

June 8, 2013

## And some words for college grads ...

*Vicki L. Bogan, associate professor of finance and economics at Cornell University, offers advice for recent graduates entering corporate America:*

In my role as a finance professor, I advise and counsel many undergraduate business students. For those about to embark on a career in the corporate world, here are some of the most valuable insights that I offer to my students:

- Understand that you are coming into the firm at the bottom (or near the bottom) of the management ladder. Even if you graduated at the top of your class in college or were a star summer intern, you still have much to learn. Listen and learn.
  - Your co-workers are your colleagues, not your friends. Develop professional relationships first, then friendships.
  - Stay away from office gossip. Gossiping about co-workers is not a productive use of time and can give you a reputation as someone who is disingenuous.
  - Treat everyone with respect, from the CEO of the company to the person that empties the trash can in your cubicle.
  - It is important to identify opportunities for improvement in your position, but do not become known as a complainer. Become known as a problem-solver. Employees that can get things done are the most valuable assets in a firm.
  - Be patient but persistent. Often decisions and actions in the corporate world do not occur as quickly as one would like. Recognize that it may take time for issues to be resolved but be tenacious and do not let significant issues fall through the cracks.
  - Actively manage your own career. Continually evaluate your progress and think about what your next career move should be. No one else is going to plan out your career path for you.
  - Your first job is not going to be your last job. Even if you dislike your job, try to learn as much as you can while keeping your eyes and ears open for the next opportunity.
  - When you consider moving positions, try to move to a job or area where you can develop new skills that build your resume.
  - If you want to quit your job, do not do so until you have another position secured. It is much easier to find a new job when you are not dealing with the financial and emotional stress that accompanies being unemployed. If you are not stressed, you can interview and negotiate from a position of confidence and power, not desperation.
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