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**HOW TO SUCCEED  
IN BUSINESS  
WITHOUT REALLY TRYING**

**AN INTRODUCTION**

Hand in hand with our rules and little exercises we will include bits of illustrative dialogue. This is intended not to amuse but to clarify certain points.

All but a very few of these illustrative bits were taken *from life*, indeed from the very career of a man who was a living monument to the precepts of this work—and proof not only that our method *can* work, but that it *has* worked, and the evidence is there, for us all to see.

Our character has been dubbed Pierrepont Finch, though there will be few among you who won't break into a sly smile of recognition as his career is unfolded.

**A WORD OF CAUTION!**

This book will be beneficial only to those who bring to it purity of thought. It is designed *solely to show you how to succeed in business and to make money* and will be effective only to those who read it with these aims in mind. Those who bring with them selfish motives will receive small comfort and scant benefit.

## HOW TO APPLY FOR A JOB

Let us assume you are young, healthy, clear-eyed and eager, anxious to rise quickly and easily to the top of the business world.

You can!

If you have education, intelligence, and ability, so much the better. But remember that thousands have reached the top without them. You, too, can be among the lucky few.

Just have courage, and memorize the simple rules in the chapters that follow.

### CHOOSE THE RIGHT COMPANY

This is the first essential, neglected by so many. There are thousands and thousands of “right” companies. Find them. Make sure *your* company fits these easy requirements:

1. *It must be BIG.* In fact, the bigger the better. It should be big enough so that nobody knows *exactly* what anyone else is doing.
2. *It should be in a Big City.* This is not essential, but it helps. New York City is best, but many others will qualify. The reasons are too complicated to be taken up here. (See “Be a Commuter” under “How to Plan Your Day,” and “How to Play Company Politics.”)
3. *Beware of “Service” Companies.* Be sure yours is a company that makes something, and that somebody else has to make it. Any company with a factory will do. Beware of organizations offering personal services, whether they be law offices, advertising agencies, or animal hospitals. They will give you few opportunities to relax, or to plan your future.

This will leave you a wide field. Remember, you are about to embark on the sea of life. It is important to choose men you would like to *sail* with.

### DON'T BE A SPECIALIST

If you have a special knack, such as drawing or writing, forget it. You may receive more at the very start for special abilities, but don't forget the Long Haul. You don't want to wind up behind a filing case drawing or writing!

It is the ability to Get Along, to Make Decisions, and to Get Contacts that will drive you ahead. Be an “all-around” man of no special ability and you will rise to the top.

## HOW TO GET THE INTERVIEW

The first step is to get in, to get the appointment. A friend's recommendation is helpful, or a letter stating useful experience. But if you have no useful friends or any related experience, don't be discouraged!

Use *an Idea*. For Dad, a bright, chatty "come-on" letter and a snappy photo were enough. Not so today. Your prospect throws away a basketful of them every day. Your Presentation will have to stand out. Be original! Be dramatic!

Think how *you* would feel if you were a personnel man and a quartet arrived singing a clever set of lyrics like "He's a Big Man, Rivers!" to the tune of "Old Man River." Or, "The Smith a Mighty Man Is He."

If your name isn't Rivers or Smith, a few moments' thought will turn up a dandy for *you*.

Another sock idea is a boxing glove and prayer book, attached to a snappy note beginning: "For that old Sunday punch you need a man like (INSERT YOUR NAME HERE).

Remember this: It's easy to drop a letter in the wastebasket, but it's hard to overlook a piece of artillery or a Shetland pony.

Think up one yourself. The surface has barely been scratched.

**Warning: Avoid Sentimentality.** A lock of your hair, a photo of you as a tiny tot, or a baby shoe may force a tear, but it will not get you a job.

## REFERENCES

Always include references in your presentation. If few people will speak well of you, list uncles or cousins with different surnames.

A good trick is to list a recently deceased tycoon, scratching his name off lightly.

*"Poor Bunny," you will say later in the interview, "I'll take his name off my new résumé."*

## SEIZE YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

Though you, as a keen young man, must plot a straight course and an accurate one for your business career, leaving little to chance, you must nevertheless be ready on an instant's notice for the knock of Opportunity.

