

10 Things

THEY NEVER TELL YOU
WHEN YOU START WORK

...AND WHY !



A Free Report from
Ryan Stephenson

Who is Ryan Stephenson?

After graduating with a B.Eng. in Materials Science, Ryan began his career in production management at British Steel. Several years later, he decided to move up a level. He quit, moved to Cambridge and gained his Masters Degree in Business Administration.

Several years on the consultancy circuit followed, realising significant profits for his clients chiefly through productivity improvements, training and change management.

After a brief return to production management, he decided to use his years of experience for better things and founded ProFile Career Dynamics, to pass on this experience and knowledge for the benefit of as many people as possible.

He is now also a professional copywriter, creating sales promotions for clients in traditional advertising media. This combination of business knowledge and marketing savvy is an ideal mix to give winning advice and guidance on how to plan and build a sound career and on how to promote yourself in the job *market*.

He is also the author of,

"Career Magic – How To Get Employers To Work For You.
The New Realities Of Job Hunting And Career Progression
– A Complete Guide"

This must-read for any modern day career person, details:

- How to create your own killer CV,
- How to breeze through interviews with confidence and authority,
- How to career plan,
- How to benefit from flagging organisations,
- And reveals great answers to the toughest interview questions.

This introductory booklet will give you a taste of his style, insights and of the practicality of Career Dynamics information. It also clearly demonstrates whose side he is on. Yours!

10 Things



They Never Tell You When You Start Work ...And Why!

You are about to discover some very useful insights into the world of work. Insights that should make your working days less stressful, more understandable and meaningful and quite possibly more lucrative, too. These few pages divulge some very valuable information. Information that could open your eyes to a new way of working if you so choose; certainly a new way of thinking.

This concise collection of no-nonsense disclosures about the world of work, its pitfalls, its peculiarities and its opportunities took me many years to accumulate and decipher. They could have saved me a whole lot of grief in the early years, had I known it all back then. But they certainly made life more tolerable in the meantime.

It is written in my preferred style - open, free-flowing and conversational, which pulls few punches. This booklet is after all intended to expose a few home truths, so there is no point in mincing about.

You may not like some of the points made here and some you may not believe in or agree with them all. But whether you do or not, they do happen, every day, up and down the country.

It all depends on your personal nature. If you're happy doing what you do, that's fine. If, however, you are looking to make life easier for yourself, or for ways to get on a bit, then you'll likely find the nuggets of information very useful.

As is explained in Number 10, application is the key to learning. So, as you read each one, give some thought as to how it applies to your own situation.

I sincerely hope you find real value in these insights. They have certainly proved to be very valuable for me.

Enjoy.

Ryan Stephenson



The First Thing They Never Tell You



"You will be paid the lowest possible amount they can get away with."

Why should this be so?

1. For a start there is little union power around these days to argue otherwise.
2. You have to wait two years now before you get the employee protection you used to get after 6 months.
3. There are plenty of other people waiting in the wings to take your place for a lower fee if you refuse.
4. If you do protest, you can typically kiss promotion goodbye.
5. Employee costs are a significant percentage of total costs and are usually monitored in budgets and reports. It is often a key management performance indicator (like production, wastage, stock levels and so on). So it is in their *own* promotional interests to keep them as low as possible.

So what's the answer? It depends on your view.

If you need security more than a stunning wage, stay put and argue your case at your annual reviews.

If you want the money, you need to build yourself a glittering CV and jump ship at suitable moments. This may mean volunteering for projects, taking extra responsibility, making suggestions, and sometimes swallowing your pride and compromising your better judgement.

In the lower ranks, getting your way is secondary to getting promoted. The difference you can make is not significant, anyway. The people who can make a difference and can get you promoted are higher up.

Besides, you will eventually have the last laugh when you become more marketable. And nothing annoys your antagonists more than agreeing with them! Be satisfied with that. And make note of No.9 here.

Most of all, keep records of your work, your results and your improvements as evidence for your CV.

Whatever you do, you should realise that it is all a means to an end. Your aim is to build an impressive CV and to back it up with the facts and figures of your proof of capability for your next employer.

The Second Thing They Never Tell You



"You'll never make good money working for other people."

How many senior managers are there at your place of work? And how many others are there? The ratio is likely to be anywhere from 40:1 to 200:1. So if you have their education, background, ability, contacts and perhaps luck, those will be your odds of making that kind of money also. If you lack any one of those parameters, the odds increase exponentially.

Then ask yourself how long you would have to wait before you started earning that sort of cash? By the time you start making enough money to relax with, it's nearly time to retire.

