

SUGGESTIONS FOR CAREER ENHANCEMENT

James R. Hutton

You are very kind to invite me to speak to you. You have many choices, so I am flattered to be here.

As mentioned, I am the author of a recent book. I wrote this book not to make money, instead to leave a legacy and to hopefully help technical sales people in their careers. During my career, I learned a lot of what impressed customers and what would get the orders and I saw so many of our sales people doing things wrong. I also observed a lot of engineers in their careers and noted that the ones with the broadest range of talents got promoted the fastest and moved the highest in their organizations.

What distinguishes a technical person, makes him stand out, and enables him to move up in management are not always his technical skills, but instead his people and communication skills.

During my travels to field offices of natural gas and oil companies, I have observed that each time a young, out-of-college engineer received a promotion, he did less actual engineering and was required to do other things in management involving people skills for which he has had little training. His slide rule would get dusty in his desk drawer.

The suggestions presented are meaningful, well thought out, and things you can do if you make a serious effort. They were gathered, recognized, and identified during over 50 years spent in our industry all over the world. They are not textbook suggestions. They are not difficult to accomplish, and they are effective. They are mandatory if you really want to excel, to scale the heights, and to break out of the pack.

In considering what to say to you that I felt would benefit your careers the most, I decided to draw on many aspects of my publication and to offer to you some suggestions to enhance your success not only in your careers, but also in your daily lives.

I will discuss 11 suggestions that I believe, if followed, will help you take a giant step in improving your promotibility. I have arranged them in what I think is the order of importance. While considering the order, they kept shifting, but number one never lost its place.

Here is the list.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CAREER ENHANCEMENT

1. Be honest and have integrity
2. Have a good reputation and keep it
3. Love your work
4. Improve your people skills
5. Be a good listener
6. Improve your letter writing skills
7. Confirming in writing all important information
8. Send the right signals out and you will get the right signals back
9. Keep all your promises
10. Keep in touch
11. Improve your telephone manners

Now let us look at #1.

1.0 Be honest and have integrity

The leitmotif or major reoccurring theme of my book is honesty and

integrity. This is not a recent philosophy. I was left a strong legacy by my father who said honesty was not just the best policy...it was the only policy. My father lost his job in the middle of the depression because he would not help steal oil from the landowner. He discovered at a pumping station where he worked that the pumps were taking suction out of the same tank oil from the wells was flowing into. The oil was not being measured or gauged so the land owner would be paid the proper royalty. He promptly alerted the landowner of what was going on. He was laid off a few weeks later. He lost his job because he was honest. This shows how important integrity is to me.

Here is what Warren Buffett says about integrity:

“I look for three things in hiring people:
The first is personal integrity.
The second is intelligence.
The third is high energy level.
But if you don’t have the first, the other two will kill you.”

From “The Unwritten Laws of Engineering” (an ASME publication)

“The priceless and inevitable reward for uncompromising integrity is confidence: the confidence of associates, subordinates, and outsiders. All transactions are enormously simplified when your word is as good as your bond and your motives are above question. ”

Integrity is an inside job and must be developed from within us.

Integrity is the alignment among:

- What we think (beliefs and values)
- What we say to others
- What we do

It is:

- Not determined by circumstances
- Not based on credentials
- Not to be confused with reputation

We build our integrity one step at a time over a long period of time.

When we commit to living a life of what we think, say and do, we will be a person of integrity. People who have integrity live and act in harmony with their values and beliefs. Reaching a higher level of success depends on an individual's ability to be a person of integrity.

Why is integrity important? Trust. Without trust, we have nothing. Trust is the single most important factor in personal professional relationships. The more trustworthy we become, the more trustworthiness we inspire in others.

All of us are dismayed by the recent rash of corporate scandals. This cartoon illustrates how bad it got. We have all heard the old saying that a few rotten apples spoil the whole barrel. The spectator asked if the second man is looking for rotten apples in the barrel. The second man, who is from the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission), replies no, he's looking for good ones. This was a bad time in our country and shows how bad it became.

