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Comm 403

Coursework Paper

Being well-rounded can be very beneficial upon entering the workforce. A combination of proper schooling and work experience can help to mold an individual into a successful person. I have taken many courses in my collegiate career. The majority of these classes were very beneficial in preparing me for the workforce. A few of these classes have really stayed with me and I feel that what I have learned in these specific classes will benefit me the most when performing work in my career. The Communication Studies classes that I feel have impacted me the most are persuasion (404), nonverbal (308), and interpersonal (202). Outside of the department, I feel that my public relations course and Spanish courses have benefited me the most. Along with these classes, my work experiences and internships have helped to prepare me for the workforce. After describing the courses and work experience I will compare and contrast my coursework and my experiences to show how they have prepared me for the future.

The first class that I would like to discuss is persuasion. Persuasion is something that is used by most everyone in their day-to-day routines, sometimes without even knowing. Persuasion is used in the workforce, particularly in the field of sales. This class taught me not only how to be a better persuader but how to defend against being persuaded as well. Persuading someone can be very easily accomplished or it can be difficult, depending on the issue. When dealing with a simple issue such as asking someone to run to the store for you, persuasion is easily accomplished. When asking someone to vote in favor of a certain candidate in a campaign, the persuasion can be much more difficult because you are dealing with the person’s values and beliefs. The foot in the door theory reveals how by starting out with a smaller request a person can then be more easily led to dealing with a larger request. In the job of sales, starting out by asking someone to purchase a small item could lead to an eventual purchase of a larger item. This is because they are already involved and have seen how you do business. Another part of persuasion that can be used in the workforce is social proof. If you can show someone that everyone else is using the product then it becomes much more appealing to that person. Again with the example of sales, if you can show someone that other people are using a product and enjoying it then you can more easily make a sale.

The next class that I would like to discuss is nonverbal communication. This class revealed that communication is not only what you say but how it is said. The class also taught me how to read someone’s nonverbal communication when conversing to get a better read on the situation. Two specific concepts from this course that I feel had the most effect on me are body language and eye contact. Body language deals with how people present themselves when communicating. This is a concept that can come in handy in the workforce. The way a person presents themselves while communicating with a coworker may be much different than if communicating with a superior. For instance, if you were in a meeting with your boss you would try not to look relaxed but rather more professional by leaning forward and showing your full attention. Eye contact can be very useful to know about, in life and especially in the workforce. Eye contact can be a sign of respect or reverence and a sign that you are giving your attention. When speaking with a coworker one may not give eye contact during the whole conversation but rather occasionally. When speaking with a superior, one would probably be better off to give full eye contact to show that you were giving the superior full attention.

The last Communication Studies class that I would like to discuss is interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is very important to be aware of because in many cases, the communication is between two people. Two concepts that I feel are the most beneficial to my career in the workplace are impression formation and attractiveness. Impression formation is when a person makes an impression of another and vice versa. This can be the key to obtaining and maintaining a job. Most people use a process called totalizing, where a person focuses on one attribute of someone and uses that to characterize them. This is especially crucial when going for a job interview. If a person goes in to the interview and does not look or act professional then the person hiring could take that and assume that the interviewee does not act professional when working. This could be the difference in obtaining a job or not. Attractiveness is a concept that can also be very beneficial to keep in mind. There are many types of attractiveness including physical, social, and task. In many cases a person’s physical attractiveness or appearance can be the difference in obtaining a job. If two applicants go in for the same job and one looks sloppy and the other looks professional then the job will more than likely go to the one that looks professional. Someone can be socially attractive which means that they work well when out in public. Someone could win over an interviewer simply by having a great personality, and showing that they work well with others. Task attractiveness is when a person is attractive in the area of a certain task. If a boss sees that an intern does a satisfactory job when performing a certain task, then that could potentially help the intern obtain a full time position.

Outside of the department I feel that my introduction to public relations course has really given me information to better myself while in the workforce. Specifically the course showed me how to properly deal with the public with regards to a company. I learned that by being straightforward with the public and giving them all of the information that they need to know a company can present a great image to the public. If the public sees very highly of the company then people are more apt to do business with them. If you are in charge of the public relations and sales are doing great then superiors will notice this and give the credit where it is due. This is information that can be very useful if you are working in the field of public relations. The image of the company is very important to how production goes. For instance, when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, Tide was quick to offer free services to the communities in their time of need. After everything was restored and went back to normal Tide’s sales went up tremendously because of their great image with the public that they created through offering help.