Pah! You want the cash NOW, just when you need it most - when you want to build a home, raise a family, do stuff, take activity holidays, drive a fast car or whatever.

So what do you do about it?

Well, you could look to get into one of the more lucrative and growing business sectors such as computing, finance or recruitment. Or one of the traditional ones such as law or accountancy. Any of these may mean re-training. And you must be sure you are going to at least enjoy it a bit. Alternatively, you could put your efforts into Number 1, above, which may take years to develop, or...

Have outside interests! This is much more fun. Don't fall for get-rich quick schemes (because they are anything but) or home-working schemes. And be wary also of MLM (multi-level marketing) stuff.

Keep your eyes and ears open. Talk to friends. Can you club together and start something? Think about what interests you; what you already know something about. What have you learnt from your employer than you can apply outside? Can you trade your skills elsewhere? Are there certain elements of what your employer does

that you could do better or cheaper? You certainly won't have the overheads they have and that will make you cheaper. Are there ideas and suggestions that would work but which they have failed to or refuse to take on board? "Ripping off" your employer in this way is probably the most common way of doing your own thing. Accumulate everything you can from them that you think might help.

Keep these questions in your mind and sooner or later ideas will start to flow, often in the most unexpected places.

I'm always on the look out for good part-time business ideas myself to pass onto ProFile members. Perhaps I will have the opportunity to divulge some to you in the future.

The Third Thing They Never Tell You



"The willing donkey carries the heaviest load"

Workplace stress is fast becoming the plague of the 21st century. You could fill your house with references on why this is so, but that's for the academics. We haven't got the time or the will to analyse it all. But what is important is how to you may avoid it.

Basically, you need to work smarter, not harder. Here are a few tips on doing just this.

- Pick out the key issues of your work. Identify and work on the important, priority items; the ones that will progress your career. This is the stuff you should be focusing your efforts on in order to make an impact; everything else is just treading water.
- However, you can't just ignore the routine stuff. This you should either systematise, delegate or ignore. Having a systematic way of doing the everyday stuff gets it done quicker, more efficiently and with far fewer errors or wasted thinking time. Write all your procedures down, if it helps to get it clear in your own head. Then look for ways to simplify it. Once it is systematised, it is easier to delegate as well.
- Don't let people dump work on you. It's just laziness. Get them to take it to the boss (unless you are the boss), or suggest someone else is better qualified to do whatever it is. Just get them out of your space. Offer suggestions by all means - two heads are better than one - but don't do the work for them. They will usually find a solution if forced to.
- Delegate upwards. If you have tricky tasks to do, new stuff or things that require a lot of donkey work on your part, there are certain ways around it.

Ask your boss for help, guidance and support. In the modern organisation, that is what they are there for, anyway.

They will often ask you to "stick with it for now" or "do your best" - and then promptly forget about it. In which case, you are surprised, are you not, that they should shun an opportunity to improve efficiency and effectiveness by giving you the support you need.

- Ask for training. You'd be surprised what modern software can do these days; you just need to know where to look.
- Tell your boss it is really someone else's job and outside of your remit. You would do it as a favour, but as it stands, it is just too time-consuming.

ProFile's exclusive book, "Career Magic" explains how to sell the benefits of your proposals and includes a comprehensive list of 1,000 benefit-generator words to help you do this most effectively.

The Fourth Thing They Never Tell You



"They don't really mean it"

"They" applies more to senior than to middle managers. When they get ratty or annoyed, they often don't really mean it.

Let's begin with the basics. There are 3 types of person in the world:

- Those for whom the job comes first, regardless of who suffers or indeed who does it.
- Those who believe you should care for your people first and only do the job within such comfort zones.
- Those who don't care about the job or the people, so long as they are in control.

The latter category is the most dangerous. These are the politicians and the senior managers of the world and they achieve their position through a craving for power. The nature and success of both the people and the job are irrelevant, so long as they have the whip hand.

Many, many tactics are employed to enforce this. Getting angry is just one of them. A bit of well-placed rage can work wonders on the vulnerable and the more sensitive - which typically includes everybody else.

However, standing up to them will not break the façade. Maintaining a show of strength in all weathers is paramount to them. You just have to see it for what it is - play-acting - and take it in your stride.

The Fifth They Never Tell You



"Get noticed - Get promoted"

It's not what you know, it's who you know - and, indeed, what they themselves know. A few percent increase in the quality, quantity or thoroughness of your work can take a lot of effort. This is time that could be used to rub shoulders with those who have the power to promote you and whose opinion of you counts.