One word of caution and I cannot say this strongly enough: Don't allow yourself to be encouraged or convinced by your boss or your superiors to do something dishonest in your work. I say that because if later there is an investigation by the authorities, top management will often bail out on you and claim they had no part in the dishonest scheme and that you acted alone. You will be left all alone with the problem. You will be hung out to dry.

Be honest and have integrity at all times.

2.0 Have a good reputation and keep it

I cannot over emphasize this. Bear in mind your reputation is built up...

hour by hour,
day by day,
month by month,
year by year...

over a lifetime and can be severely damaged or destroyed in a heartbeat by inappropriate behavior.

This next slide illustrates what Victor Hugo thought about this almost 150 years ago. It is still true today.

“Be it true or false, what is said about men often has as much influence on their lives, and especially upon their destinies as what they do!”

As Shakespeare put it:

“The purest treasure mortal times afford is spotless reputation.”

Charles W. Eliot, a 40-year President of Harvard University, had this to say about reputation:

“It is the judgment of your contemporaries that is most important to you; and you will find that the judgment of your contemporaries is made up alarmingly early, and often lasts a lifetime. Live today and every day like a man of honor.”

From “The Unwritten Laws of Engineering” (an ASME publication):

“In a surprisingly short period, individuals are recognized, appraised, and catalogued for exactly what they are, with far greater accuracy than they usually realize. Therefore, it behooves you to let your personal conduct, overtly and

covertly, represent the very best practical standard of professional integrity by which you would like to let the world judge and rate you.”

Here is a Bible quotation:

A good name is more desirable than great riches.

To be esteemed is better than silver or gold.

Proverbs 22:1

Bear in mind that your reputation goes out in front of you – it does not follow you. The industry is small and the word gets around. Your image is created by all that you say and do both inside and outside your organization. To many people, a person’s word transcends what is put in writing. Have a good reputation and keep it.

Another suggestion is...

3.0 Love your work

All of us have noted how much more can be accomplished if we love our work and are therefore highly motivated. We have all observed what motivated athletes can do by winning when no one gave them a chance. All loved what they were doing.

There is a Chinese Proverb that goes like this:

“If you would be happy for one hour, take a nap.”

“If you would be happy for a day, go fishing.”

“If you would be happy for a week, kill your pig and eat it.”

“If you would be happy for a month, get married.”

“If you would be happy for a year, inherit a fortune.”

“If you would be happy for life, love your work.”

Love your work and you will accomplish much more and have a happier and healthier life.

In early history, work was considered a necessary evil. Not anymore. Today our work defines us.

Now when we meet someone new, we usually ask them what they do even before we ask where they are from.

New York Federal Judge Milton Pollack died recently at 97. Work, he often said, kept him alive.

Here is my thought about work:

Find a job you truly love and you will never work another day in your life.

Love your work.

The next suggestion is:

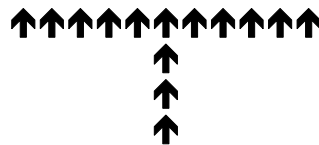
4.0 Improve your people skills

A few years ago, I was playing golf with a retired senior executive from a major oil company. While waiting between holes, I asked him a few questions about his career and what experience gave him the most satisfaction. He told me that during his last few years, he spent several hours each week on a committee whose only job was to evaluate the outstanding performers and recommending who among this select few would be promoted and move up to even bigger and better jobs and to eventually run the company. He went on to say that invariably those not selected for promotion failed due to shortcomings in getting along with

people or in their people skills. He said all were competent technically in their fields. All the engineers were excellent in their disciplines. The mechanical engineers were good. The chemical engineers were brilliant. The civil engineers were outstanding. The geologists, accountants, and lawyers knew and did their jobs well technically, but the failure of almost all of this group to move still higher in the organization was due almost entirely to their inability to communicate well, to manage people, and their inability to get along well with their colleagues, their superiors, and their subordinates – their failure in the “people” category.

To me, it seems that people with only technical skills reach a plateau in their careers and unless they possess other talents outside their disciplines, they top out and don’t move up.

It is like this diagram:



You move up the ladder to a certain level; then you stall.