This is particularly true in the early stages before you make your connection. Suppose, for example, you happen to run into the head of a large corporation:

*"Oops, sorry, Mr. Biggley, didn't mean to knock you down!"*

*"You blasted idiot!"*

*"I was just coming to ask you for a job, sir—"*

*"Dammit, you imbecile, what do you think we have a personnel man for?"*

Seize your opportunity! Go to the personnel man:

*"I was speaking to J. B. Biggley only this morning."*

*"Biggley himself?"*

*"He said to see you."*

*"Not old J.B.!"*

*"Oh, yes. Just happened to run into him."*

*"Well, well, Mr. uh—"*

*"Finch. Pierrepont Finch."*

*"Well, this may be over my level, Mr. Finch. Perhaps you ought to see Mr. Bratt."*

And so, in one way or another, you will have stormed the gates and the company of your choice will be quick to grant you that important interview.

Once you have been granted an appointment, prepare carefully.

### HOW TO DRESS

The impression you must convey is that you don't really *need* this job—the job needs *you*. It is a challenge. Dress with this in mind.

The note is one of studied carelessness. By all means wear a Madison Avenue Sack Suit. If one is not available to you, borrow any old suit from a comparatively shapeless friend, remove the padding, and roll about in it on a clean level surface.

Accessories should be kept in the same minor key. A black knit tie is good for creating the feeling that you don't really give a damn. Wear shoes of the same pair. No good being *too* relaxed.

### NO MUSTACHE

Avoid not only mustaches, but also sideburns and chin whiskers. Men with facial hair are seldom trusted. (Later you will have more latitude, as you will see in the chapter on Junior Executives.)

### A WORD TO WOMEN

Women are often hired by women, but it is well to be prepared for any emergency. If you're not sure of your interviewer, it is best to bring along a handy Convertible Kit. This consists of a Salvation Army hat (insignia removed), heavy glasses, zip-on Mother Hubbard, and an extra pair of flat-heeled shoes. These can all be slipped on quickly in the reception room after the receptionist says, "Miss Blank will see you now." If, of course, it is *Mister* Blank who will see you, just leave your equipment in a neat pile in the reception room. No one will take it.

Aside from your Convertible Kit dress carefully, with Mister Blank in mind. Nothing will be wasted because if you do get the job, these will be your regular working clothes.

It must be remembered that the well-bred girl is always fully clothed in the office. The broken shoulder strap, the deeply split skirt, and the bare midriff are *de trop* in most businesses. The bright girl soon learns that these devices are not only in bad taste, but are not necessary.

It is not skin area but *contour* that counts.

A few simple experiments with sweaters, jerseys, and a slightly smaller dress size

will bring pleasing and surprising results. One young lady who made a careful study of contour planning found that results were little short of breathtaking. The male workers were stimulated and encouraged, and though production dropped slightly, it was *more* than made up for in better morale, and greatly improved esprit de corps.

A common stumbling block to contour planning is occasional lack of contour. However, those not blessed by nature need not be discouraged. Science has come to your rescue! Several good commercial devices may now be purchased freely.

The fact that your contour-corrected attire may seem sexy should not disturb you. Sex will be farthest from the male interviewer's thoughts! He will be thinking of your mind. However, he will have learned in the School of Hard Knocks that good minds are most often found in good bodies, and that beauty and brains only too often go hand in hand!

### THE CASUAL MANNER

Always remember that in business there are plenty of grubby little people to do the work, but a person of real charm is a pearl indeed. This is what your interviewer will be seeking and you must help him (or her) to find it.

Remain relaxed, casual, friendly, and sympathetic. Imply that you, too, have sat on his side of the desk.

*"I know what a nasty chore this interviewing is," you say.*

*"You get used to it."*

*"I wouldn't mind if it were always people like us."*

Note the "people like us." It is always well to *include the interviewer*.

Some other valuable phrases:

*"The money is secondary. I'd like to be one of you people."*

Or:

*"The human values are the important thing, don't you think?"*

### DON'T BE PINNED DOWN

He will be interested in you *as a person*. Encourage this. But he may ask you specific questions about experience, just to make conversation. Parry these skillfully.