I'm not saying you should creep and smarm, but there are two particular advantages in this.

1. You gain information and you "create" luck for yourself. You stand a better chance of being in the right place at the right time and of discovering the difference that will make a difference to your prospects; that one piece of information that can open doors for you.
2. You will gain in professionalism.

Look at it from their point of view. Number 4 tells us that the more senior the manager, the more political they are. Do they take time out to tell you what a great person you are? That you're doing a great job? Or to grill you on the details of the work? No. They are only interested with their own progression. You do the work and they take it to show *their* bosses just how great they are at getting things done.

So the more work you take on, the better your boss will appear in their boss' eyes. A few tips on avoiding the graft are given in Number 3. To also appear like a good promotional prospect...

- Get in early and leave on time. Staying late rarely gets you noticed. But being there before others certainly does. You use this time to work on the stuff that will advance your career - or even your personal stuff.
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- When the boss walks in, have something significant to ask, to suggest or to comment about. Show keen interest and understanding.
- Request training. But you must give sound reasons, including an aim; i.e. what you intend to do with your new knowledge for the good of the company and, in particular, your boss.
- Gain general knowledge of your company's operations outside of your own field or area, including the people. Getting promoted will mean a wider remit, so you will need to know more about a broader range of issues. The more you already know, the lower the risk to the managers in promoting you.

In a nutshell, if you want to be promoted you have to start behaving like you already have been. Then it will become obvious to others what sort of material you really are.

The Sixth They Never Tell You



"You don't go to work to be liked"

That's not to say you have to be a miserable, awkward git to everyone around you. But if there are people who don't fit your desire to improve, you don't have to hang around with them or tolerate them.

There are a multitude of whiners, moaners, groaners, rumour-mongers, gossipers and malicious corrupters in any organisation. These people are toxic. One bad apple can spoil a whole barrel. They also need the company to pour their scorn out onto. They will walk considerable distance to have a good old moan with someone who will sit and listen. Just watch them do it! Their self-esteem is so low, it is impossible for them to keep it to themselves. Misery must seek company.

Don't get sucked into this quagmire. Making a living is hard enough as it is without this drain on your motivation. Besides, these people are going nowhere; they will never gain in rank, so you don't need them.

Instead, hang around with the optimists, the idea-generators and the energetic. This is where important and valuable information and the contacts come from.

Besides, bosses (usually) know only too well who are the doers and who are the malingerers. Hang around with the malingerers and you'll be guilty by association. Hang around with the doers and you'll be part of a valuable network.

The Seventh Thing They Never Tell You



"Perception is reality"

How people *perceive* you is how you really are. If you dress like a slob, they'll think you're a slob; if you speak with firm authority (even though you may be churning inside) you will be perceived as authoritative. If you're perceived as a keen, early starter, that is how you will be considered, regardless of what you are actually up to. If you behave like management material (see Number 5), you'll be perceived as management material.

You should dress as, act as and talk as the position in the company that you wish to be. Get that picture in your mind and start acting it out from today.

The Eighth Never Tell You



"Information is power"

Oh, boy, don't they just know it. There are various forms of power and information is one of the critical ones. This is why there will never be open management. It is far, far more one way than the other. The information that managers hold is one of the principal pillars of their power base.

We are in the information age. Companies that collect and rapidly exploit information have a distinct competitive advantage over their rivals. It's no different on the personal level.

There are some ideas and details you should never divulge to your boss and some you should keep back for the right moment. Every time you let something go, a little of your "proprietary knowledge" (that which is unique to you) goes public and it loses its value.

Think what happens in share dealing. If you were a broker with some hot, insider information, would you let everyone know just so you can look clever, well informed or to curry favour. Not likely. As soon as that information got out, the share price would equalise and you would no longer make a profit from what you used to know. It has lost its value.

So judge the value of the information you hold and keep it for the right moment or for your own use.

I myself have used the tips and tricks I am divulging to you here to work more effectively and efficiently and so get ahead of the game. That meant I could produce and then hoard reams of information, letting it out only at judicious moments to show regular progress. In the meantime, I got on with my own stuff.

The Ninth They Never Tell You



"It's only a game"

Although this means you do have to master the technicalities of what you do, it also means there is nothing wrong with bluffing, cheating and rigging the cards. If the slack in the system gives you manoeuvring space, use it. If there is a way for you to make it look good without having to bust a gut doing it, then take it.

Let me give you a few examples.

