

SO NOW YOU HAVE A JOB..

OBSERVABLES FROM A CAREER IN INDUSTRY

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THREE TOPICS

- Welcome to the workforce
- Personal growth
- Challenges
- Spread throughout the presentation are “Job Lessons” I learned along the way. These slides will have titles “JL#” etc.

FOR CONTEXT...

- I was never the smartest person in the room
- Squeaked out a B average in under-grad
- Thought I was an imposter surrounded by geniuses
- Struggled with the math classes... but thermodynamics made sense (?)
- Quickly learned at work that if I was to be successful... I had to pivot to my strengths

MY CAREER WENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS

- Lockheed Martin
- Grad School (Mines)
- Stellar Solutions (consulting firm)
- Lockheed Martin
- Digital Globe
- Lockheed Martin
- Retire
- Consultant

CHAPTER I: WELCOME TO THE WORKFORCE

QUESTION I HAD AS A NEW HIRE

How does this work... I show up, then what

What are they (managers) expecting of me

How do I know if I am doing a good job

How do I discriminate myself from others

What are things to avoid

Will the company help me in my career

Did I choose the right job

RULE #1 OF INDUSTRY



Nobody cares where you
went to school

But it does make a difference

INDUSTRY IS A MERITOCRACY

Meritocracy

🌐 66 languages

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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



It has been suggested that *Discrimination of excellence* be **merged** into this article. ([Discuss](#)) *Proposed since July 2025.*

Meritocracy (*merit*, from [Latin](#) *mereō*, and *-cracy*, from [Ancient Greek](#) κράτος *kratos* 'strength, power') is the notion of a political system in which [economic goods](#) or [political power](#) are vested in [individual](#) people based on ability and talent, rather than wealth or [social class](#).^[1]

Part of [a series](#) on

Politics



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- It isn't perfect... But to first order it is true

YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT....

- But wait... I have a CS degree from Mines and you have me doing what!!?
- Many positions start out slow....Your manager and company don't really know you well
- Patience can be a good thing
- Perform with excellence ... no matter the task.

WORK CAN FEEL SLOW

- Compared to school.

EXPECT SLUDGE

- Training
- Meetings
- Waiting on others to get something done or provide input.

YOUR FIRST MANAGER... THINGS THEY LOOK AT



Do you play well with others?



Do you show up?

"80% of **SUCCESS**
is *Showing Up*"

----By Woody Allen



REAL FEEDBACK IS RARE..

- No longer knowing exactly where you stand.

JL#1: ANYONE YOU INTERACT WITH CAN ONE DAY BE YOUR BOSS

- Respect everyone... Regardless of company position
- Your Peers are your future boss.

JL#2: EMBRACE INCONVENIENCE

- Like working a weekend when nobody else wants to
- Stay late to get the job done if others are depending on you.

JL#3: ALWAYS BE ON TIME.

- Showing up
- Meetings
- Training
- Lunch.

JL#4: TECHNICAL SKILLS ARE ASSUMED

- All your peers went to school too
- It is rare technical limitations are an issue for a new hire
- Your bosses assume you have the skills until proven otherwise.

CHAPTER 2: PERSONAL GROWTH

- Mines Grads – you have an advantage

WHEN BRIEFING MANAGEMENT....

- “Be sincere, Be brief, Be seated.” —Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- “The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.” —Thomas Jefferson
- “It is my ambition to say in ten sentences what others say in a whole book.” —Friedrich Nietzsche
- “I have made this letter longer than usual because I have not had time to make it shorter.” —Blaise Pascal
- “I have already made this paper too long, for which I must crave pardon, not having time to make it shorter” – Benjamin Franklin
- My Mom used to tell me “the definition of boring is no detail left unsaid”
- And yes, I see the irony in this slide being long...

