, and only on your phone. Resist the temptation to respond to texts and emails while you are at work.

Email protocols

Some companies have style guidelines for all company communications, that inform what an email should look like, what is permissible, what greetings should be used, etc.

Many small companies leave it to the user. Here are some general guidelines for emails sent from company computers:

- You may be required to copy your supervisor on EVERY email you send. Check with your supervisor on whether he wants to see all your emails
- Your name and job title must be on every email you send
- Use only lower case
- No spelling mistakes
- Try to keep to one subject per email
- Do not be abusive in emails, be polite and tactful
- Do not make any promises or commitments in emails that are beyond your authority levels
- Don't broadcast emails any further than they need to be
- Every email must have a title and the content brief and to the point
- The title should help the receiver decide whether to open it or not. For example "read this" is not useful as a title, but "important information from the manager about sales" is a meaningful title

Golden Rules

- Do not hit send until you have read the email and the addresses that at least twice. Then,
- Do not hit send until you checked the email recipients are correct
- Now hit send
- Make email titles as meaningful as possible
- Never, ever, send an email when you are angry. You will regret it. Instead, take a break, or move onto another task until you have calmed down.

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.

These applications have the potential to ruin your reputation and get you fired. The best advice I have seen on the issue of social media is:

"When you post anything on social media, always assume it will be made public. Ask yourself, would I be OK with the Boss seeing this?"

Here are some examples where people didn't take that advice. The Courier Mail reported on 19th December 2015;

"After a long day at work keeping face and kissing butt, it can be a great relief to get home, turn off the proverbial filter and relax."

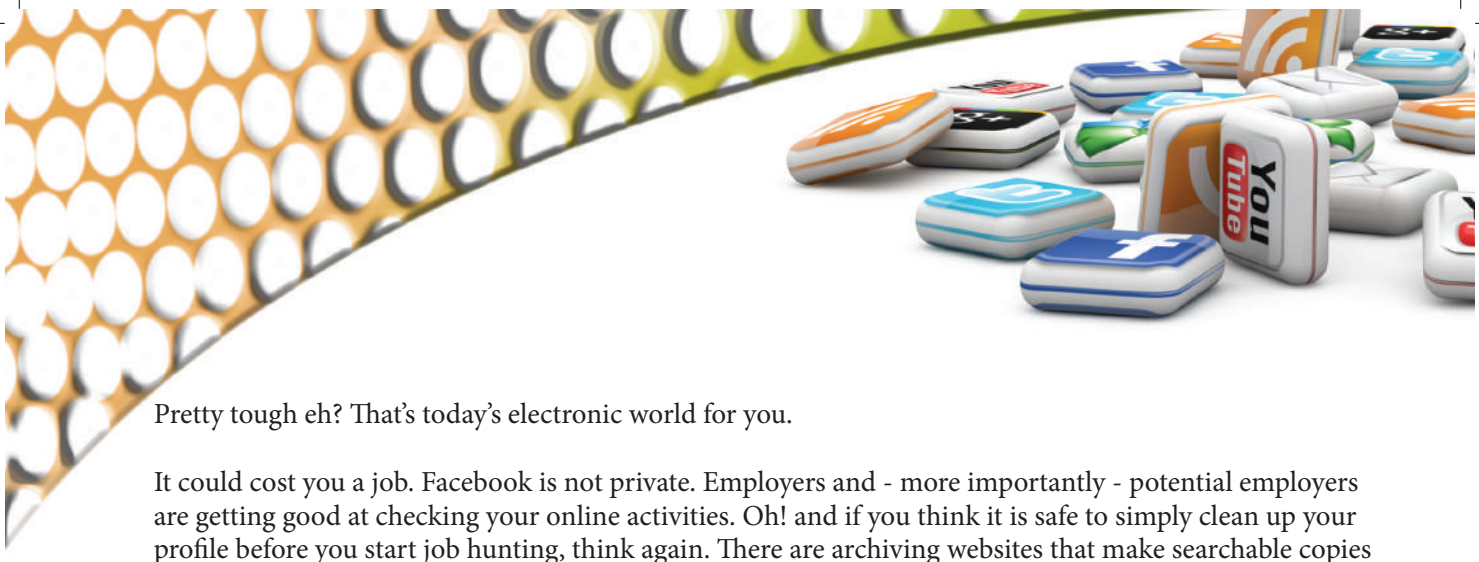
But in the age of social media, public and private time is blurred. A questionable tweet, post or comment while sitting on your couch at night can cost you your job - whether it's about work or not.

That was the experience this year of one man who publicly shared a screen shot of a woman's Tinder profile with a snide remark.

After the post attracted nasty and threatening comments towards the woman, it went viral with the hash tag "sexual violence won't be silenced" and ended with the man being fired.

The content was not related to any workplace, employer or company and was posted outside of work hours. But that didn't matter. The man was sacked for bringing the company's name into disrepute whether it was realised or not."





Pretty tough eh? That's today's electronic world for you.

It could cost you a job. Facebook is not private. Employers and - more importantly - potential employers are getting good at checking your online activities. Oh! and if you think it is safe to simply clean up your profile before you start job hunting, think again. There are archiving websites that make searchable copies of websites and then store the copies forever.

Privacy. "Good Privacy" is not really a term associated with social networking, especially with a giant like Facebook that is considered to be the backbone of social networking.

Be careful about what you post as a status update or on another person's wall. Regularly check your privacy settings to see what information is available. Applications and other users can take advantage of you if you are not cautious enough.

Social media is addictive. There are tons of applications available online, Facebook is one of the most addictive sites on the Internet. People get hooked on applications and games like Farmville, Mafia Wars, etc. Many schools report that the average grade of students has gone down and the main cause is social networking sites. People may end up losing jobs if they are caught socializing during work hours, when they should have been working.

Social media is full of unwanted information. You would like to keep your Facebook use to a minimum but your friends are constantly sending you requests to join them in social games, or sharing information that is really better kept a secret. There are options to hide or block applications or users, but new applications are always popping up to take their place.

Social media has a huge impact on your personal life and career: people add their colleagues, family and friends to their friends' list. If you make a negative comment about anyone, it is extremely easy to find. This can be especially detrimental at your workplace.

Don't think about telling friends you're looking for a new job or complaining about your boss when you have them as a Facebook friend!

Depending on your job, you may also be in trouble if a friend posts pictures of you with a drink in your hand or at a party. If you work with young children or in certain professional roles, this could be grounds for dismissal.

Social media follows you. Facebook Places is the last straw of your privacy. It lets your friends know where you are and what you are doing. What's more, you will be spammed by others' updates too, on their whereabouts. This can be very disturbing.

So if you want to have your coffee in peace, make sure that your Facebook privacy settings are safe from a work perspective.

Social media gets you involved in scams. With so much of your private information available in your Facebook account, it's easy for scam artists and hackers to use this information to target your other accounts - such as email, banking, and PayPal.