*"But exactly what did you do, Mr. Finch?" he may ask.*

*"All phases of the operation. I'll send you a detailed résumé." (He'll forget this.)*

*"But couldn't you tell me just one—"*

*"I like that picture! Van Gogh?"*

Keep him off balance. But keep things on a high plane!

### "WHY DID YOU LEAVE?"

If you are leaving a job, or if you have a job and are seeking a better one, you may be asked, "Why did you leave?" or "Why do you want to leave?"

Even if you were fired, and thrown bodily out the door, remember this: *Don't be bitter*. This would mark you as a sore-head or difficult personality.

Remember these phrases:

*"They're a grand bunch of people."*

Or:

*"They were mighty happy years, mighty."*

Since this, of course, will not answer your interviewer's question, he may repeat, "Well, then, why did (do) you want to leave?"

Tread carefully here! The impression you want to convey is that you can get along with *anyone*, no matter how difficult. Imply that you, somehow, were *above* them.

*"I felt that I had outgrown them," is useful.*

Or:

*"Let's face it. They're not up to you people."*

Or:

*"Well, it's an old outfit. I want to work with young men." (If the interviewer is young.)*

Or (if he is old):

*"Somehow they seem a bit callow. I want a shop with experience!"*

After a few such interviews you will be hired quickly. You will then have your foot on the first rung of the ladder.

[NOTE: Those who have already risen from mailrooms, or managed to bypass them altogether, need not learn this chapter by heart. It will be enough to run through it quickly a few times, jotting down important points. These may help you to rise from other things.]

Beginners often spend their first golden months—or years—in the mailroom or shipping department. Years hence, when you are careworn, harried, and tax-ridden, you'll look back fondly on those golden, carefree times and see yourself as you were then, clad only in a three-button West-of-England tweed, cheeks tanned, eyes clear, trudging happily to the post office with a sack of mail.

But remember, the thing is to Get On, to succeed, to escape from the mailroom, and it is to this purpose that this chapter is written. Let us leave the nostalgia to other, more skillful pens.

#### HOW TO DRESS

After you have made your mark you may cultivate a studied carelessness, but the mailroom man must always make a good impression. In fact, it is impossible for an ambitious young apprentice to be *too* well dressed.

Dress at all times as though you were attending an informal wedding or tea dance: conservative—but well-cut—lounge suit, the best white linen, carefully knotted four-in-hand from Sulka or Countess Mara, and good, well-boned boots. Do not be concerned with expense.

#### HOW TO LIVE

How, indeed, the fainthearted will cry, if your tailoring bills alone more than consume your \$27.50 a week? Never fear. If you are one of those poor devils without independent income or generous women friends, you can still survive easily. Supper money and judicious use of “taxi” money will allow you to eat lightly.

*You need not pay rent.* You will find that the offices of your firm's executives are handsomely equipped and comfortable. They are, in addition, often in a fashionable part of town and are, of course, close to your work. Choose an office with a large comfortable couch and quiet exposure. Some prefer one facing east. It is cheerful to see the sun rise! Generally speaking, the higher the executive the larger the office, the more comfortable the couch, and the later he will come in mornings. As long as you

are out by nine-fifteen, no one will complain.

*You need not perform menial tasks.* It is extravagant to wear out a pair of \$30 brogues on a simple errand! Keep the phone number of a good messenger service at your fingertips. While the fellow is delivering his package, wait at your university club, using the time profitably to plan your promotion.

### **SOME USEFUL TIPS ON HOW TO BE PROMOTED**

1. *Attract Attention.* Let them know you're there—in a well-bred way, of course.

After an especially difficult assignment return with package directly to executive's office (not to the mailroom!) with visible evidence of hardship. A bit of blood is helpful, if wiped from the face in a devil-may-care manner as you enter his office.

*"You must have gone through hell, boy!" he will say.*

*"Finch, sir, Pierrepont Finch."* (Always be careful to establish the name.) *"It was nothing, sir."*

*"Blood, eh?"*

*"Just a scratch. Some hoodlums tried to take it from me."*

*"Oh?"*

*"Taught them a lesson, sir!"*

But don't *push!* Remember, the elevator and the men's room are the only places where you will meet the executives on a man-to-man basis. Don't press your advantage. Just a word or two is enough.

