



1st jobs serve as career launch pads

CEOs' advice: 'Work hard'

By Peggy Aulino
staff writer

Some of them inherited the companies they now run. Others started in the stockroom and now they hobnob with stockholders.

Area company presidents and CEOs all went through the school of hard knocks to some degree. Some attained academic degrees along the way; some did not.

They were asked recently where they started out, what they learned and what sort of advice they would offer those who are just now entering the work force.

Carol Quigley Quigley Cos.

Carol Quigley was a special education teacher before her father died and left the Quigley Cos. to her and her sisters. Quigley, the Southfield company's president, said her classroom background helped her when it was time to take the reins of manufacturing truck and auto parts.

"Teaching helps you understand people. Basically people are people, whether they're kids or not," she said. "A lot of running a business is the people aspect of it — the people you work with, your customers."

Quigley's advice to up-and-coming top executives: "Just work as hard as you can and always remember that the customer is the person that you're there for."



James Eckl Gray & Kilgore

That's the same sort of advice offered by James Eckl, president of Gray & Kilgore Advertising in Troy. But Eckl calls it being aggressive.

"I don't mean cutthroat, just a willingness to learn and take on a little bit more than the job definition requires," he said.

Eckl's first job after he got his degree was as an auditor.

"Probably what I found out most was I didn't want to be an auditor," he said.

But understanding the "internal workings" of a business helped him succeed.

"I truly believe . . . if you don't understand the numbers game you're lost. I think that's true in most businesses," Eckl said.

Besides being aggressive, Eckl thinks people trying to break into advertising should be unique. That's because on a typical week, his company receives 20 to 30 resumes. Being unique will help get someone a job interview, he said, and being aggressive could land them the job.

Donald Blue Mutual of Detroit

Donald Blue, president of Mutual of Detroit Insurance in Plymouth, agreed that choosing work that is personally suitable leads to job satisfaction.

"I think it has to do primarily with their aptitude and interest," he said of young people seeking jobs in which they'll prosper. "They should try to do something they like to do. Go that direction, as opposed to simply taking a job here and there."

Blue worked in Mutual's legal department after earning his law degree but "became more and more involved in management" over the years, he said.

"Many years ago I made a decision to do this as opposed to practicing law," he said.

Blue suggested young people "try to get into something they enjoy doing because they will do well if they have the interest."



Brian Connolly Providence Hospital

Brian Connolly, president of Southfield's Providence Hospital, agreed that the first job is important, but he thinks some people waste time by looking for the perfect first job.

"What's important is that they get the first job. Once you're in, if you work hard, a lot of doors will open," Connolly said. "Their first job isn't going to be perfect. It's just a learning opportunity, a chance to grow."

Connolly started out as a management engineer, visiting hospitals throughout the state to conduct studies on productivity and long-range planning. That put him in touch with several hospital presidents.

"It really helped me kind of pick and choose a (management) style I thought was most effective and the one I was most comfortable with," Connolly said.

directly to the career into which she has since settled.

"I went in and applied and they could tell I liked doughnuts. I was very much overweight," said Mark, who is president and chairwoman of the Farmington Hills company that operates Weight Watchers franchises in nine states, Ontario and Mexico.

"I think that added to my career," Mark said.

"Everything you do in life is a learning experience if you open your eyes and learn," she said in a more serious vein. "You have to be receptive. A lot of people go through life learning nothing."

Mark had a long list of advice for job seekers.

"They should believe in themselves and have a good sense of humor," she said. "Know what you want and decide what you're willing to give up to get what you want. Be enthusiastic about what you do, and if you're not enthusiastic find something else that gets you excited about what you're doing. Don't expect perfection from yourself. Allow yourself to make mistakes. I make dozens of them. That's how I learn and grow."

And finally: "Always take time to smell the roses."



from that position was: "Listen and observe; don't just talk. Good public relations can not work without the listening component."

His advice to those seeking their first job was "take it at any cost."

"Getting the first job in the Detroit area is very tough," he said. "I would urge people to take internships." That way, "you have demonstrated that you're not only studied the field but you've worked in it."

Area company presidents and CEOs all went through the school of hard knocks to some degree.



Pat Gray Uniforce

Pat Gray makes her living helping people get jobs, albeit temporary ones. She is president of Uniforce Temporary Services of Birmingham, Livonia and Southfield. But she started in the field as a permanent placement counselor.

"I acquired a knowledge of people by dealing with individuals who had many and varied skills," Gray said.

That helped her when it was time to hire people to staff her offices, and it gave her an understanding of the personnel needs of large corporations.

People just getting out of school are not at the end of their education, Gray said.