Virus attacks are enabled by social media. No matter how secure a website is, hackers always find a way around so they can try to spread worms and viruses via the website. Since news spreads very fast on Facebook, a click on an unknown link is all that is needed to spread the virus to your friends, their friends and so on. It is always good to be careful before clicking links and following them.

Trouble deleting your Facebook account? Until 2007 Facebook never completely deleted a user's information even when they deleted their account. It was more like suspending an account, which meant that anyone could get their account and all the information back anytime if they decided to join Facebook again.

In 2008, Facebook introduced an option to permanently delete the account. Even today, one has to be sure not to just deactivate their account but also check other preferences to make sure that your account is completely deleted. In 2009, Facebook was the most visited site on the Internet. People spend a lot of time interacting with others and checking on what other people are doing, and you can forget to take care of yourself. Prolonged time online can lead to various health issues like headaches, backaches, eye strain and a long list of other maladies.

Protect yourself by using proper privacy settings, and don't use the same Facebook password that you use for other online accounts. There are real gifts, real games, and real people out there. Interact with them in real life and use Facebook as a tool to keep in touch with people, but not the only means of doing so.

Some other examples of social media coming back to bite you:

The Courier Mail again:

*"Hotel manager Michael Nolan lost his job after calling feminist commentator Clementine Ford a 'sl**' on Facebook."*

Ford shared a screenshot of their interaction with her 80,000 Facebook followers and tagged Nolan's employer in the post."

Another case:

"SBS sports reporter Scott McIntyre received a public backlash after denouncing the Anzacs via twitter on Anzac Day."

He was sacked by the broadcaster, which cited a breach of its code of conduct and social media policy. Scott has begun an unfair dismissal claim."

And another case of not being careful.

"An Adelaide councillor put her career at risk after sharing an anti-Islam post on Facebook."

Betty Gill said it was an innocent mistake – she had intended to share a Christmas message but selected the wrong post in her feed."

You have been warned. Social media has a lot of traps to prevent you being "Excellent at work".

Office Communications

Communications

You will meet many different personalities at your new workplace. Some will be friendly, some reserved, some will be extroverts, some introverts.

This creates an issue with communication.

With all these different personalities, you may write and say the same thing to all of them, and surprise - each of them will receive and interpret what you write and say in a different way.

As a new employee you will have to learn, very quickly how to use the business language. New starters must learn how to be tactful and polite in all circumstances.

This can be as universal as introducing yourself. Practice what you are going to say, by watching and listening to how other people in the organisation do it

This will seem very strange at first, but talking in the same style as the rest of the team is an important skill for a new starter to learn.

Company phone behaviour

As a new work starter you are now expected to behave professionally. So while it might be very funny to have a cheeky voicemail message on your mobile, this might not go down so well with your new employer.

So delete that hilarious phone-answering message!

Telephones can get you into a lot of trouble. Even if you are confident about answering the phone at home, and have had a mobile phone for a few years.

Unfortunately home use is not the same as business use. You will probably have picked up behaviours that may not go down so well at work, and may harm your reputation with people before you have even met them.

As a new starter you are now representing the company when you use the phone. So you need to learn phone protocols very quickly. Best advice - observe others and copy their behaviour.

How does the boss answer the phone, how about your co-workers? Who does it best?

It's not unusual for people to have a "phone voice" for work, and an "at home" voice when out of work situations.

Your work phone calls should be work related and kept to the point and not longer than necessary. Remember, someone else may have a need to contact you quickly.

Answering the phone - voice

The way to answer the phone varies from company to company. Some are very formal, some are informal, but usually all are businesslike.

When you answer the phone at work, it's usually best to identify yourself. This can be:

- Name and your phone extension and greeting
- Name and area (e.g. Reception / site office / workshop / accounts / etc.)
- Company name, then your name, then area, then greeting
- Your name can be first name, or first and surname
- You may also add "How can I help you?" as a routine greeting
- You may say greeting first

TIP: There is any number of combinations, so observe what the answering behaviour is and you should practice, practice, practice, until it becomes second nature. (Even if your voice sounds funny at first!)

Answering a phone call - task

You should always answer a call.

However, this does not mean that you have to provide an answer or promise to do something without having all the information at your fingertips.

For example, if you pick up the phone and the boss wants something that you are unsure about, it's far better to say that you are not sure about that but you will get onto it straightaway and come back to the boss as soon as you know the answer. Never get cornered in a phone call into making promises without being sure that you can keep them.

Making promises you don't keep while at work will severely harm your reputation.

A tricky situation can happen when someone is talking to you and your phone rings. Some people find it annoying to have a phone ringing while they are talking to someone else, so if you find yourself in this situation, here's a tip:

- Ask the person who you are talking to if you can answer the phone. Then answer the phone, with your usual greeting and ask if you can call them back. It would be rude to break off the talk with the person speaking to you to continue another phone call, unless it was an emergency.
- Similarly if you answer the phone and someone comes to you who clearly wants to talk, don't keep them waiting while you are on the phone. Ask the person who is on the phone to hold for a few seconds, and ask the person who wants to talk to you if you can call them later.
- Never be pressurised into promising something on the phone that you may not be able to deliver. Better to get the caller off the phone by promising to get back to them once you have had a chance to check whatever it is they are after.

Making a company phone call

A common mistake is to pick up the phone and make the call too soon because you know you need to talk to someone about a particular issue. This is fine for social calls. The other person knows you and has already made an assessment of your reputation. So they are probably happy to chat about other stuff before you get to the point.

At work it is different. Especially for a new starter.

At work people expect a phone call will either give or request information that concerns their work. Co-workers are not expecting a new starter to ring up to chat about the weather.

Be aware that co-workers may be very busy at the other end, so keep company phone discussions short, sharp and to the point.

Short and sharp messages should not mean being rude.

- So don't pick up the phone to call a co-worker as soon as an idea comes into your head.
- Take a few minutes to think about what it is you want the phone call to achieve. If it helps, write down what it is you want to pass on, or what you want to know.