My Spanish courses are also very beneficial to how my performance will be in the workforce. It is not necessarily specific concepts but rather skills that I have learned that can help in my future. Knowing another language makes a person very versatile in the workforce. Not only can they help their company when dealing with English speaking consumers but broaden their spectrum by being able to communicate with people of different cultures. When looking at resumes of potential employees the fact that one applicant can also speak Spanish could potentially give them an advantage in obtaining the job. When in a job, a person that can fluently speak another language could be given special assignments that other employees could not perform because they cannot communicate with the customer.

My work experiences and internships have also helped to prepare me for the workplace. I have worked in many food industry positions that required a good bit of dealing with the public. In the food industry you are in constant contact with people and you have to learn how to deal with them properly to provide the best service. This is an area where experience and exposure gave me the knowledge I will need for future placement in the workforce. Even though studying and taking classes gives you great knowledge to better prepare yourself for the workforce, actually being in the industry will give you the most beneficial knowledge to succeed.

I have also held two internships in my collegiate years. The first internship was at the Department of Motor Vehicles. This internship gave me a great experience in dealing with the public. I was in a window where I was in charge of dealing with anyone that came through my line. I had to be skilled enough to meet the specific demand of each individual customer and be aware of many aspects of driving in the case of a question. I became very skilled at what I was doing by the end of the internship, which helped keep lower lines and speed up the process of transactions. No matter what job I may obtain in the future, this work experience in dealing with the public will be a great asset to have for my future careers.

The other internship that I have and am currently doing is with Northwestern Mutual Financial Network as an insurance agent. This internship is very beneficial in the area of sales. I am required to obtain clientele through personal meetings and phone calls and try and help them out with their financial situations. This is great experience for me, especially if I end up with a job in the field of sales. There is a great deal of communication that is involved with this internship. For instance, I make many phone calls which require skills in communication. By being able to effectively communicate I can better my chances of obtaining a client. Then when meeting with them in person if I can show them that I am someone that genuinely cares about their financial situation through proper communication skills then I could potentially gain more clients. This will of course increase my commission and reputation with the public and with my superiors. It also offers great opportunities for networking. In this job I meet and talk to many people and if I gain them as a client I can obtain referrals which broaden my network. Networking is crucial to being in the workforce because knowing people is everything and many job opportunities amongst other things can be opened up to you.

Having the combination of both coursework and work experiences is definitely a great thing to have for the future. I feel that with the combination of these things I will be well rounded and competent for future positions. I would first like to compare my persuasion class to my internship as an insurance representative. As I mentioned, persuasion can be a key component to a person in sales. If a person is a good persuader then they are likely to make more sales. I learned the actual theories behind persuasion from the class and I have learned techniques found from experience in the internship. This is how they differ. One takes a more theoretical approach to understanding persuasion while the other takes a more hands-on approach. This is getting information on something from two different angles.

Another comparison that I would like to make is my nonverbal communication class and my internship as a sales representative. In selling insurance there are many communication interactions that take place. Being able to read a client or potential client’s body language can be very beneficial to the salesman. I can evaluate the body language of the client and tell what they are most concerned with and whether they become uncomfortable. By taking the nonverbal class I am able to competently evaluate a person’s body language during a meeting and act accordingly. This could give me an advantage over another representative because I would be able to properly assess the client’s needs through good communication. They differ some though because the internship also requires good use of verbal communication as well as nonverbal.

The last comparison that I would like to make is my public relations course and my interpersonal communication course. These two courses are very similar but have different intended audiences. The interpersonal class focuses on the communication between two people whereas the public relations course focuses on the relationship between an entity and the public. The public relations course taught the same thing but on a grander scale. The differences between these two things though are that when dealing with a one-on-one interaction it is on a more personal level. Maintaining a relationship between two people focuses on each individual’s needs and wants and it is give and take relationship. When an entity wants to maintain their relationship with the public they must do so on a broader term. They have to take into consideration that they are dealing with a bigger and much more diverse audience than in an interpersonal interaction.

Coursework and work experience are great things to have on your resume when entering the workforce. It can make you well-rounded by gaining knowledge from two different approaches. Communication classes will help me in my future as well other classes outside of the department. The other classes help to give you information that may be more specific to the career choice. In my case, taking a public relations course will be just as beneficial as my communication classes because I hope to obtain a career in public relations. It is not just the knowledge gained from one aspect or the other but rather a good combination of all three that I feel will help set me apart from the rest when entering a career.