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BUSINESS

10 Tips for College Graduates Entering the Workforce

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My name is Mark Wayman, and for the last eleven years I have owned an Executive Recruiting firm focused on gaming and high tech. Compensation starts at \$100,000; last year I placed eight executives north of a million dollars.

The Epicurean Charitable Foundation, which provides scholarships for hospitality students, recently asked me to write an article with advice for students entering the job market. Interesting enough, none of my input has anything to do with skill sets. Follow your passion, whether that be F&B, marketing, finance or technology. There are ALWAYS good jobs for good people. Outlined below are my top ten tips for graduating students.

Without Integrity, You Have Nothing - A CEO once told me, "Mark, if an executive does not have integrity, nothing else matters." No truer words were ever spoken. Being dishonest is a character flaw. This is the BEST advice I can give students entering the job market. Always be 100% honest and forthcoming.

No One Likes a Narcissistic Megalomaniac - No one likes a self-absorbed, self-serving elitist. There is no shortage of self-centered people. And for every job opening, there are hundreds of candidates. If you think it is an honor and privilege for a company to hire you, think again. Be humble, be genuine. Humble and genuine is attractive!

Relationships Trump Talent - There is no shortage of talented people, but what separates the good from the great...is relationships. I regularly see talented executives that can't get a job, and mediocre executives that land on their feet despite a history of poor performance. Why? Because they are well networked and have friends like the Colonel has chicken. Build a strong professional network and keep in touch.

Today's Choices Become Tomorrow's Circumstances - Make good life choices. This is HUGE! For most companies, a criminal record, DUI, or tax lien is a deal breaker. If you make bad life choices, you are likely to make bad work choices, and you will struggle to find employment. Make good life choices.

Long-Term Thinking Improves Short-Term Decisions - Successful people have a clear future orientation. They delay gratification in the short-term so they can enjoy far greater rewards in the long-term. Attending college is the perfect example. You can attend college now to ensure a better long-term career path, or not attend college and find it challenging to get promotions. Make decisions based on your long-term goals.

The Grass is NOT Always Greener - When you enter the job market, all jobs are good jobs. Focus on finding a company that will invest in you with training and coaching. Do NOT get focused on money. Yes, money is important. Anyone that tells you it's not...does not have any. That stated, early in your career you need to focus on developing your skill set. Don't bounce from job to job. Don't chase the money. The grass is not always greener!

Don't Burn Bridges - Most big cities are more like small towns. In Las Vegas, there are two million people, however only two hundred people make most of the decisions, and they all know each other. There is no upside to burning bridges. If someone likes you they will tell one friend. If someone does not like you, they will tell ten friends. Don't burn your bridges!

An Attitude of Gratitude - If you want to stand out from the thundering herd, show gratitude and appreciation every step of the way. Saying "thank you!" is the right thing to do, and places you in a class by yourself. The same can be said of giving versus taking. The world is full of takers. Be a giver...and be grateful!

Remember the Golden Rule - No matter how cool and impressive you think you are, ultimately what people will remember is how you treated them. As my Dad used to say, "Treat the Janitor the same as the CEO." Why? Because you will be passing the same people on the way down that you saw on the way up. Always treat people with kindness, courtesy and respect.

Work Was Never Meant to Be the Center of Our Lives - Family, friends and career, in that order. I'm not saying your career is unimportant. I am saying the company is all about the company, which you will find out the first time you are terminated. They don't care about your student loans or your rent. Don't be married to your job.