The computer workstation - usage

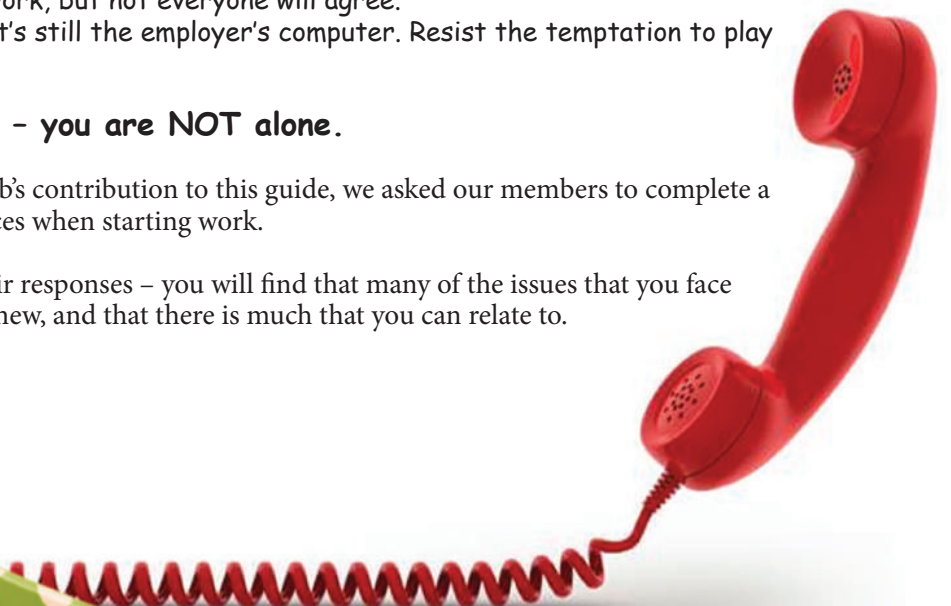
Computers are fairly commonplace nowadays at work. You may have access to one for email or other work purposes. A few things that you need to be aware of:

- It's not your personal computer. Don't personalise it in any way. You may think it's cool to have your girl/boy friend as screensaver, but not everyone will agree.
- Don't upload anything to it that is not work related, and only upload things that you have been instructed to do.
- Do not play computer games, or listen to music on the workstation. You may think it makes you more efficient at work, but not everyone will agree.
- Even at lunchbreaks it's still the employer's computer. Resist the temptation to play games at all time!

The survey results - you are NOT alone.

As part of the Rotary club's contribution to this guide, we asked our members to complete a survey of their experiences when starting work.

Have a look through their responses – you will find that many of the issues that you face in starting work are not new, and that there is much that you can relate to.



Questionnaire

All Rotary clubs have a wide range of experiences. In fact it's in Rotary's constitution that you can't have more than one person with the same work background. So to take advantage of this experience I asked the club members to fill out a confidential questionnaire to get an insight into their work and career experience.

Here are the questions with my comments.

How did you decide what your first job would be?

Comments:

The answers are much the same as you would expect today. Although there are lots more avenues of advice and much more choice of jobs, it's as true today as in the past that there are only a few things that will influence your first work choice. What you are good at (today) and who your parents and friends are will have a large bearing on your choice. So will your financial situation. So the chances of making a choice that will give you a path to being happy at work are slim.

What can you do to improve your chances? Probably nothing you can do at your age about the financial situation. We know from Chapter 1 that the longer you stay at school the more you will earn in your lifetime. But your problems may be more immediate. You need money now, to pay the rent, help the family, whatever. But remember that if you go into a work path that you enjoy, chances are that you will be good at your job, and advance quicker if you can keep that motivation and attitude going.

- My first job came as an opportunity presented by one of the teachers at my high school who had a friend looking for a junior staff member in her family business
- I picked my father's career as I could think of nothing else!
- I was very good at Technical Drawing at high school and, I therefore wanted to begin work in a drawing office
- Father worked for a land company with many wool/cattle properties. Wanted to be a jackaroo/overseer then station manager. Downturn in wool market post synthetics boom caused problems. Loved animals and my father suggested considering Veterinary Science as I was doing reasonably well at school
- After finishing school, my first preference was to work in the Forestry Department. However, my father was a bank manager and I followed him into the bank business
- I studied accounting and it never occurred to me that I would do anything else. I was offered a job with Castrol and was grateful as I had tried to gain work with a public accounting firm but was not successful
- It just happened, probably not planned
- I needed money to pay the rent
- My first job was part time as a paper delivery person as I owned a bicycle
- I applied for a number of post school jobs through interviews and assessments. I ended up taking the one that paid the most at the time - wanted a car.

Did having a good or bad score help your first job?

Comments:

By now you will have got the message that a high score is not the first, or even the second thing employers are looking for. Of course you need to have the qualifications to get through the front door. But once you have these then a better attitude will always beat a better score.

- Having good grades certainly helped me stand out to the teacher who recommended me for my first job. This is something employers look at; however they also look for a well-rounded person, i.e. someone with extra-curricular/after school activities
- No it only helped me get an interview
- No, my ability at technical drawing was an asset, but so was attitude
- I needed a school certificate for the junior position I wanted
- Having a part time job whilst at school prepared me for the post school experience as I had some concept of performing to an expectation
- Definitely required good score
- I needed to reach a required level of senior school to obtain an interview. It was a junior role and I later went back to further study with work's assistance
- No. It made no difference.

Who was your greatest influence in this decision?

Comments:

No surprises here. Your mum and dad's experience with work will be a big influence on you. This was probably OK when jobs lasted for many years. But the workplace is changing: you need to do yourself a favour and get out there, gain work experience and look for mentors you can trust in the field that interests you. There are many stories of kids who had aptitude for things that didn't "fit" with the family history. We read about these in the entertainment magazines, where some famous actor went against their family's wishes and joined a drama school. The same thing is true of other kids who chose (or don't choose) careers that their family promotes.

- Being 13, my decision was inherently influenced by my parents and their ability to drive me to and from work each day
- Dad tried to dissuade me!
- My Dad!
- My father - who did not like me bludging at home and having a wild old time with my mates and girlfriends
 - Probably my mother
 - Once a degree was decided upon the job happened: However the actual job was as a result of knowing someone
 - I was not enjoying school and wanted to try to be independent with money.

What advice would you give a new starter about their first job?

Comments:

Some key lessons here about preparation and attitude.

- Take notes. This will show you are conscientious and you can refer back to these rather than asking the same questions again. It helps to read over these notes after you've finished your shift, to reinforce them in your mind
- Put your phone away while at work. This will mean you won't be tempted to check it when you should be working
- Ask questions so you understand what you are doing and why. This will show you are interested in their business, and make you feel like you are contributing to the business as a whole
- Do not go out late the night before a shift; if you are hung over or overtired, it is really obvious and looks bad to your employer and the customers
- Keep yourself busy - after all, you are being paid to be there. If you have run out of work, take initiative and see if you can do something else (e.g. take the rubbish out or clean something)
- Think carefully; you will be doing the chosen job/career for a long time and you should therefore enjoy it
- Work experience; don't waste the opportunity
- Be respectful to everyone you meet
- Appearance is important. Dress conservatively and appropriately. Watch what others wear
- Be prepared to give 110 percent effort, and extra time
- Be positive - always, even when times are tough
- Always remember to respect the boss, and customers - they pay your wages
- Keep in mind that you will probably have many jobs, but your attitude to them should not change. Commitment will be rewarded
- Approach the job as if it is the most important thing that you have ever done and see it as a stepping-stone to further career opportunities
- Show enthusiasm and be yourself. Show integrity - do what you say you will do
- Take pride in whatever job - no matter how menial
- Show you are prepared to start low and enthusiastically learn.