*"Damned fine memo of yours on the wicket situation, sir," you will say.*

*"Oh, you like it, uh—"*

*"Finch, sir. I agreed with almost all your recommendations."* (Note the "almost.")

2. *Read Memos.* You will soon find there is little information of any value in them (see chapter on Memos, How to Write), but they are mighty handy in cases like the above.

3. *Write Memos.* Write them on any subject. Small matter what you write them about, as long as you write them often. No one will read them, but someone will notice your name at the top.

4. *Two Heads Are Better Than One.* The chap who uses his head will not long stay in

the mailroom. Ideas are the thing, but you may find that because of your boyish appearance and young open face few people will take you seriously.

Don't be disheartened! Remember that two heads are better than one, especially if the other one belongs to an influential executive.

A quick run through the files will turn up a number of ideas over which some of the executives have fought long losing battles.

Read all the correspondence on one of these, then approach the man whose baby it was:

*"Oh, pardon me, sir, I know it's presumptuous of me, but I haven't been able to sleep lately for thinking of the wicket retreading situation."*

*"Yes? Well, come in, son!"*

(At the very words "wicket retreading" he will begin to breathe more rapidly.)

*"Finch, sir, Pierrepont Finch. Please tell me if I'm on the right track."*

Then rehash his whole idea in your own words.

*"Well, what do you think, sir?"*

*"I think it'll work, Finch! I know it'll work. And it would have worked, too, except for an, uh, political situation."*

*"You mean it isn't a new idea?"*

*"You couldn't know that, son. Before your time. Incredible, though, boy of your age. Miss Willoughby, will you bring in that wicket retreading file—'48 I believe—and don't disturb us. I'd like to spend some time with this boy. Yes, uh—"*

*"Finch, sir."*

*"Yes, Finch, you must have a mighty good head on your shoulders!"*

From this point on he will consider you his protégé. You will be sure to have the first vacancy in his department.

This technique is far easier than thinking up your own ideas—and far more effective.

5. *Be Generous with Your "Buddies."* The lad marked for success is one who is openhearted and unselfish, happy to share his good fortune with others, particularly his colleagues of the mailroom.

The callow chaps around you may not look like much, but they may well be



tomorrow's captains of industry. Make them your "buddies." These rough-and-ready friendships will stand you in good stead in the years to come.

For example, suppose the personnel manager calls you into his office and says:

*"Oh, Finch, we've been keeping an eye on you!"*

*"You have, sir?"*

(It is well to be noncommittal at this stage.)

*"Yes, you may not realize it, but we keep a mighty close watch over all you fellows. I think you may have the stuff, Finch."*

*"Thank you, sir."*

*"In fact, we've decided to give you a nice promotion. You've done so well as a mail boy that we're thinking seriously about putting you in charge of the whole mailroom!"*

At this point the run-of-the-mill fellow would accept willingly. Not you! Remember, be generous! Be *big!* Look him straight in the eye and say:

*"Decent of you, sir, damned decent! And you know how I'd like to accept. Don't see how I can, though, in all honesty."*

(He will look at you with new interest.)

*"No?"*

*"Don't really deserve it, sir. Watson is your man. Quiet chap, not one to attract notice, but he's earned that job!"*

Be sure you tell Watson what you've done for him. He'll be your friend for life, and of course he'll still be in the mailroom, running it efficiently, long after you have gone ahead to higher things. (The personnel man won't forget how big you were about this!) It will pay off in extra service, too.

*"Oh, Watson, send a boy up to my place, will you? These pencils are getting frightfully dull."*

*"Can't spare one, but I'll come myself for you, Ponty."*

*"That's a good boy, and make it quickly, will you?"*

Of course, if the first offer of promotion will take you *out* of the mailroom it is better to accept.

No good being *too* generous!

Just follow these simple rules for a few months and you will quickly be summoned

to the department of your choice.