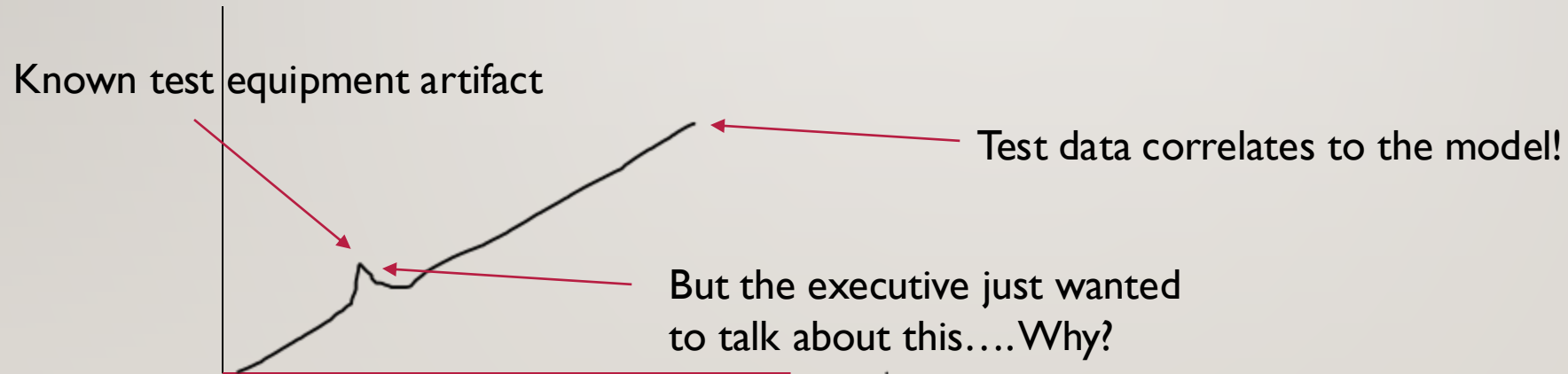
SO LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS... COMMUNICATION

- Become a story teller – but make it short
- Your audience is thinking one thing: WIIFM (What's in it for me?)
- In a room full of technical talent... the best communicator rises to the top.



TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION -

- Demonstrate you know the “why” behind anything you show as important
- Anticipate the questions..And give the answers in the chart



TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION ... CONTINUED

- If you have a slide full of words ...
- You are telling me this
 - You are not confident to discuss material
 - You don't want me to listen to you
 - You prefer to write a paper than communicate concepts and ideas
- Pictures typically better than words
- Explain the “why you should care”

What is a Prioritization Framework?

A prioritization framework is a structured approach or methodology used to make informed decisions about the allocation of resources, time, or attention to various tasks, projects, or goals. It helps individuals or organizations determine what should be done first, what can be delayed, and what might not be worth pursuing at all. Prioritization frameworks are commonly used in business, project management, personal productivity, and various other contexts to ensure that efforts are focused on the most important and impactful activities.

Here are some key elements and principles commonly found in prioritization frameworks:

1. **Criteria:** Establish clear criteria or factors that will be used to evaluate and rank items for prioritization. These criteria could include factors like importance, urgency, cost, potential return on investment, alignment with strategic goals, and feasibility.
2. **Scoring or Weighting:** Assign scores or weights to each criterion to reflect their relative importance. This helps in quantifying the importance of each factor in the decision-making process.
3. **Data Collection:** Gather data and information relevant to the items being prioritized. This could involve market research, financial analysis, customer feedback, or other sources of information.
4. **Ranking:** Apply the criteria and scoring to each item to create a ranked list. This list represents the order in which items should be addressed or pursued.
5. **Review and Adjustment:** Regularly review and update the prioritization list as circumstances change or new information becomes available. Priorities may shift over time.

JL#5: EVERY TIME YOU GIVE A BRIEFING OR STAND AND SPEAK TO A GROUP... THAT IS AN INTERVIEW FOR YOUR NEXT THING

- The impression you make often comes from the day to day opportunities you will have to be heard.
- How you handle yourself and how you communicate ideas is what sets you apart from others

JL#6: STYLE POINTS MATTER... A LOT

- Reputations are built in two dimensions
- Managers typically take a good team player over “the smartest person”

JL#7: PROOFREAD EVERYTHING YOU WRITE.

- Be a precise communicator

NEW TOPIC... INTERVIEWING

- So, you have your foot in the door... what about you next position?

