

# ***FOREWORD***

Over the years my wife and I have made it a point to get actively involved in our children's lives; she has volunteered in the local school system and PTA/SAC for a number of years and I ended up coaching and umpiring in Little League, both boys and girls. Through the fraternal organization I am involved with, I was active in offering and presenting College scholarships to High School graduates. Not surprising, I have gotten to know a lot of the young people in the area and have developed a good rapport with them. Inevitably, as they grew up I was often asked about their path in life and offered counsel, particularly when they went off to college. As this crop of students started to graduate, I would often talk to them about their professional careers and advise them of the challenges they would face in "the real world." From this experience, it occurred to me there was a void, a black hole if you will, in the transition between our schooling and entering the work force. Our schools are intended to offer an academic understanding of such things as science, math, literature, communications, etc., but they do not really prepare us for the reality of life after school. This is something we all have to learn through the School of Hard Knocks, including yours truly. The objective of this book, therefore, is to try and assist young people in transitioning into the work force without a lot of trauma. There is really nothing magical here in what I have to offer, it is simply a compilation of the items a young person should be cognizant of as they begin their professional career. Maybe the best way to think of this book is as a set of training wheels as we learn to drive a bicycle. Up to now, most of us have been put on the bicycle and simply pushed off without any instruction or direction. We wobble, we fall, but we all get back up on the bike until we figure out what we're doing. This book is intended to give you the necessary guidance to make the leap from the safety of mom and dad and schools, to the brutal realities of the business world. As you will discover, the obvious is not always obvious to a lot of people.

## WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK?

This book is universally applicable to anyone entering the work force for the first time. Although my original thought was to write this for college graduates, it is equally applicable for anyone starting off in life, be it someone entering the work force straight out of high school, an immigrant starting his/her life in this country, or someone leaving the military and entering the work force. Actually, I believe the people from the military will have a better chance of making the transition to the real world as they have already been counseled by professionals and have learned a sense of organization and discipline. Nonetheless, there are lessons herein contained that will help them as well.

Corporate Human Resource (HR) departments will also find this book useful for setting new hires on the right track in their career. The lessons included herein will expedite the adaptation to the corporate culture and thereby make the new employee more productive, more rapidly. It not only reinforces the many formal rules as contained in corporate policy manuals, but also includes the subtle unwritten rules we must all observe while working with others.

## BOOK CONSTRUCTION

The book will consist of a series of essays on a variety of topics. You'll find my style of writing as somewhat "tight"; in other words I don't like to ramble, let's get to the point and keep it short and sweet. One of the concepts I often promote herein is that your personal and professional lives are one and the same, yet I will separate chapters based on personal and professional considerations. The following chapters are included:

- *Introduction* - This chapter is intended to describe the transition from academia to your chosen field of endeavor and sets the stage for the remaining chapters.
- *Shapeth Up and Geteth Thine Act Together* - This section describes the various elements of living as a responsible adult regardless of your professional line of work. It will discuss such things as managing finances, personal organization and planning, taxes,

housing and transportation, etc.

- *Adapting to the Corporate Culture* - In order to function and succeed in any organization, it is necessary for a person to understand and adapt to the corporate culture. This will be a concept I will refer to often throughout the book. It will include essays discussing business ethics, teamwork, and office politics.
- *Professional Development* - This chapter will offer advice on how to learn and grow in your line of work. Continuing education is an important part of everyone's development and prosperity.
- *Social Skills* - This section will address the fundamental skills necessary to socialize in the work place. It will discuss such things as appearance, common courtesy, etiquette, introductions, etc.
- *Do's and Don'ts in the Workplace* - Knowing what is expected from you by your employer along with your rights as an employee is necessary for survival. This chapter will describe such things as policy manuals, performance reviews, traveling on company business, office romances, etc.
- *Management 101* - This chapter discusses the basic philosophy of management as well as some governing laws and rules to be observed. The more you know about what is going through your manager's head, the better you will be able to work for him/her.
- *Conclusion* - This section summarizes the lessons inculcated in the book and makes some concluding observations.
- *Appendix (Bryce's Laws & Quotes)* - This represents a compilation of pertinent quotes and maxims I have found useful in my walk through life. They make some interesting points for you to ponder.

This book represents many years of first hand experience, not only of my own but by countless others. I have been a member of the work force for over thirty years now and thanks to my management consulting business I have had the opportunity to visit hundreds of companies and organizations around the world, in just about every field of endeavor imaginable. This has afforded me a rare opportunity to work with managers and workers at all levels of the corporate hierarchy. I have seen a lot of mistakes made as well as a lot of successes. Hopefully I can pass these experiences on to you.

Early in my college career I learned, "*We enjoy life through the help and society of others.*" Throughout my career I have always found the human dynamics for running a business to be the most stimulating. Like me, as you travel through life, you are going to meet a wide variety of people with different interests and perspectives. And just when you think you have seen it all, someone throws you a curve ball.

*"Concerning the difference between man and the jackass: some observers hold that there isn't any. But this wrongs the jackass."*

- Mark Twain, Notebook, 1898

- *Tim Bryce*  
*July 2007*