*"Finch, we feel you're our type of man! We're taking you into the department. You'll sit at the old desk in back of the mimeograph machine. Only temporary, of course. And you'll get more money, too. Think I can swing \$2.50 more a week!"*

This is what you have worked for! You're a Junior Executive. No one can stop you now!

A junior executive is any male in an office who sits down.

At first you will make considerably less money than the men who run the elevators, wash the windows, and shine the shoes. But remember—you are being paid not in money but in experience. You are learning! Some men spend their whole lives doing this, and when they finish they may have little in the bank, but they are rich indeed.

However, you are headed for the Top, so don't overdo this. Learn the business, yes, but you have other far more important things to learn, too.

#### **YOUR MISSION**

As a Junior Executive you are the very pillar on which modern business rests.

It is you who must shoulder the load while Top Management *thinks*. Yes, this is what they are doing, thinking. They may not look it, but they are.

It will be your job, as a Junior Executive, to take over as many of their worries as you can. This will leave them as little as possible to think about.

#### **YOUR APPEARANCE**

The keynote now is one of maturity, and of cheerful suffering.

*Clothes.* You need buy few clothes, since the Junior Executive does not dress as elegantly as the mailroom boy. Simply have your brighter, more dashing items dyed mouse color or Oxford gray, and sprinkle lightly with dandruff.

*Look Older.* But don't be too obvious about it! Do not wear high-button shoes, green eyeshades, or sleeve protectors.

Never exaggerate the importance of a few gray hairs, especially in the temples. This will mark you as a man of judgment. There are a number of good commercial preparations which are inexpensive and easy to apply.

*Mustache.* A mustache, well cultivated and closely cropped, will add years and a look of sly cunning. This latter, though undesirable as we have seen in job applicants, is a real Plus in the Junior Executive.

*The Look of Suffering.* The Junior Executive is expected to suffer, and if you cannot manage it, you must at least *appear* to. An ulcer is excellent. Grow one if you can, but if you cannot, a bottle of milk placed conspicuously on the desk will do nicely, if accompanied by a slightly pained smile.

## YOUR OFFICE IS IMPORTANT

The caste of a Junior Executive is determined by the size and magnificence of his office. In fact, when your office is indistinguishable from that of the Senior Executives you will *be* a Senior Executive.

Your first step will be to get *any* office. Few will listen to a man who sits at a hall desk. When you see an opportunity, go quickly to the office manager:

*"I see that Mr. Grabble is leaving, sir."*

*"That's right."*

*"Do you mind if I move my things in there until the new man comes?"*(Note: Never say "have the office!" It is always: "move my things in.")

*"Is there a new man?"* (There isn't.)

*"Hadn't you heard? Should be in any day now."*

You will be allowed to "move your things in" temporarily. After a few months everyone will forget it isn't your office and it *will* be.

The Head Cold Approach is equally successful:

*"Frideful code in the head,"* you say to the Office Manager, sneezing violently.

*"Oh, too bad, Finch."*

*"Wonder if I could sid in the epty office for a few days. Draft out here is derrible."*

*"Well, for a few days I think it'll be all right."*

Such a cold can hang on for weeks. By this time it is wise to administer the coup de grâce:

*"I don't like to cobplain, but my office is fridefully drafty."*(Note "my office.")

*"Oh?"*

*"The one in the corner sees to get the sun. This code, you know. Maybe you could swidge O'Brien in here. Strong as an oggs, O'Brien."*

*"We'll see what we can do, Mr. Finch."*

After the transfer, the office will be yours until it no longer suits you.

Continue the process until you have at least four windows. A four-window man is one to be reckoned with!

**The Furnishings.** It is a careless man who neglects these! You will have to decide first

what mood you want to create. Some prefer the severe and monastic, with straight chair and table instead of swivel chair and desk; others favor soft lights, oriental rugs, and incense; others, rococo; and still others, the tooled leather and old gold nothing-is-too-good-for-me approach.

Decide for yourself. Fit your personality. Your office is a frame for *you!*

In most cases you will want a generous supply of sofas, easy chairs, portable bars, credenzas, and bric-a-brac. The company will supply these.