YOUR REPUTATION IS EVERYTHING

- Everything you have ever written down on apps is available to hiring managers
 - Social Media is a bonanza to see who you are and what you find important.
- At work, your people skills make an impression .. good or bad
- Ideally, you want to be asked to apply to positions
- As you move up, ethics and integrity are far more important than tech skills
 - And we managers talk about you all the time

JL#8: BE THE HIGHEST INTEGRITY PERSON

- Always, always own your mistakes, and own them publicly. Folks that are quick to take responsibility are noticed as high integrity, and others will trust them
- Speak the truth, even if folks don't really want to hear it
- Don't be afraid to bear bad news... bad news doesn't get better with time, so it is always better to deal with it up front, and as soon as you can
- Give credit to others. Be that person who is the champion of other people, not yourself
- If you don't know something.. Say "I don't know"! Don't make stuff up! We can tell.



JL#9: PRACTICE FOR INTERVIEWS ...AND DO IT AGAIN

- Especially for leadership positions
- Use a friend or mentor –
- Don't wing it!
- We can tell if you are prepared... It is a test

INTERVIEWS - BEHIND THE SCENES

- Managers typically have a bias – it is human nature
- You can win or lose based on your “get off the stage speech”
- You must differentiate yourself
- We hiring managers get in a pile and talk about you before and after...

SOMETIMES INTERVIEWS ARE OPEN BOOK TESTS

- You have the questions ahead of time
- It is all about the quality of your answers, and the delivery

OTHER LESSONS LEARNED ALONG THE WAY

JL#10: ALWAYS BE SLIGHTLY IN OVER YOUR HEAD

- Take assignments that challenge you or you will never grow
- If your job becomes too easy, it is time to do something else
- Be a risk taker – you don't have to blindly follow

JL#11: TAKE ON A LEADERSHIP ROLE

- These can come in different forms. But leadership fundamentally starts with being in a position of influence...
- Learn to influence others while being respectful
- Lead a task, lead a group, lead a product... Many different flavors

JL#12: DON'T TALK BAD ABOUT PEOPLE... IT ALWAYS COMES AROUND BACK TO YOU.

- This again is a reputation thing... Even if you talk “in confidence” about someone... You are that person now.



JL#13: BEING TECHNICALLY COMPETENT IS EXPECTED OF EVERYONE. THE WAY YOU GET AHEAD IS TO EARN TRUST.

- Trust and integrity matter more than technical skill

JL#14: TAKE THE EXTRA 5 MINUTES TO HAVE A CONVERSATION

- Get to know what makes people tick. A ton can be learned from listening. Even if is someone you just “need something from”. Take the time to be nice and get to know them. It will pay off later.

JL#15: EVERYONE IS THERE FOR A REASON.

- Just because you don't see the value in what they are doing doesn't mean it isn't valuable to the company.
- Be slow to judge.

JL#16: UNDERSTAND WHAT THE BUSINESS DOES, AND HOW IT MAKES MONEY

- Any job you have – if you work for yourself – or work for others... how does it make money. Learn about it because that drives how decisions are made.



JL#17: TAKE TIME TO ENJOY YOURSELF

- People that have joy in their lives are more fun to be with
- Find something in common to laugh about. Once you can share a laugh with someone, there is a bond that is created that can get stronger.

JL#18: BE CAREFUL BEING SNARKY

- While it can be clever, unless you know everyone in the room, don't do it. And especially be careful on chat platforms... it is all archived

JL#19 ALWAYS ASSUME EVERYONE ELSE IN THE ROOM IS SMARTER THAN YOU,

- Always start from a place of humility



JL#20: YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF YOUR CAREER.
NOT THE COMPANY



JL#21: IF YOU DO THE SAME JOB YEAR TO YEAR, EXPECT
YOUR PAYCHECK TO BE THE SAME YEAR TO YEAR.



JL#22: IF YOU ARE TALKING, YOU AREN'T LEARNING



JL#23: FIND THE RIGHT WAY TO DISAGREE WITH YOUR BOSS

- Ask questions....“have you thought about this..”?
- Re-frame “I see it differently.... Have you considered... blah blah”
- At the end of the day... it never serves to be sideways with your boss, so do whatever it takes to make their job easier for them.

TO WRAP THIS UP...WHAT I SEE FROM MINES GRADS

- Critical thinking skills are second to none
- Mines grads networks remain strong in the workplace
- Easily move careers....You aren't stuck!

THAT'S IT... QUESTIONS

