

WORK: PRACTICES & ATTITUDES



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**Miracles can be made,
but only by sweating.**

Source: *Corriere della Sera* (1994), by Giovanni Agnelli (1921-2003)
an Italian industrialist

Finding a Job

- **Preparation**

- Know your ability
- Go searching for information about job vacancies (newspaper ads, job placement agencies, internet)

- **Networking**

Becomes important in relation to widening your chance of getting information or being known by others.

- **Resume Development**

- It is about “selling yourself” through the use of resume and cover letter

- A resume: a summary of *professional goals or objectives, education, previous jobs, professional skills, accomplishments, and honors.*

- A cover letter: a letter containing a brief information about one’s professional background together with the position s/he wishes to apply.

- **The interview**

- It is worth remembering that “You are what you say”

- Personal appearance and hygiene should be carefully taken into account.

- Some common questions in an interview may be culturally problematic to some people.

- many Asians are taught not to boast about their individual accomplishments.

Employer-Employee Relationships

- The nature of the relationship is casual; however status and hierarchy in the United States organizations do exist.
- Outward appearances (i.e. people's interactions) make this fact less obvious.
- Subordinate-superior relationship is often characterized by the use of first names in daily conversations. Many outsiders may find it difficult to identify "who the boss is".

On-the-Job Communication Skills

- Directness and honesty becomes one of the important issues here.
- When you don't understand, say that you need some more explanations.
- Silence may be seen as the sign of boredom or being uninterested.
- Active verbal interaction becomes an integral part in American business meeting.

“Time is money”

- One of American values: “time flies.”
- Promptness and punctuality are major expectations in American workplace.
- Common workdays: 8-4, 9-5

Workaholics

- Two views on workaholics:
 - Valuable members of society: productive and embody the values of achievement and efficiency
 - Recently seen a form of abuse to one's physical and mental state.

Work Ethic

- Action and work orientation is one of American values. Work often define people; their identities come from what they do.
- Driven by “achievement motivation”, people try hard to be productive and they work hard for this.

Reactions to Work

- People work to survive; they work to make a living.
- However, besides for survival, your job can say other things about you. “What you do” can reflect “What you are” and “Who you are”

References:

- Levine, D.R. and Adelman, M.B. 1993. *Beyond Language*. Cross-cultural communication. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.