

Re: What was your first job out of college?

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- *From:* "Michael A. Terrell" <mike.terrell@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sun, 30 Sep 2007 14:05:16 -0400
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terryS wrote:

I tend to agree with Michael. In my mind no matter what job one does one should be professional enough to be able to communicate effectively and accurately in at least one language.

My english isn't perfect, but at least I try. I took Latin in high school, all those decades ago. :(

For most of us that is English; sadly too like most I have no other language capability which is certainly a limitation. With time back would certainly have learnt French or maybe Spanish. Although the way the world is developing Chines or Farsi (India) might be better but much more difficult for a westerner (and an older one at that) to learn even a smattering.

That doesn't mean we don't all, occasionally, in haste, misspell a word or don't use 'Spell-check' correctly. But bad sentence construction etc. only obfuscates and tells the reader that YOU don't communicate very well!

I have nerve damage in my left hand, and carpal tunnel in my right, so my fingers don't do what I tell them. i read what i've written, and correct it, then run the spell checker. that doesn't get everything, but it does get enough to make the messages readable.

For example: I had a graduate engineer working for me at one time who couldn't write even to follow a pre-set format. We (myself and other managers) wondered how he ever passed his engineering courses. We gave him a low performance review for that and other reasons and he

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eventually straightened himself out.

I have taken test procedures back to the engineers who wrote them, and they couldn't figure out what they wrote. They also had a bad habit of specifying test equipment not available on the production floor. They expected the cal lab to find something suitable, but at one time several specified a network analyzer, and the only one in the company was locked in that engineer's office. This was before they went ISO 9001. One of the things we did during that time was to remove all references, except to test fixtures.

Eventually, I was allowed to rewrite these useless documents. Before I sent them to be signed off by the engineer in charge of that product, I would have a technician who had never worked with that item sit down and run through an actual test. The idea was to make each test procedure clear enough that any technician they hired who was worth keeping could do almost any job, without outside help.

A lot of original test procedures were so convoluted that it took you through the same steps, several times. One AGC board averaged 5.5 hours to test. A slight change to the test fixture, and streamlining the directions took the average test time to 18 minutes. (Some of the integration ranges had to be measured with a period counter, and calculate the actual frequencies.)

These days much communication is direct (email, MSN, ng postings etc.) i.e. no secretarial involvement at all, such as this item that I type and post myself. Must spell check it before sending and read over to spot the worst of any grammatical errors.

Criticism welcomed. Always willing to learn.

Constructive criticism is a useful tool, to those who aren't 100% ego. :) There is no hope for that small group. :(

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Service to my country? Been there, Done that, and I've got my DD214 to prove it.

Member of DAV #85.

Michael A. Terrell
Central Florida

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