- Whilst doing his degree thesis, a friend knew that, on balance, academic theory was more important than the scientific accuracy. So he used his knowledge to get a feel for what the results should look like. Then he drew on his 'key results graph' three points for scale, filled in an arbitrary curve between them and then made the rest up. He got upper second class honours.
 - I saw a technical supervisor alter test results to fit the tolerances. It wasn't important - it had been tested again since - but the gaps and the mistakes would lose the department compliance points in the QA audit if discovered. How often was this done and how much time, effort, worry and stress did it save? Who knows. But it never showed.
 - I've seen fabricated production data. Stuff that would be detected downstream anyway, simply by the poor nature of the material (and so wouldn't go to the customer), but which could never be traced back thanks to a management system with more holes than a warehouse full of Swiss cheese.
 - I've known students crib reports from friends who took the course some time previously, even from back home in foreign countries.
 - I've even known some to pay professionals to do the work for them. After all, what happens when you get a business problem you can't solve internally? You pay a consultant, right?
 - I've also seen a yearly appraisal of mine that didn't even take place. And that's senior management making stuff up!
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So you see how commonplace this is. From beginning to end, top to bottom, people are bucking the system. Have you ever walked over a "keep off the grass" sign? Have you ever done 40 in a 30 zone? Of course you have. You take little advantages wherever you can. Many rules are made just to keep you in your place. If you stick rigidly to every rule made for you, then people will take advantage of you.

The Tenth Thing They Never Tell You



"Watch the X-Files - i.e. Trust no-one"

Don't even trust the stuff in this report! Pardon? Well, it might all be true; then again, it might not! It's up to you to decide. Let me explain myself.

Deep down, everybody has their own personal interests at heart. It's only human nature. Even when you get married, your spouse won't be doing it for your sake. On top of that, everybody sees things in a different light anyway - their experiences are viewed through their own personal "cognitive filter"; i.e. everybody is wired up differently according to his or her own genetics, upbringing, experiences, abilities, rationale and emotions.

Now that's quite a list of fairly hefty parameters and it is what makes everybody's perceptions different.

This means you can afford to take nothing at face value. The key is to absorb, assess and make your own decisions. You shouldn't take prescriptions. Do you think newspapers report what's good for the nation or stuff that will sell their papers? Will an insurance salesperson decline to sell you a policy because they truly believe it's not quite for you? Hardly.

You can't believe what they say. No one has your interests more at heart than you do. That's why you need to filter the world before letting it in.

So the next time your boss says something is really important, ask yourself for whom? Can you do a quick job on it and still keep him or her happy? When something is a rush job, is that really the case, or have they just not considered the options? Or are they just knee-jerking? Or are they just trying to get you to work faster? Or is it down to their lack of organisation and planning and so their own responsibility to do it? Can you gain a favour out of doing it? And from a million other requests made to you during your tenure.

You may think this is being excessively cynical. And cynicism is often cited as being highly detrimental. But that usually comes from those who are trying to exploit you.

For 'Cynicism', read 'Caution'.
For 'Paranoia', read 'Protectionism'.



OK, that's it. Each of the above issues is the core of a potentially large topic. You can learn a great deal more about these and other topics from ProFile.

I hope, as you think about and apply this stuff, that you begin to see just how valuable this kind of information can be. Remember in Number 9, I said it was only a game. Well, do you think you would fare better if there was someone stood behind the other players reading their cards for you?

Well I like to think of myself as being that someone. I've already seen many of the cards people play. And I would like to let you in on the tricks and techniques of the game. Some of the issues covered here are, for example, discussed in more detail in ProFile's exclusive book "**Career Magic - How To Get Employers To Work For You**", which also details a 10-step process to your own killer CV, career-planning techniques and how to breeze through interviews.

You can read more about it and other career-enhancing ProFile products at the web site (www.career-dynamics.co.uk). Or simply e-mail me at ryan@career-dynamics.co.uk.

Earning a living is getting harder all the time. The job market is becoming ever more fluid and unpredictable. You need all the help you can get. And the best form of help is insider help. From someone who's been there and seen it already. Who me? Why, of course!

But don't look upon it as an unfair advantage. All I am giving you is the information gleaned from years of experience - trial and error; success and failure. Others would use it if they had it, so why not you? You need every break you can get these days. Besides, life's too short to re-invent the wheel. You can gain years on the opposition with the right sort of insider information. And I'm here to provide it for you.

The few quid you may invest with ProFile is chicken feed compared to the benefits and rewards you could reap over the coming years - rewards you will continue to reap long after you have

forgotten all about us; perhaps even for the rest of your career. After all, gains you make now will compound in subsequent years.

I wish you a long and prosperous career.

To your future prosperity,

Ryan Stephenson