Did your first job influence the rest of your career? How?

Comments:

Your first job is really important - if it is a happy experience then it will fill you with confidence, and similarly if it is a disaster, it can really set you back. The reasoning is the same. You have experience of only one job, and so you think ALL jobs are like the one you are in at present.



Where the experience is not pleasant it takes a lot of courage to try something else, but as you see below, by being brave, it often turns out for the best.

- During my first job I developed the confidence in dealing with customers and found I enjoyed customer service. This has followed me through my career to a role where I deal with clients constantly
- I was lucky. I enjoyed my job and could see a future. I then had good bosses who became my mentors and later good friends
- Yes. My first job was with Otis Elevator Co. Very early, I determined that I wanted to get to senior management. Over time, I mapped a path through various jobs in the organisation, isolated some role models and used knowledge of their paths to help me
- First job was working for the federal government in abattoirs as I had taken a cadetship with them. My perception was that my work was not valued, just the fact that my signature had a degree after it that satisfied the US department of Agriculture requirements for beef importation. When I suggested ways of disease surveillance in collaboration with State and P.P. Board veterinarians I was told that was not my responsibility and to just sign the paperwork. Departmental dealings seemed to be more concerned with pay, holidays and no real interest in work done. Frustrated I resigned and went into private practice
- My first job was running errands for co-workers. It was boring, but after a while I moved to a different level and found the work interesting and challenging. Also as I worked in my new position I was able to travel, which was really good, as it broadened my experience and made me a better person
- My first job actually turned me off my chosen career, I hated it, but changed employment
- My first job was interrupted by army national service for two years - after that two years, I was keen to go back to my job and it became my career.

Were you ready for the change between work and school?

Comments:

Among your group of school leavers there will be different levels of maturity. Some will be better prepared than others for the transition. There's no shame in asking for help – try and establish a network of family, friends and others who have work experience. The worst thing you can do is not to get help if you are stressed, or not coping.

- I went to university after school and then to a full-time job. From my experiences in my part-time jobs through school and Uni and my studies, I was more than ready to enter the workforce full-time
 - Yes, I worked during the holidays and knew what to expect - and what was expected of me
 - Yes. I also left school/began work at a time when there was at least one job for everyone

- Yes. I had worked as a jackaroo during university holidays and also in veterinary hospitals
- The undergraduate course had plenty of practical activities that had to be carried out during the holidays (dairy, poultry, abattoir etc.). I made the most of these opportunities
- No, I was a bit of a larrikin at school. I loved being the class clown - so I didn't get good results. Once I got the basic qualifications I couldn't wait to start work and make some money
- 5 years at Uni made me ready for work. I did free work experience during these 5 years to try and get an idea of what it was about. Probably best advice for any school leaver: get that experience before it's too late as it may change your thinking on the chosen career
- I didn't take school as seriously as I should and, having experienced part-time work, I was happy to leave school and have a go at paid full-time work

Thinking about kids you may have mentored...what have you seen about the difficulties they have?

Comments:

The club members have had a lot of experience mentoring young people, and although everyone is an individual, there are common attributes that all school leavers have to learn and apply in the early work years.

- Principally a need to develop confidence in themselves plus a need to test themselves through taking managed risks
- Secondary school students that I have mentored truly loved animals and wanted to help. Most did volunteer work at the hospital just to get exposure. Main difficulty was realising that the TV images seen of veterinary practice does not show some of the more gory and heartbreaking scenarios. By getting exposure they were preparing themselves for their future careers with their eyes open
- Take pride in what you do
- When I got to more senior positions I became responsible for others, and I noticed poor appearance, lack of manners and talking appropriately to co-workers and customers was an issue.
- Usually a short conversation with the new starter fixed the problem. This had the added benefit of improving the self-image and confidence of the new starter
- Lack of initiative seems to be an issue with new starters
- Fitting into the work environment by either being too eager and trying to jump ahead of their skills or slacking off to the extent they found it hard to relate to colleagues.

What advice would you give them?

- Be an individual ... try some difficult things. Don't be controlled by peer groups ... other peers will not consider you when an opportunity comes to them. Broaden your comfort zone. Always understand that, whatever level you reach in an organisation, for some activities you will be in command while for other activities someone else will be in command ... learn flexibility
- Get out there and experience the job/profession
- Be respectful of others. These work relationships can give friendship and life-lasting contacts and referrals
- Ask questions and show you are interested and put phones away
- Do your research on the type of job and role you aspire to and then make it your mission to achieve.
- Did you have any particular difficulties or success in transitioning from the classroom to your first place of work?
- I did struggle initially to take on responsibility as part of my first job as this is something we aren't given at school.
- Yes, I scribbled a note to a colleague and did not realise that I left a readable copy on the boss's note pad!!! (Back in the days of carbon paper in order books!)

What benefit did you get from the school career adviser or from work experience as a student?

Comments:

Career advisers are great. But they are also human. They can't be expected to know everything. So it's not a bad idea to get a second opinion. Same is true of family and friends who may advise you to go down a certain path after you leave school. Getting a second opinion is really important if you are the first in your family to be trying a certain career or going for further education.

Remember you are not alone in this, there is always help out there, if you ask around.



- Our career adviser was very helpful my decision on what to study at university. Work experience undertaken through and during school also helped me decide which career path I wanted to take
- School career adviser ... NIL. Work experience ... while at school I did various part time jobs ... cinema lolly boy, newspaper seller, bottle washer in a pharmacy, gas station attendant and shop assistant in a men's wear store. These all gave me an understanding of a positive approach to work activities and a strong work ethic
- I met with the 3 career advisers, each recommended that I seek outdoors work. In the end I joined the bank and stayed with them for 40 years. The influence of my parents in my work life was much stronger than the career advisers
- Very little
- Work experience helped get my first job and made the first day much more familiar as I knew people
- Nothing of value from a school career adviser at that time and we did not do work experience. I benefitted from part time work outside the school environment in the local business world.
- Got more advice from Mum and Dad without realising they were encouraging me.

What's your strongest memory about coping with the professional vs friend relationships?

Comments:

This is a really hard lesson for some school leavers. You have had many years in school and have grown used to a certain kind of culture. That culture doesn't exist outside of school. At school the relationships are generally supportive, and you are allowed to do certain things that are not acceptable at work. Relationships now need to become "professional" and that means a whole bunch of stuff that you might not like or have difficulty adjusting to.

- One memory is being unable to go to a friend's 18th birthday party on a Friday night as I had an early work start on the Saturday morning; however work was the priority
- Discussing a wanted move in the organisation with a friend only to find that he then fiercely chased down this opportunity
- While it was important to get on well with colleagues we rarely socialised apart from professional functions. Being too close potentially influenced practice decisions.