But remember that a caste system governs all office furnishings as well as offices. Furnishings are handed down until—by the time they reach the Junior Executive—they are a sorry sight indeed. It is simple to beat this unfair system, if you remember the *Magic Time*.

There is a **Magic Time** to pick up really suitable furnishings. First, prepare a list of the different items you would like, in various offices. Then, as their occupants leave the company or are transferred, simply summon the porter:

*"Oh, John, sometime today will you pick up that break-front in Crabtree's old office?"*

*"I thought the new man was coming in Thursday, Mr. Finch."*

*"He is. Crabtree wanted me to have the breakfront, though. He mentioned it specially. When you bring it in, move it against this wall, please, next to the bar. You can take this old thing here and move it in for the new man. He may like it, you know."*

Soon you will have a real showplace.

But always remember—you are not doing this for yourself.

*"It's quiet,"* you will say, *"that's the important thing. These six windows are a distraction, but I don't really mind. Just give me a desk, a pencil, and a piece of paper. I can work anywhere."*

## DESK MANAGEMENT

You will soon have to decide whether to adopt the very full or very empty desk approach. There is no middle ground. A few papers on a desk look messy and inefficient. The keen young man keeps either a polished expanse of bright wood or a great overflowing mass of work. The one indicates cleanliness and efficiency, the other herculean effort and overwork.

Both are good. Decide now which course you will follow.

## CALENDAR MANAGEMENT

The same reasoning applies to the notations on your desk calendar, which is on top of your desk, for all to see. Confine yourself to one or two simple notations, such as:

*“J. B.—All Day.*

*Lunch—Stork. B. S.”*

The “Lunch, Stork”—“Lunch, Colony”—or “Lunch, 21” is advisable in all cases, even if you plan to duck out for franks and beans at a lunch counter.

Or, you may prefer the Cluttered Calendar approach, with dozens of appointments, scores of notations, appointments scratched out and replaced with others. This is especially effective if combined with the absolutely clean desk. It creates an impression of feverish but antiseptic activity—and will win you admiration everywhere.

Your task as a Junior Executive will be to assume responsibility, to take cares and worries on your powerful young shoulders, and remove them from older, grayer heads.

The more responsibility you can assume, the better. Some useful phrases are:

*“Why not just roll it all into one ball of wax. J.B.?”*

Or:

*“The whole thing needs to be buttoned up.”*

However, keep in mind that your real function is Formulating Policy and Making Decisions, the work for which you were chosen, and work which is best done in a relaxed, semi-reclining position.

Therefore, your first duty on assuming extra responsibility is to find capable assistants who will do the actual routine work.

The first step, of course, is to select the right secretary.

#### **HAND-PICK YOUR SECRETARY**

By the time you have reached a position of real responsibility you will probably be in the one-window stage, and will be able to say good-bye forever to the steno pool.

You are ready to have your own private secretary. Choose her carefully! Many a rising young man has been broken by careless or frivolous choice of secretaries. A Secretary is NOT a Toy. She will be a girl selected for her ability, at one thing or another, and she will only too often be skillful with the typewriter, and perhaps even shorthand. She will be entrusted to your care as a helpmate *in your work*, and should not be used for pleasure, except in emergencies.

*Does She Belong to Another?* If the young lady assigned to you is so attractive that you feel things are too good to be true, tread carefully.

Ask yourself this question: Does she belong to another?

It may be that one of the really big men in the company has become Interested-in-Her-Career, and has given her to you as a secretary. He will want to be sure she is kept busy during the day. Keep her busy! But keep your distance.

If your flesh is weak, avoid temptation. Help her to rise to the top. You, too, can rise with her. Approach your immediate superior, the man whose niche you feel destined to fill, and say:

*“Oh, Mr. Gatch, I hardly know how to say this, but Hedy just happened to remark how much she admired you.”*

*“Oh, did she, Finch? She’s quite a girl, all right, quite a girl!”*

*“She was wondering whether you, uh, might be interested in having her work for you.”*

*“Frankly, Finch, I’d love it, but I kind of suspected that old J.B. might, well, you know—”*

*“Nothing to it, Mr. Gatch! Broke up months ago—if it existed at all!”*

(Note: Little white lies like this are to be encouraged if your intentions are good.)