"I would remind them that the world of academia is part of their education and the next step in their education is becoming acquainted with the real world, where they apply what knowledge they have and then, at the same time, continue to grow," Gray said.

She also suggested that young people "recognize that each opportunity is a learning experience and extract from that experience the most knowledge that they can."

"They will find in later years that everything they have learned will be applicable in some situation," Gray said.



Steven Jackson Hungry Howie's

"There's really no school you can go to learn how to be the president of the company. You've just got to make decisions and hopefully you make more right ones than you do wrong ones," said Steven Jackson, president of the Livonia-based Hungry Howie's Pizza and Subs.

Jackson, like some other executives, changed career tracks since entering the work force. He was studying elementary education during college in the mid-1970s, but looked around and saw that lots of teachers were getting pink slips, he said. He quit school and opened a Hungry Howie's, the second in what is now a chain of at least 40 outlets in the Detroit area alone.

As a newcomer to the business Jackson had a lot to learn. But at that stage in the game, ignorance was bliss, he said.

"(When you open a business without much experience) you really don't realize when you're making mistakes. I think it's sheer basic energy and willpower," he said. "I guess I didn't realize what the numbers meant. I just kept trying to do better than the last week."

Jackson didn't have any advice for recent graduates.

"It's hard for me to answer that question. I was never in the job market," he said.



Robert Awrey Awrey Bakeries

Robert Awrey has been there for his customers since he was 15.

"I've never really worked anywhere else but here," said the president of Awrey Bakeries of Livonia.

He started out mopping floors and doing other chores in a downtown Detroit retail outlet that was part of the business begun by his grandparents.

"I learned to relate with and get along with people. That's the biggest lesson in life and business," Awrey said. And, he said, "I learned to work hard. I learned a pretty good work ethic."

Awrey suggested young people in the market for a job follow "the old saw — work hard and keep your nose clean."

"You get ahead by doing whatever job is assigned to you — excellently," he said. "Work a little harder, do a little more than the next guy."



Florine Mark Weight Watchers

Florine Mark said her first job — selling doughnuts at age 11 — led in-

Jack Casey Casey Communications

Jack Casey, president of Casey Communications Management in Southfield, was interested in journalism at the beginning of his career. Though he has worked for newspapers and politicians and now is in public relations, "I still think of myself very much as a reporter," he said.

"I figure my several careers have really been an evolution of the first one," Casey said. "It's all communications."

His first job, as a copy boy at a Toledo newspaper, was secured because a friend's mother was the publisher's secretary. The lesson he took

Walsh College conference aimed at business couples

By Marilyn Fitchett
staff writer

Frank and Sharan Barnett are capitalizing on helping others like themselves: partners in life and partners in business.

The Barnetts are looking to spread the "copreneurial" gospel when they lead a weekend conference June 15-18 at the Guest Quarters Suite Hotel in Troy, presented by Walsh College.



They define "copreneuring" as "not only a commitment to a particular enterprise but also a lifestyle that incorporates both work and personal worlds" that is based on "trust, equality, sharing and intimacy between partners."

The conference, called "Working Together: Entrepreneurial Couples" hopes to attract couples who now own their own business and those thinking about it, or the "doers and the dreamers," according to Sharan Barnett.

Statistics from the Small Business Administration indicate the list of doers is growing. From 1980 to 1985, the number of sole proprietorships, excluding farms, that were jointly owned by a husband and wife rose 82 percent to 442,993.

Authors of "Working Together: Entrepreneurial Couples," the Barnetts believe that at being a business with a person with whom you share the rest of your life results in a "synergy" that does not evolve between partners solely in business. Their book is based on their experiences running their advertising agency and on interviews with 24 couples operating their own businesses. Last year they dissolved the ad agency to concentrate on developing the National Association of Entrepreneurial Couples, which they founded in 1988.

"There is a difference between partners (who are not part of a couple relationship)," Frank Barnett said. "What we find (with partners who are couples) is a high degree of communication, a very clear shared vision for where their enterprise is going, a lack of competition between them because they have learned to merge their respective egos into what we call a 'wego.'"

Please turn to Page 2

GRADUATION NIGHT

One of the happiest nights of your life . . .

Don't WRECK it!

DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE

Sponsored by:

MICHIGAN'S LARGEST
MERCEDES BENZ
DEALER

ESTATE MOTORS, LTD.

464 SOUTH WOODWARD AVENUE • DOWNTOWN BIRMINGHAM

644-8400

AUTHORIZED SALES • SERVICE • PARTS
OPEN MONDAY AND THURSDAY EVENINGS UNTIL 9 P.M.