In order to break out of the pack, you require talent and abilities out of your discipline. Here is what a professor at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh said:

“I advise students all the time, you have got to have something you can do for a company now. That is what gets you in the door. But, if you want to succeed long term, you’ve got to have a broader range of skills and problem solving abilities.”

Hopefully, this presentation will help you toward this goal.

Work hard to improve your people skills. Practicing the other topics I am discussing will help in this category.

The next suggestion is:

5.0 Be a good listener

In 1973, I went with the local manager to call on the maintenance foreman of a large overseas oil company.

On his desk was a plaque with this inscription in Spanish. Since I did not read Spanish, I asked him what the inscription said. He said it epitomized his life history. Then he translated it for me.

“Everything has been said, but since no one listened, I must start over again.”

After I heard the translation, I told our host that it also epitomized my life history and it still does today. People, in general, just don’t listen – and people, in general, do not know how to listen. Most people are lousy listeners, but technical people cannot afford to be poor listeners.

The eye has been the favored child in school while the ear has been left to fend for itself. The neglected ear performs poorly in the world where it must work overtime. It is estimated that we listen at about 25% efficiency. How we do our jobs, how we get along with other people, how we get along with our superiors, what we eat, the medicine we take, what we do to our hair, what we wear, how we furnish our homes, the moral codes we adopt, how we vote – are all greatly influenced by the way we listen.

One hundred technical workers in 47 states were asked to rate reading,

writing, speaking, and listening in order of their importance on their jobs.

The results were:

Reading	4%
Writing	11%
Speaking	22%
Listening	63%

These statistics probably apply to most groups.

To better understand what is being spoken, keep in mind something about the person talking because everyone, when he is speaking, is to a large degree talking about himself. The speaker will unconsciously reflect into his words his inner feelings, his idiosyncrasies, his preconceptions, his assumptions, his background, and his prejudices.

A good example of poor listening by most people is what happens when several individuals from the same company or group attend a meeting with a customer or with their own colleagues. When you caucus later to discuss what you heard in the meeting, you will invariably have as many versions as you had people in the gathering. Sometimes there is such a divergence that you are quite sure that some of the individuals were in a different meeting altogether.

Some suggestions for improving your listening skill:

- Bear in mind listening is hard work and requires real effort
- Pay attention to the speaker and put his needs first
- Let him know that you are listening
- Be empathetic and responsive
- Look at the speaker and stay alert

- Listen for ideas
- Suspend your own judgment while listening
- Ask clarifying or follow-up questions when the speaker stops talking

We often fail to listen because:

- We are too busy.
- We already have our minds made up.
- We are uninterested or day dreaming.
- The problem is either too simple or too complex.

To show how important listening is, consider the following:

This is a true experience. Several years ago (in 1968) we were working on a large project in the Soviet Union. Other firms were involved and their presidents were leading the discussions. Following the conclusion of one of our negotiating visits, I was traveling out to London where I lived and at the Moscow airport encountered one of these presidents whom I knew. The plane was not crowded, seats were not assigned, and when we boarded the flight I sat down across the aisle from him. As soon as we were airborne, he invited me to move over and sit by him. I began the conversation by asking a question about his career, where he grew up, etc. When he finished responding, I asked another question. This was repeated during the next 3 ½ hours. I made a few comments, but mostly I asked questions and listened intently to his replies. Upon our arrival, he was met by his London manager and continued back to the U.S. A week or so later, I had lunch with this London manager. He told me that his president said I was the best conversationalist he had ever met. The only thing I did was to ask questions, to listen, and to let him know that I was listening.

Even today, even today, because of the answers I received, I probably remember more about this president than 98% of the salesmen who ever called on him – even those who saw him over a long period of time.

Two good books on listening are “Your Most Enchanted Listener” by Wendel Johnson and “Are You Listening?” by Nichols and Stevens.

Work hard at being a good listener.

The next suggestion is:

6.0 Improve your letter writing skills

Very few people seem to be able to write letters anymore. Perhaps e-mail has contributed to this.

Our sales people were all university graduates, but their draft letters to customers were pretty grim.

To help them, I always asked them to put down on paper what they wanted to write and to give it to me for revision, but I always told them to be absolutely honest in what they included.