What tips would you give a new starter about work relationships?

Some tips that might help you make the transition to work relationships:

- Respect your boss and take an interest in the business (particularly if it is a small business which your boss has grown from the ground up). Show respect to your co-workers - do not participate or contribute to workplace gossip
- Remember that as you progress, others may not and you may become their boss. And remember that the opposite may be true so don't confuse friendship with being a good colleague
- As far as romance goes, don't foul your own doorstep
- You work with your colleagues collectively as a team. You don't have to socialise with them and at times too close a relationship can cause serious problems both individually and with the "team"
- Don't cross the line with employers
- Keep professional relationships at arms length - rather than becoming friends
- Be respectful, friendly, and keep your private life to yourself.

What did you find most fulfilling about your first job?

Comments:

Here are some things that the club members recall about their first job. You will also be changed by your first work experience and hopefully find something that improves you and sets you up for a better working life. But it's not all roses, as you can see from some of the replies.

- The thing I found most fulfilling was finding my confidence and being able to deliver a good service to the customers, which in turn reflected on the brand of the business
- The ability to take a strength from school into my work life
- Leaving it!
- Being able to complete tasks and get enjoyment out of what was completed
- Not sure there was anything !!
- Realising that some one thought I was worth employing
- Taking home some money and having one of my bosses say "Well done" a few times

How about your career, what was most fulfilling? Did your first job lead to this?

Comment:

Sometimes the path to your chosen career is not straight. You have to be prepared for this, and try out things when you are younger. Making career changes later in life is almost a given nowadays with changes in technology etc., but that will be easier for you to do if you are open to change and have tried out new things when you are younger.

- The things I find most fulfilling about my career are building strong relationships with clients and my co-workers and being able to deliver great service
- Working in a team and getting praise from customers and co-workers for a job well done
- Led to having my own company and doing better than I imagined
- I stayed in the elevator industry for all of my working life. My path took me from drafting at Otis to sales in their WA office, then to a consulting engineering firm to establish their business in Sydney after which I was approached by Lend Lease to set up an export operation for their elevator subsidiary. This took me through technical management and sales management roles to board appointments with responsibility for all business operations in NSW/ACT to national marketing, then on to secondment to KONE Elevators as SVP responsible for Asia-Pacific operations. Most fulfilling were sales in WA ... good market due to iron ore boom and little manpower management ... and Asia role ... taking diverse country operations from US\$60m annual turnover to in excess of US\$250m over 10 years
- Weirdly, one of the most fulfilling days was releasing a wombat (fractured hip), a kookaburra (fractured wing), 2 top knot pigeons (fractures) and a possum that I had treated over a period of time and that had been meticulously cared for by a part - indigenous ranger in a local national park. No cost to anybody, no income for me or the ranger. Very few words were exchanged, just a great feeling. Successful major surgical procedures, getting papers published etc are great but sometimes the quiet things are the best
- Yes my first job led to my current career
- My first job and my army national service plus encouragement to enter tertiary study as a mature age student enabled me to become a senior executive running a global part of a major bank. That was not within my vision when I left school.

What tips would you give a new starter about rewards they should look for in their work?

Comments:

Being happy at work is not an impossible goal. Some people get happiness from earning lots of money, others from doing a job that helps their community, others feel good about their work if the company they work for is respected. So there are lots of ways you can be happy at work. Good luck in finding what works for you.

- One of the rewards to starting work is being able to contribute to the running of a successful business. Another reward is your wage which gives you some independence and freedom
- Be realistic with your expectations, ask older family member how well off they were
- Negotiate your own financial rewards. Material reward ... finance or finance offset via perks or share options ... is what you work for. Don't take seriously talk about a potential future job title being more important than financial reward ... you can eat what money gives you, you can't live off a title
- Financial and workplace issues are important but job enjoyment is the most rewarding
- Don't be too impatient: if an employer sees that you are keen don't be too quick to want to be the boss, take your time to learn
- Job satisfaction. Is it interesting, challenging, and does it have a future?
- Do some research and consult people you know, admire and trust to be honest with you.

Did your workplace have a mentoring program or did it encourage new employees to seek advice freely?

Comments:

Businesses generally are less mentoring than they were 20 years ago. As we said earlier, business are under more pressure than ever before, and don't have the resources to mentor new starters. You are expected to contribute sooner and more. However, you can establish informal mentoring support in business with the right co-workers and outside help.

- All of the jobs I have had in my career have had mentors in some form, whether formal or informal. This was invaluable when I was learning a new role
- No mentoring program but bosses took pride in their new starters doing well
- A bit of both, however mentoring was strongest to those who initially sought advice
- Yes. New employees were designated a staff member and always had access to partners. All veterinarians daily participated in "Clinical Rounds" where each hospitalised case was presented by the attending veterinarian and discussed by all. Nurses were encouraged to be there and participate in patient care and condition discussions. Students had to follow cases and present them to rounds. New vets were advised of staff's special interest and encouraged to seek advice
- My first job was with a large old firm, so strong in how it operated which was a good learning experience and benchmark for later life
- Such programs developed much later in my career. Earlier, it was informal contacts and discussions.

Thinking about kids you may have mentored...what have you seen about the difficulties they have?

Comments:

Here we see the common problems in making transition to work from school.

- Many have not understood that there is less freedom at work than at home or school life
- A belief that it will be an extension of their school experience (quite ordered, time specific and structured). The work environment has its own challenges and opportunities and you realise it is up to you
- Don't invite your friends to visit you at work. They are distracting



- Try and put aside any personal issues while at work and focus on the task at hand
- Put your phone away while at work – don't be tempted to check Facebook or other social media
- Yes it can get messy - there is a need that while at work and concentrate on work and this means trying to forget about the upcoming date or your romance or this week's footy/cricket game. The boss expects you to work during his time
- Personal life takes on all forms from hobbies to relationships with family. The personal life takes away your focus on work when at work. So you are basically asleep at the wheel
- It is not at all wise to live with a work colleague.

What advice would you give them?

- Understand that the boss is "buying your time" and therefore expects attention and focus for all the work hours
- Hard work leads to success
- Teams can do better than individual.

Did you think your first job added value? How did this affect you later?

Comments:

Here you see the impact of the first job on the whole of your working life.

