



In a recent issue of *EAST COMPANY* magazine, several accomplished executives were interviewed about their first jobs to explore how these early experiences contributed to their current success.

Each was asked:

- What was it like to be a "newbie?"

Lessons Learned Along the Way

- What were their first experiences all about?
- How did those first jobs create lasting lessons, and what were they?

Those of us who manage people sometimes forget how impressionable new employees are, and what a huge responsibility we have in helping them get off on the right foot.

As I think back on my first jobs, I realize how much I learned from those early experiences, and how they helped to influence me and shape the values that I hold to this day.

I grew up in a family of modest means and have had to work in some capacity since I was 13 years old. My employment career began as a babysitter and advanced to what was at the time called a "mother's helper."

Other early jobs included working as an arts and crafts counselor in a camp that catered to the wealthy; typing stock certificates worth millions of dollars at The New York Stock Exchange; selling furniture at Macy's department store in Manhattan; and doing order fulfillment at a major mail order catalog firm in Los Angeles. Following that, I worked at home as a full-time wife and mother.

Then I began my more professional work experience as a special education teacher, administrator at the U.S. Chamber's Institutes for Organization Management, and as vice president of education services at the American Society of Association Executives before

assuming my current position as president and CEO at GWSAE.

All of these experiences taught me to be self-reliant and to give my very best to the organizations and people that employed me. In preparation for a recent GWSAE staff retreat, I developed a list outlining the lessons I have learned from my personal work experience.

Susan Sarfati's Top 10 Success Factors (in the workplace):

1. Be your own person. Work for yourself and have the highest expectations of yourself and others.
2. Be driven by ethical standards and genuine honesty.
3. Have passion for your work
4. Be generous of spirit — cut others slack but also expect the best of them.
5. Be cognizant of all the people you will need to get along with, and how challenging it will be. For example, for a staff of 30 — there are at least 900 interactions regularly (30x30). This relationship stuff is complex — accept it and work at it.
6. Work only in positions when you have fire in the belly for them.
7. Behave as if the devil is in the details, because it really is!
8. Surprise, delight, and challenge your customers 100 percent of the time.
9. Deliver positively outrageous service that will give you the competitive edge.
10. Give and receive feedback often and honestly.

BONUS — Take your job seriously, but not yourself!

I challenge you to come up with your own list and submit it to me. I'd like to learn about your values and the lessons you have learned during your years in the workplace — starting way back when to the present.

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