She will be grateful to you, and when, after a short time, your superior is fired, you will be moved in quickly to fill his shoes.

Do not be too hasty about advancing the young lady to the next man ahead of you. It is well to wait until the dust settles and tempers cool.

**Go to Extremes.** The wise young businessman practices moderation in most things. However, this is not true in the choice of secretaries. Go all out. Take no halfway measures.

You must decide for yourself which choice you will make, the beauty or the beast.

**The Beauty.** If you decide on this course, select a girl of ravishing beauty, first making sure she does not belong to another.

Soon your little corner will become a mecca for influential men.

*“Thought I’d drop around and see what Finch thinks about it.”*

*“Finch? He in on this?”*

*“Well, not exactly. Good head on the boy, though. Real pleasure to be around him.”*

You will make many valuable and lasting friendships.

If the young lady looks to you for comfort and guidance, be generous. Supply it. Emotion and sentiment have their places, even in the workaday world.

**The Beast.** Some prefer to take the opposite tack. Select the oldest, fattest, and least attractive woman in the building. Leave no stone unturned. With thirty or forty years experience in the company, she will be able to do all your dull, routine work better than you can. This will leave you free to think, decide, and endear yourself to those around you.

And she will give you an immediate and enviable reputation.

*“Solid citizen, that boy Finch!”*

*“Oh?”*

*“Well, I mean, just look at his secretary! No fooling about that boy!”*

And you’ll have no worries about her getting married, having babies, or other nonsense.

She’ll be yours for keeps.

## **HAVE PLENTY OF ASSISTANTS**

You cannot have too many able helpers! If the management is balky at first, it will be your duty to educate and indoctrinate.

*“As I see it, J.B.,” you begin, “the job breaks down like this. I drew up a little chart.”*

(Organizational charts filled with little lines and rectangles are valuable here.)

*“Oh?”*

*“Now we’ll need three more men—A, B, and C, here.”*

*“Three more men? I thought you were going to do the—”*

*“I’ll hold the reins of course. Have a pretty clear idea who the men should be, too!”*

**The Work Demonstration.** If the above doesn’t succeed, you may be forced to put on a Work Demonstration.

For two or three days and nights—two should be ample—remain in the office, consuming nothing but black coffee and cigarettes. Send your secretary around occasionally to borrow benzedrine tablets. Do not change clothes, but have a barber come in daily to shave you—*while you dictate.*

On the morning of the third (or fourth) day, walk cheerfully in to your superior’s office.

*“Lord!” he will say. “You’re looking frightful, Finch!”(You will be.)*

*“It’s nothing, J.B. Feel like a million.”*

(Assume an overhearted expression.)

*“You were absolutely right about the assistants, J.B. Think I can carry on alone. Four or five months more like this and I’ll have the whole thing whipped into shape.”*

At this point sink slowly to the floor with a brave smile, and twitch for a few seconds. Then lie still, eyes closed. Maintain just the trace of a smile!

You will be sent on a long vacation, and will return to find your assistants, ready for your instructions.

By this time you will surely be On Your Way. But we have not yet—as you will see—really scratched the surface.

It must always be remembered that hard work is the very lifeblood of modern business. You, too, must be ready to pull your share of the load. This may call for personal sacrifices on your part—but no matter—your work should come first.

#### **KNOW YOUR OWN BREAKING POINT**

Willing as you may be to dedicate your life to your business, remember that you will be of small value to your company if you reach the breaking point.

Know your limitations, and stay within them!

#### **AFTER-HOUR MANAGEMENT**

The conscientious businessman will make every moment count, and the moments that count most are those spent *after regular business hours*.

If you manage after-hour planning skillfully, you can achieve pleasing and surprising results and also free your mind for truly High Level thinking, which is your major function.

Remember, the hours you are assumed to be at work, the regular office hours, are of little value. The hurly-burly of office routine will interfere with long-range thinking.