- My first job significantly built my confidence with interacting with people. This was the foundation for the various customer/client focused roles I have had in my career
- Sure. My drafting past was focused on elevator project layout. In my later sales career I could quickly determine the needed number, load and speed of elevators to suit a particular building design then advise the architect of the needed space requirement in his building (I could do all of this sitting in his office and without a computer)
- No it did not add value. But it showed me that I was not content in just slugging it out. I wanted to be stimulated, appreciated and be able to think for myself
- My first job was as a Saturday morning boy at Coles packing the bags for customers through the checkouts and also packing stock on shelves. It was a stable job and it taught me that getting along with people was needed. I was taught by my parents to respect my bosses even though over time I worked out the ones I liked and didn't like
- It certainly made me aware of what was required - labour - in making one of these big supermarkets operate efficiently and the hours a lot of these managers put into their work
- Upon attaining my accounting degree I actually applied for a junior accounting job with Coles and was given that job. However after the interview process and thinking back on my time over many years with Coles, I could not see myself taking the role so said no. I remember the interviewer being rather amazed I said no. Still don't know if that was a good or bad decision
- My first job was as an articled clerk, first step of training for 2 years, was at the bottom and had to be prepared to do anything

- When I became an employer I treated all employees with respect and valued their input something that was absent in my first couple of jobs
- I worked really hard to make money in my first job, where I learnt that I could do better if I worked well as a team member
- I chucked in school during my final year and went to work - 18 months later I saw school achievements by my brothers and sister and figured I was going to be the dummy in the family. I went back and finished school to gain university entrance - I did go to Uni a few years later and was actually the first in our family to get a degree
- I employ new staff all the time in various capacities. I would like to think that they grow as a result of their time with me.

What is your strongest learning from your first job?

Comments:

- Everyone serves a customer, even the boss. Put yourself in the boss's shoes from time to time and go that extra step. It will help you build your reputation and value to the boss.
- My first job taught me a great deal however my strongest learning would be around providing exceptional customer service and working efficiently by setting goals to complete tasks.

What's your strongest memory about protecting/losing reputation at work?

Comments:

- I recall once accidentally short-changing a customer. I was embarrassed to have made this mistake and thought it made me look incompetent
- We stressed to always be truthful and if you make a mistake or something untoward happens, own up to it and seek help to sort out a problem. Also advise clients, don't try and hide from it

What's the hardest thing you have done to protect your reputation?

- Every day I take pride in my work to ensure I complete my job to a high standard and be known as a good employee
- Take the job seriously (not to be confused with taking yourself seriously) and fully complete each task you undertake
- Having to accept responsibility if I am wrong
- Change jobs due to work colleague's poor attitude. Have you seen where new starters lose their reputation?
- In my experience, this mostly comes from not accepting responsibility for task outcome ... it's often easier to blame somebody else, the available tools/information or the system for shortfalls rather than take personal responsibility and learn from mistakes
 - Not doing what they say they will do, so lose integrity.

Any examples of where the right attitude saved the day?

Comment:

Attitude shapes the way you look at things. Is a glass half full or half empty? Is this a problem, or an opportunity? If you have a positive attitude you will see things differently.

- Attitude is vital to any role. If you don't approach your work with the right attitude you won't be effective or productive, particularly in customer service roles. Having a bad attitude is immediately obviously to the customer and puts them in a bad mood also
- Have a goal every day. It will help you even out the ups and downs of life. Keep a long-term personal plan, and check it out every now and then
- Very important to listen and not think you have all the answers
- A young bloke asked for a job, any job, then worked his way through many positions. We then trained him to be a qualified electrician. Now he has his own business.

What sort of things have you seen that show the right attitude in new starters?

- Being punctual - arrive a few minutes before expected start time and don't rush out the door before or right on finish time. If an employee is prepared to give a few minutes then the boss will be aware of it and return the favour
- I loved checking out the X-rays from out-of-hours presentations and seeing what my day would involve. It was important to have all members contribute and to allocate responsibilities to the most qualified person
- I had the pleasure of mentoring a young guy in Cairns at a major hotel I worked for as the financial controller. He had just been through Uni and was looking to pick up some work in the hospitality industry. He came from a good family, his father was very influential in the Cairns area. What made him stand out was his ability to listen and be accepting of what he saw. He was never critical. Apart from being involved in my finance area he also worked in the bars and reception there to see how this area of the hotel industry worked. He has since had an amazing career becoming a head of regional operations for the InterContinental Hotels Group. This region covered Korea, United Arab Emirates and parts of Africa. Earlier than this he was general manager of Taronga Park Zoo in Sydney. He has recently taken a job with a hotel investment fund manager as head of asset management. I had a quiet drink with him recently and he mentioned that showing an interest in his work and being enthusiastic had helped him. He has developed a work discipline over the years as he was constantly overseas and has a young family. While he is intelligent, he had the right attitude and I always liked to see him doing well.
- An empathy for people does help and as a result nurturing referrals from your work
- Anyone keen to "have a go" gets my vote
- A willingness to learn & take pride in what they do
- Being prepared to listen and learn.

Any inspirational examples of where you had to struggle to keep your motivation?

Comments:

Keeping yourself motivated is really hard. Here's some tips...

- I can lose motivation while doing monotonous tasks, so I mix this up in my work
- Working in an environment that didn't respect you and treated you as an automaton. So I left, as I couldn't change the workplace
- These days it is regular challenge - useful to take time out if you are losing motivation to get some perspective. Even if it is just remembering how grateful you were to get the job all those months ago.
- My biggest tip for this is to set goals for the day, or for the hour. This will keep you motivated and on task and will make you more efficient
- Be prepared to ask questions, but think them through first. If you ask a silly question, you are likely to get a silly answer. If you are prepared to say "I don't understand " then your boss will (generally) help you understand
- Expect change in both work practices and personnel. Get to know your job very well and do it with a good attitude. Switch off from work when away and do activity that you enjoy
- Stick with people who make you laugh and relax
- Staying fit always helps motivation
- Not really - you just have to work through it, as there is not time otherwise
- Keep learning. In my case it was post graduate studies, attending courses (for learning, not just socialising, and reading. Also "professional intercourse" (discussing cases, seeking other's opinions, having an open mind). I once met a veterinarian who stated that after 10 years in practice you have seen it all. He was disillusioned and not particularly happy in his job. After 40 years in practice I was still seeing new things, learning and publishing. In retirement I still read and try to keep up to date with new trends but do miss the excitement of seeing something new, learning new techniques and academic discussion.

Sometimes it's not easy when others are doing the wrong thing especially if you are new. Have you got an example where this occurred to you or a new starter?

Comments:

You are going to make mistakes as a new starter. How you react and learn from them will determine your success...



- Once I really stuffed up and sent out the wrong goods to a customer. Worse, the customer saw what their competitor was getting and at a better price. I didn't find out till the boss came and saw me. I don't know why he didn't sack me, I think it was because I had done some good things and had a good reputation. I didn't make that mistake again!
- Once I refused to let the big boss (who I hadn't met) into the office, because I was told there were to be no visitors. Fortunately my boss said I was following instructions. The big boss eventually saw the funny side of it, and forgave me. He even gave me a rise later in the year
- I did a locum after leaving the government and witnessed a veterinarian perform an unnecessary procedure purely for financial gain. I was horrified and tendered my resignation. He had a contract to TB test cattle and begged me to do a 2 week job in far west Queensland. I reluctantly agreed for disease eradication reasons. The job turned out to be for at least 3 months and he left me stranded out there (flew me in on a single engine plane) refusing to answer my calls. My wife had relocated to her parents in Sydney. After 2 weeks I had to organise my own travel out and seek legal redress to get salary. Ethics are paramount as is honesty, and responsibility.