Letters you write are a reflection of you and your company. Also, when you send a letter or e-mail, you lose control of it and you do not know who will read it besides the recipient. His boss or someone very high in, or even outside, the company may be given a copy. Think carefully about what you include in letters and also how you write them and the words you choose. Some words are inflammatory and should be avoided. Read your letters over again and again and don't hesitate to revise. If the letter is complex, or if other people have been involved in what you are writing about, suggest that they read your draft and make comments, especially for accuracy.

Keep in mind also that virtually all organizations have internal politics and occasional jurisdictional disputes; therefore, study and give a lot of thought before including critical or unflattering comments in your written communication. Printed messages have a life of their own and can be forwarded to other people and can be used to crucify, embarrass, or otherwise make someone or some department look bad.

Other suggestions for writing good letters

- Don't play games.
- Be careful with copies. Send copies judiciously.
- When confirming agreements, don't slip something in that wasn't specifically agreed to.
- Avoid inflammatory words.
- While composing the letter, practice empathy. Try to place yourself in the recipient's shoes and evaluate how you would interpret the information included and think about what your reader wishes to know.
- Think about how you can best serve the reader's interest.
- Never talk down. Use temperate language if writing upward or to customers.
- Make sure all names are spelled correctly.
- Make sure titles are correct.
- Make sure grammar and spelling are correct.
- Use soft language. Say we believe, we feel, or we think rather than making strong or rash statements.
- At the top of your letter, in the reference, include relevant information such as:
 - Subject
 - Purchase Order Number
 - Name of Plant
 - Contract or Job Number
 - List of previous meetings, phone calls, or correspondence on this subject.

This enables the recipients to know immediately what you are writing about. It also aids in accurate filing.

- Keep sentences and paragraphs short.
- Use simple language – a province of clear thinkers.
- Tabulate technical information rather than include in sentence form. If lengthy, include it on a separate attached page.
- Do not include in-house terms without identifying.
- Forget I, me, my, mine, we, and ours. Substitute you and yours.

- The opening sentence must, besides compelling attention, obtain the reader's confidence and must radiate the "you" attitude. It must also make clear that he is the one to benefit from the message.
- The closing sentence should be forceful and make it clear what you expect the reader to do.

There are many good books on letter writing. One of the best to help with sentence structure is "Elements of Style" by Strunk & White. Another good reference is "The Elements of Business Writing" by Blake and Bly. Take great pains to learn how to write good letters. It will pay dividends.

Another suggestion...

7.0 Confirm, in writing, all important information, not only to avoid misunderstandings, but also so the recipient will remember more.

I couldn't use this chart in my book because I was unable to determine the source.

Studies have revealed the following about information retention:



Information Retention			
<u>Method of Presentation</u>	<u>Recall After</u>		
	<u>3 hrs.</u>	<u>24 hrs.</u>	<u>72 hrs.</u>
Hears Only (is told)	70%	10%	2%
Sees Only (is shown only)	72	20	10
Hears and Sees (is told and shown)	85	65	50
They say (verbal participation)	90	80	70
They do (physical participation)	95	85	80
They say and do	99	90	90
Hear and Forget	See and Remember	Do and Understand	

This tabulation shows how much information is retained after (3) hours, (24) hours, and (72) hours, depending on how it was presented. From this you will note that if someone hears something only, after (72) hours they retain only

2%. If they see it only, they retain 10% after (72) hours – but if they hear and see it, they retain 50% after (72) hours. If you tell someone something and also put it in writing, they will retain **25** times as much information as if you just talk only.

I find the numbers in this table astonishing – even frightening. To realize that if you just tell someone something verbally that after three days they will remember only 2% of what you told him. This is sobering. In my early days, I failed to confirm very much. – Now I do.

Also, you should always strive to avoid misunderstandings because when misunderstandings occur, it seems that everyone loses. It can cause you embarrassment and can even cost lives. For example, maximum cylinder or vessel working pressure is transmitted only verbally to someone and not confirmed in writing.

Confirm in writing all important information.

