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## Sage business advice from SCLSNJ's Cathy DeBerry

*As an adult services librarian for 15 years, SCLSNJ's Cathy DeBerry deals with and works with all types of people on a daily basis from all walks of life: business professionals, retirees, parents, the mentally ill, kids, teens, the homeless, and small business owners. Her passion and devotion to her job is clear in everything she does and doing what she loves has led to a great deal of professional success.*

*Here are some of the words Cathy lives by; words she truly believes contribute to her happiness in her work, and ultimately in her success. No matter how cliché these words of wisdom may be, they are the rules she's adopted for herself in the workplace.*



### **You get more with sugar than with vinegar.**

You will be more successful at the workplace by being nice to those around you. Being condescending, impatient, or rude to your peers, superiors, and/or those you manage is rarely effective. A smile should be a permanent fixture on your face. My mother taught me these tidbits when I was little and they still apply to all parts of my life:

- Think before you speak.
- If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say it all.
- (And my favorite) Mind your manners!

### **Give them the pickle.**

When I first started with SCLSNJ, I had the opportunity to watch a DVD called *Give Them the Pickle*. This customer service standard established by Bob Farrell is based on the premise that, to be the most successful at what you do, you need to make your customers happy and the only way to achieve that is by giving them the *pickle*. The *pickle* represents something extra that you do to serve people that sets you apart and makes you memorable. Putting a smile on a client's - or a colleague's - face because you went the extra mile will make their day as well as yours.

### **Always look on the bright side of things.**

Having an optimistic attitude at work isn't always an easy thing to achieve but it is something to which you should aspire. Studies have shown that optimism in the workplace leads to greater success.\* Remember, things aren't always going to go your way. So use those opportunities to challenge yourself. Take control of work situations as well as your reactions to those situations. Ignore what you can, put your head down and continue to do what you do best. There is a great editorial in the *Washington Post* written by Marilyn Hessen, chairman, president and CEO of Lockheed Martin; in it she asks readers: "Who would you rather work with: optimists who work towards a positive vision of what can be, or pessimists who shake their heads and ask what good will it do?" Think about it. Who would *you* rather work with?

### **Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change.**

Change what you can and accept what you can't. Unless your job involves curing cancer, saving lives or sending someone to the moon, it is usually not a life or death situation if you miss a deadline or fail at something you have tried. Remember that your idea isn't the *ONLY* idea. Try taking a breath and putting it in perspective.



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### **Manage up.**

In her book *Managing Up* (available at SCLSNJ), author Rosanne Badowski says, "You need to go above and beyond the tasks assigned to you so that you can enhance your manager's work." By successfully managing up, you will become indispensable. The first step in learning how to manage up is to get to know your manager's style. Executive coach Mariette Edwards offered the following advice in a *Wall Street Journal* article by Elizabeth Garone entitled *What It Means to Manage Up*:

- Pay attention.
- Jump in when needed.
- Do quality work.
- Keep your boss informed.
- Build relationships, trust and an information network.
- Stay out of office politics.
- Learn the art of negotiation.
- Be a good follower when necessary.

### **Challenge yourself by saying yes immediately and worrying about it later.**

The satisfaction you will gain in trying something new, no matter how intimidating, and succeeding at it will repay itself tenfold. Not only will you grow as an employee, but you will grow as a person.

### **It's OK to fail.**

You have heard it before but I am going to say it anyway: It is OK to fail. It will not be the first time nor the last. Do you remember when Steve Jobs and Richard Branson told us to embrace failure? There is wisdom in those words. Don't dwell on it. Learn what you can and move on. Use it to motivate and inspire you and, most importantly, don't be afraid of it.

### **Let go of grudges.**

At one time or another we have all been on the receiving end of harsh, ugly words. But before you write off the person in front of you, stop and think for a second. Give your colleague, your client, your customer, the benefit of the doubt. Grudges get in the way of productivity, success and, ultimately, your happiness.

### **Say 'Hello,' 'How are you?' and 'Thank you' often.**

Need I say more?

### **Take the time to shoot the breeze.**

Getting to know your peers' concerns and desires makes them easier to work with. If you know what motivates them and what frustrates them, compromise, understanding and cooperation in the workplace are easier to achieve.

### **Give credit where credit is due.**

It is important to create an environment where you acknowledge the success of your colleagues, your support staff and even your superiors. Working in an environment where you don't receive credit, praise or recognition leads to frustration, poor morale and burnout. Credit motivates us. Sharing credit will not only make colleagues want to work with you, but you will also be seen as a team player. I would recommend reading Jennifer Robinson's article in *Gallup Business Journal* on the significance of praise and how important it is to the human brain. According to the article, "Recognition is a short term need that has to be satisfied on an ongoing basis—weekly, maybe daily." If you haven't told a coworker "good job" in the last month or so, make it a priority today!

### **When all else fails, feed them.**

Nothing replenishes the human soul more than good food. Treat your staff and/or colleagues to pizza or bagels or some other treat regularly as a way of saying thanks. I can tell you that

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nothing excites the staff at the library more than a tray of homemade cookies during the holidays.

Studies<sup>^</sup> show happier employees are by and large more productive employees. This, in turn, often leads to more successful employees and, ultimately, a more profitable business.

Whether you are self-employed, supervise a small group of people or manage a large corporation, the happiness quotient is something you shouldn't ignore.

Looking to make your place of business a happier place of work and in turn increase productivity? Or are you yourself suffering from burnout or a lack of morale? Look in the mirror. What can you do to make yourself happier, as well as those around you? Incorporate the advice above and you may be surprised at the results. You can't always change the situations or people around you. But you can change how you behave and how you react to those people and situations. Put a smile on your face and you will soon discover that happiness is contagious.

In the August 2015 issue of *New Jersey Business*, Rafael Toro, director of public relations for Goya Foods said it best: "Happy employees translates to happy business. Good employees make good products – not the other way around. When you have happy employees, it affects your business; the products are better; the way you deal with your customers is better."

\* [http://www.academia.edu/5365951/Organizational\\_optimism\\_A\\_Considerable\\_issue\\_to\\_success](http://www.academia.edu/5365951/Organizational_optimism_A_Considerable_issue_to_success)

<sup>^</sup> <http://www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/happy-employees-are-more-productive-employees.html>