What were your experiences in working in a team?

- All jobs require some form of teamwork. In my first job, each employee played a different role but interacted as a team in order to get all the work done for the day. My experiences in a team were positive as each person had a role that they did well and this contributed to a productive day
- Some team members will suit your personality and some won't. Try to appreciate the part all members play in the team. You will probably critique the contribution of team members and who are the natural leaders and followers.

Any observations for the new starter?

- Keep work and home separate
 - We always advise work experience students and new employees that the veterinary hospital runs as a team with all members important and need to be respected. That includes the kennel staff and cleaners. We also stressed, "We are a private industry and our clients are our source of income and, as such, they must always be treated courteously with respect."
 - Employers like people who have played team sports if you want a team player, not ones that have played individual sports
 - Be engaged, listen more than talk, and be prepared to do the tasks that others in the team don't want to do and do them to the best of your ability. You will soon gain the respect of the team.
- What was the most difficult part?
- I have been in team environments where one team member doesn't pull their weight
 - The most difficult part was my shyness and not speaking up enough so a feeling of being suppressed came over me.

What were your experiences in working in a team? Any observations for the new starter?

Comments:

Work is done as a team. As a new starter you probably won't have a leadership role in the team, but do your job well, support the team and people will want you on their team...

- Any team needs a leader to bring the set task to a successful conclusion. The leader need not always be the most senior member. Be prepared to be a leader at times. Also be prepared to fail ... if you're a real team player, the other members will help you through.

Have you seen new starters do great in teams? What things would you say they were really good at?

- A lot of new starters think they know everything, having just received their degree. They sometimes struggle with advice and believe everything they say must be right and the only way. Several believe they are superior. As said they need to know the team, know each member's responsibilities and work with, not against, the team. It is important to be aware of job descriptions and rosters and use the right person for the right job at the right time. The new starters that do well appreciate this and are seen to fit in quickly and find their job a lot easier. Also seeking advice and learning
- Ability to get along with people and have an ability to understand what was a priority in getting jobs completed.

New starters sometimes struggle in teams. What teamwork skills do new starters need?

- Be prepared to make the team look good ... this is not about your success, it's about the TEAM is success!
- To work out they are there for a reason and if they don't perform other people will be let down. We all get into situations that we don't like but often by doing what we don't like skills are being enhanced that can help us in broader life.

What people have you met at work (good and bad) and how did you adjust your behaviour to remain professional?

Comments:

You'll meet all kinds at work. From bullies to mentors, and you're not going to change them. Your job is to figure out how to work with them, while building that all important reputation for yourself.

- I have worked in a lot of different work environments and cultures and in each the concept of "professionalism" differs. I had to adapt my professional behaviour to fit in with the particular business
 - Be careful with being too friendly with work colleagues: it may bite you later. (I was friendly with a boss and I later found out that he told lies about me which jeopardised my promotion)

- Dealing with the public can be enjoyable, infuriating, frustrating and a whole heap of other adjectives. Sometimes dealing with colleagues can be similar. Understand what people are after. Listen and objectively assess their requirements then act ensuring that you are acting in their interests, the interest of the workplace and yourself
- Appreciate people's financial constraints as well. For example, a total hip replacement (THR) may be the gold standard option for a dog with hip dysplasia but the expense may preclude the operation. There are alternatives that will provide the patient with a pain-free outcome but perhaps not the greatest range of movement. This may be an alternative to a painful existence and euthanasia. I have seen new vets virtually demanding that owners agree a THR which was financially impossible potentially resulting in the owners putting the dog down. Similarly heroic resuscitation in a patient without a viable outcome can subject owners to massive expense without a patient at the end. At all times be objective
- I have met good and bad people although this generally can take some time to work out unless you have been informed beforehand by somebody you trust
- Respect people as this will show through. Give them an answer that reflects your values and try not to lower yourself to their level if that is the case
- If you find people are bad mouthing others, then there is every chance they will do it to you when you're not there. If you know people can keep matters confidential and play a mentoring role, these are the people to stick with

What would be considered as unprofessional behaviour?

- Being disrespectful to co-workers and customers, being tardy or hangover for work, gossiping or complaining
- Trying to get too friendly with the boss's daughter!!! Or talking about the boss behind their back
- Unethical, acting outside the relevant acts (e.g. Veterinary Surgeon's Act), and not working in the interests of all concern
- Anything that is not TRUE
- Anything that you would not like done to you
- Bad mouthing other people; taking the accolade for work you did not perform; sloppy language; laziness; taking shortcuts although these days the goal appears to be "well did they complete the task".



Did you or have you seen self-improvement ideas that work for new starters?

Comments:

Apart from gaining work experience in your new job, you must think about self-improvement outside of work, while you are young. Don't rely on work experience to get you promoted or to get you the next job. That next job may not be there unless you have acquired skills that you don't get through the daily work grind.

- My tip for this is, as discussed above, to set goals and work to improve on these each shift
- Try to understand how the work you do fits into the complete organisation. Also try to understand how other parts of the business work and fit into the whole organisation.
- Isolate and copy a positive role model at work. These are not hard to find as other employees will talk about the achievers regularly
- Continuing education, "professional intercourse", seeking advice of superiors about and detected shortcomings. Listen and act
- Get into Toastmasters so you can gain confidence through public speaking. If kept up long enough it does marvels.

Did you experience any issues with politics in your first job or career?

Comments:

Politics are important, but don't play the game while you are setting out in a new job. You will be screwed by the more experienced political animals at work for one thing. But the main reason to stay clear is that office politics will not improve your reputation or future job prospects.

- Yes ... politics and back stabbing can be very harmful and some people are experts at it to climb over others when it comes to promotion
 - Politics is a part of work life so be aware of it
 - People who have been with an organisation for a while will tend to have opinions on work processes and other people in the organisation. Some are outspoken about it and others are more introverted. And they want you to think like them so they feel you are a part of their team. As people generally are a social species, then this behaviour at work needs to be understood
 - Office politics will be apparent in most work environments, sometimes quite significant. It is important to be aware of it and manage within it.
- Any special thoughts / stories about politics in small or family run businesses, tips for a new starter?

- Family run businesses generally are very protective of family members. There are cases where family members are incompetent at their job but that doesn't matter. It is important that you fit into the family culture or your time there will be short. This is where the new person needs to make a decision on their future if their values are being trampled on by the family. I have worked for a family company that the boss says you can hire and fire staff, you can discipline staff. However upon trying to do these things, if the person involved was a boss favourite, you had to accept it
- Small businesses normally have say 1 major head and they like to have people around them who accept them so the social aspect of humans comes into play again. As these businesses can often be 3-5 people, it becomes obvious if you are not the flavour of the month. This makes it difficult in the world today as work is hard to get and retain so the more you can develop your competencies and people skills the better off you will be
- Very hard as an outsider to work in a small family run business, probably not a good place to start.