Another suggestion:

8.0 Send the right signals out and you will get the right signals back

These words were forever etched in my memory in December 1985 when I received a call from one of our overseas customers I had dealt with for several years. This gentleman called upon learning from our local office that I would be retiring at the end of the year. He exclaimed that he did not realize that I was leaving and, instead, thought I would be around another ten years. I expressed my appreciation for his compliment and went on to say how lucky I felt I was in choosing my profession and my company – especially since I not only had

superior colleagues and bosses to work with, but also because of all the fine, outstanding customers I had the privilege of associating with during my 33 years in sales and how superbly they had treated me. His reply was, “If you send the right signals out, you get the right signals back.” These words came not from another salesman nor from someone in public relations – instead, they came from a brilliant German engineer who spent his entire career with his company in engineering.

Consciously and subconsciously, I was always aware of the importance of presenting a good image to people – especially customers – but I had never thought of this in these exact words. This shows how astute people are and how aware they are of the image you project.

The more I thought about this, the more it occurred to me that some salespeople and others, by their proper conduct, reaction, and demeanor, send the right signals out. Others do not send the right messages out, or worse, send mixed signals. A salesperson can send out the right signals by being responsive to the customer’s needs and requirements, speaking softly, never stringently, and by expressing sympathy to hardships when things go wrong. This type of salesperson will get the right signals back.

Here is a thought from the Bible about sending out the right signals:

Never forget to be hospitable. For by hospitality, some have entertained angels unawares.

Hebrews 13:2

In my manuscript, I listed 36 suggestions for sending out the right signals.

Two other books that will help:

- Attitudes of Gratitude
- Random Acts of Kindness

Send the right signals out and you will get the right signals back.

Here is another suggestion to enhance your career...

9.0 Keep all of your promises

Make a promise – Keep a promise!

It has been my experience that very few people keep all their promises.

The smaller the promise, the more important it is to keep because someone who takes care of the small commitments he makes will certainly take care of the big and more important matters to which he agrees. Make notes of the promises you make so you do not forget them.

I always did that. Many times people expressed surprise when they received something from me that I promised. I would always say, “But I promised it.” The reply was that salesmen and other people come in their office promising all sorts of things and they never deliver. Apparently, this is pervasive. You may sometimes get only one chance with an individual.

Never over-promise: Under promise and over deliver, then you will never be caught short. Also, be on your guard about this, particularly when on unfamiliar ground because when you undertake something, the other person will usually hear what he wants to hear and often read something more into your words than is present or intended. Be sure to make yourself clear in this regard. It is a good idea to repeat your commitment in different words to make sure it is clear.

Keeping all of your commitments develops credibility with others. They soon know whom they can count on and whom they can't.

One of my favorite examples occurred in Houston several years ago. We had a very sticky wicket or problem with a very important overseas customer who felt we had overcharged them several million dollars.

For months, we had been having local meetings with their Houston people in an attempt to resolve the issue, but we were making very little progress. The meetings were usually chaired by their local manager and attended by 3 or 4 of his people.

One month, for our regular meeting, we learned upon arrival at the meeting place that the local manager had jury duty and this month the meeting would be conducted by their big boss from overseas who was visiting Houston.

When the big boss saw me, he greeted me warmly and the meeting started. Then this gentleman said something startling at the time and still startling to me over 25 years later: He said "Mr. Hutton and I have had dealings only once before, but he did everything he promised he would do and solved all my problems." These remarks had an electrifying effect on the people from his company because he was the big boss from the home office and he said something very complimentary about me. You could almost see their fangs disappear.

This one remark assisted us in shortly reaching an acceptable compromise on the dispute and saved my firm a lot of money. His remarks were astonishing because we had had dealings only one time – 10 years before and had not seen each other in the meantime. This proves that sometimes you only get one chance to impress someone and to establish your reputation. Don't

bungle it.

Keep all your promises.

Another suggestion:

10.0 Keep in touch

As we go about our work, it is very easy to lose touch with people we are not currently dealing with. It is always a good idea to keep in touch with people because sooner or later they will reappear in our lives. Keeping in touch can be done in many ways.

One way when your time is short is to have a conversation on the telephone with them. Another is to have lunch with them, even though you have no current dealing with them. Almost everyone goes out for lunch and you can take advantage of that for a brief exchange of thoughts without absorbing much of your time or the other person's time.