What was your experience in customer service?

Comments:

More tips on customer service

- I was extremely nervous serving customers for the first time as I was very shy. However I quickly gained confidence as I served customers with my boss, then on my own but supervised and ultimately on my own completely
- Shyness and naivety led to me feeling underwhelmed about how I served a boss. It became apparent to me that having a prepared mindset would have helped more. Also speaking up at work in front of strangers was difficult.

Have you seen new starters perform customer service really well? What did they do?

• We stressed the importance of clients as our source of income, paying our salaries. The receptionist or anyone answering a telephone, as the first line of contact with a client is the most important ambassador for the business. Similarly the first contact, from the front desk staff is the critical next step. Staff that who greet clients warmly and by name, know their pet's name (it's on the computer!) and listen, do well for all. Servicing the client, know how long they are waiting and explaining delays, keeping the premises neat, tidy clean and interesting. Speaking directly to people, looking them in the eyes and explaining subjects simply and not over technically, using aids (skeletons, charts, diagrams etc). If you do not know something do not be afraid to admit it and ask someone else. I recently went to my doctor with a lump on my lip. The doctor has his fellowship from the RACGP and is an examiner for the college but was unsure and sought the opinion of another doctor in the practice who had a special interest in these sorts of lesion.

Did I think less of my doctor for seeking a second opinion. Not at all, I respected him for seeking the best outcome for the patient: me. The fact that I was on the couch with my pants down with my doctor palpating my testicles when to the other doctor came in did create a bit of concern from the second opinionating doctor but it was soon sorted out

- Yes just being friendly and courteous.

Did you know anyone who was particularly good at managing time. What did they do?

Comments:

Everyone works to the clock. You have limited time at work, so make the most of it by understanding your key tasks, then planning and prioritising your work.

- Need to know when to move on and work to a deadline, do the important things first
- Know what is expected of you and do the best job you can. A happy boss is a happy future
- I started work in accounts. The lady I worked with cleared her desk every day about 15 minutes before knock off time. Then she would put on her desk all the invoices and things she had to do the next day. I copied her routine for years afterwards.

Any personal experiences with social media difficulties that would help a new starter?

Comments:

The Internet is not your friend. Be very careful on social media, it has destroyed lots of people's reputation, often through thoughtless comments in emails or Facebook. Best to assume that your worst enemy is looking over your shoulder every time you post something on the net.

- No personal experience, as I have always been very conscious about this. New starters should be vigilant with what they post on social media as it can reflect on the employer. Also, potential employers often research applicants on social media to get an idea of what kind of person they are
- A lot of new graduates and students were much more tech savvy than the older partners and wondered why email enquiries were not available. We were wasting a lot of time answering phone enquiries and frustrated that we were giving advice over the phone without examining the patient. We developed a policy of not giving advice without examination. The concern with email enquiries was that it was another impost on time, that the answers would be given again without examination and that they would be written and accessible if incorrect advice was given. Web sites are a different matter.. Only comment would be to limit social media activities to work only activities and remember who is paying your wage.
- Be very careful about criticism of organisations on Facebook etc. It is unprofessional and please be aware of the organisation policy in regard to this. Once you put your views on social media, you have lost control over what people may think of you in the future. People will make up their minds very quickly about somebody (their perception is their reality) so please do not give them that chance.

**Did you find it easy/hard to adjust to “work language”.
What did you do?**

Comments:

It can be very confusing listening to your new co-workers. It might sound like a different language. That's OK, you are allowed to ask them to explain the meaning of these new words and terms. Ask lots of questions, show interest, and you may learn more than you expect. Plus it will increase your reputation if you are seen as being interested.

- I found it quick and easy, because the team was very helpful
- Listened and learnt. We used a logical SOAP format. S= Subjective, what the client tells you. O= Objective or what you saw in your examination. A = Assessment of S & O, P = Plan or, if in hospital, progress, plan and prognosis. Obviously medical language was in use.
- Any tips for new starters?
- Listen and learn
- You pick up the work language very quickly. My advice would be to listen to how your co-workers interact with customers and other staff (not in a creepy way and don't been seen to be eavesdropping)
- Have a go and use old examples if you can find them to get an idea
- Don't use bad language in the workplace even if your work mates or even your boss does, it will count against you at some time.

Can you give any horror stories about your first day at work?

Comments:

Be prepared, think about everything you can, and you'll be OK.

- My first day started really badly. I had measured how long it would take me to get to work on Sunday, but Monday's traffic was a whole lot worse, so I arrived 30 minutes late and really flustered
- Not mine ... but I have seen people go to the wrong address, catch the wrong bus/train and arrive late on the first day. It is then very hard to recover from that experience. Before your first day, see if you can take time to see where you have to go and how difficult it is to be there on time (or ahead of time)
- I started work in Brisbane. I checked the traffic on Sunday, and worked out how long it would take to get to work. I started on Monday and was 1 hour late because of the traffic. I was crap all day.

Any personal anecdotes on how new starters have got themselves into difficulties where they needed help with work conditions?

Comments:

Try and find a mentor in your new job. This will make your life a lot easier. Show that you are willing to learn and need only to be told once, and you get it done. You'll get respect and build your reputation.

- Most new starters need some help in reading their pay slips. Sometimes there are errors in pay slips and unless you get help straightaway it can become a real issue. Always be prepared to ask questions - but tactfully.
- Often new starters have no idea about the risks of the job, so they don't wear safety gear, or wear it incorrectly. It's always a good idea for new starters to ask, even if they are shy. I always tell them to watch how other people do the job, before they do it
- Sometimes new starters try too hard, and ignore the conditions. Things like working faster to get the job done, but then they injure themselves and the work stops for first aid, or an investigation and you end up taking longer. I always say that for the first few months if they can learn to keep up with everyone else, that's great. Don't take risks by trying to do things faster or without precautions.



Key Messages from Part 3

- The training you receive at work is only the start. It may be minimal, you will need to add to that training through your own efforts
- Work adds value. You need to work out where your job adds value, and do those (critical) tasks really well that add the most value.
- Everyone serves a customer wherever they work. Even the boss is a customer. Try and figure out how you can add more value to that customer.
- Customers have expectations - understand what they are. Try and exceed them
- Never make promises to a customer that you can't keep.
- Work is repetitive. Establish a work routine that sets you up for being good at your job.
- Electronic media is everywhere: work, home, leisure. Learn to change your interaction with it as you transition to work.
- Phone and email are a large part of most new starters communication at work. Learn how to use these tools to improve your reputation.