1) Sending them postcards when you are on trips or 2) writing a note at Christmas time is a very good way to remind them that you still exist. Another way is to write notes when you learn they have been promoted, change jobs, or have had new additions to their families. If you learn routinely about birthdays or anniversaries, you can send notes on these occasions. Handwritten notes kept on a personal basis are more effective.

If you cultivate early on, this habit of keeping in touch with individuals as they move up in their company, you will, in later years, find that you have a lot of friends in very important and high positions in their organizations. Maintaining contact comes in handy in case you want to make a career change, or must look for another job due to mergers, downsizing, etc. Keep in touch. Friends are

somewhat like money – easy to make, but hard to keep. A lot of people have made all the money they needed in a lifetime, but no one has made all the friends he needed. Keeping in touch has paid off in spades for me. Keep in touch.

My final suggestion is:

11.0 Improve your telephone manners

This is the last topic added to my remarks. This subject may be controversial and some of you may disagree, but I feel strongly about it and feel that it should be addressed. I am 86 and feel I can say it.

Many technical people seem to never answer their telephone – always allowing it to go to an answering machine.

Clearly, sometimes this is necessary when you are away from your office or if you have visitors in your office or working to meet a deadline. But, certainly at other times you can, occasionally, answer your telephone yourself.

Many of you are very busy and cannot always answer, but you should try to do it as much as you can. Answering your own phone sends a powerful message and a favorable signal. You may now be in a commanding position so that people will keep trying to reach you, but you may not always be in such a favorable position. You may work for your existing company the rest of your career, but again you may not with all of the takeovers, mergers, downsizing, etc. You need good relations with your counterparts in other companies and with others in case you must look for another job. You also need good relationships with vendors because sooner or later you will require information to do your job better or will need fast quotations for what they have to sell. You want always to

be treated the best with fast responses and good price and deliveries. To enjoy this, you require good relations. You can enhance your reputation and send out the right signals with good telephone manners.

I believe you should eventually return all phone calls even if you know you do not need what someone is pushing. I usually call back, express gratitude for the call, and explain that I am not interested, and to say otherwise would be misleading. If you don't return all calls, sooner or later, you will miss talking to someone you should have and really wanted to talk to. Being gracious is worth the effort and will pay dividends. It has been my experience that the higher up in a company a person is, the more likely it is that he will answer his own telephone and the easier he is to get in touch with.

Identify yourself immediately whether you are placing a call or answering your own telephone. Also, allow the caller time to identify himself before saying or allowing someone who answers your telephone to say abruptly "Who is calling?"

Good telephone manners apply also when placing calls to someone. Bear in mind that all telephone calls, even on regular phone lines, are intrusive whether to an office or to a residence, but cell telephone calls are even more intrusive. They can reach the recipient in a very awkward situation such as in the middle of a meeting, etc.

It is always a good idea when calling either on a regular telephone or a cell telephone if the recipient answers to ask, after identifying yourself, whether or not you are interrupting anything. If the answer is yes, then immediately say you will call back later. Don't say "Well, all I wanted to ask was this or that."

Stop the conversation immediately by saying you will call back.

I have always followed this procedure and many times, the reply is that I am interrupting a meeting, etc. I always get off the line immediately and call back later.

Also, do not leave sensitive or personal information with someone else who answers the telephone.

Also, when calling on a cell phone, be careful about the questions you ask because others may overhear the answers.

Develop good telephone manners. They add to your reputation and your people skills and will help enhance your career.

To summarize:

If you would like to enhance your career, to improve your chances of professional success and promotion, and to break out of the pack, and be happier, consider the following:

1. Be honest and have integrity
2. Have a good reputation and keep it
3. Love your work
4. Improve your people skills
5. Be a good listener
6. Improve your letter writing skills
7. Confirming in writing all important information
8. Send the right signals out and you will get the right signals back)
9. Keep all your promises

10. Keep in touch

11. Improve your telephone manners

As you consider whether or not you can apply any of these suggestions, please bear in mind:

The road to success is always under construction.

Thank you very much