Any good after-hour planner can find ample reason to be away from his desk from nine to five on week days. At nine-thirty, remark:

*“Oh, J.B., anything you want from me before I take off?”*

*“Going out, Finch?”*

*“Yes, sir. Don’t trust that survey at all. Think I’ll get out and ring some doorbells. Got to get down to the grass roots, you know.”*

*“Good boy, Finch.”*

You may then proceed to any calm, restful spot. A day out in the open will stimulate your brain. When you return to the office in a day or two, your mind will be clear, and bursting with ideas.

Some alternate approaches are:

*“Want to get out and check the stores. Got to see if we’re really moving off the shelves.”*

Or:

*“Think I’ll run out to the plant. Quality check, you know.”*

But the after-hour planner will be careful to be in the office after hours *at the right times!*

If you hear, for example, that the boss is going to drop in to the office Saturday morning, if only to pick up his golf clubs, be there a half hour ahead of him.

Roll up your sleeves, tousle your hair, and loosen your collar. Several empty paper coffee cartons and a few hundred cigarette butts will also help. (The cartons and butts can be kept in a drawer and used again.)

You will be noticed!

*“Oh, working this morning, Finch?”*

*“Mmmmmmmmm. Is it morning already, sir?”*

*“Great Scott, been here all night?”*

*“No, not all night! Just trying to clean up a few things. Shouldn't be here much longer.”*

(Avoid any hint of self-pity!)

*“Oh, that's good.”*

*“Is there any way I can get in tomorrow, sir? Just in case. The night watchman is very fussy.”*

After the boss goes, wait ten or fifteen minutes and leave. It will not be necessary to come in Monday. Never fear; your employer will defend you hotly.

*“Finch isn't in again today, sir!”*

*“I should think not! Poor devil worked all weekend! I ought to know. I was in here with him, working side by side!”*

(You may count on the wise employer's knowing his after-hour techniques, too! He will be Setting a Good Example.)

*“Too bad,” he may continue, “that there aren't more men like Finch around here!”*

## **BE A COMMUTER**

Another way to conserve your strength is to establish early that you are a commuter, and that you have a frightful problem with trains.

If, for example, you have to lie abed late, wrestling with a knotty problem, you need only say: *“Damned Long Island Rail Road!”*

*“Oh, train late again, Finch?”*

*“Almost two hours.”*

*“Funny. Mine was on time.”*

*“But we're on the spur, you know. Always a bottleneck.”*

The same approach may be used in the evening.

*“Have to run, J.B.”*

*“Now? It's only three-thirty!”*

*“Trestle. Blazing like hell this morning. Lucky if I get home at all.”*

It is not necessary to *be* a commuter, as long as everybody *thinks* you are one. A chap who had bachelor's quarters three blocks from the office left regularly every day at 4:38 on the dot.

*“Have to, you know. Got to get the 5:01. Next train doesn't come till eight!”*

*“Poor devil. Well, see you tomorrow!”*

*“May be late, though. Damned thing doesn't get in till 10:17!”*

He avoided strain and overwork, and by devoting his extra time to clear thinking, rose rapidly to the top.

The more obscure and mysterious your form of transportation, the better. Fictitious railroad lines are good, if the names are well chosen. Some recommendations: South Jersey Central; Newark, Hackensack, and Quogue; New York, Hartford, and Providence. One expert maintained for years that he lived on “the Putney Division,” commenting only:

*“Nothing like that ride through the mountains every morning. Never seems like three hours!”*

Some helpful phrases:

*“Third rail, you know. Ice.”*

Or:

*“Did the last twelve miles by bus!”*

You will no doubt find other and perhaps better ways to conserve your strength.



The farmer spends his time in the fields, the laborer at his machine, and the businessman at meetings.

You may feel at first that the meeting is a waste of time, a useless expenditure of energy, accomplishing little. Nothing could be farther from the truth!

A meeting is a Sounding Board, a Confluence of the Minds, a means of preventing junior executives from hiding their lights under a bushel.

The object of a meeting is not, as the very young believe, to solve the problem at hand, but to impress the people there. And for this purpose, of course, the larger the meeting the better.

If you are new to business, you have small inkling of the happy hours that lie ahead, the little glows of triumph, the camaraderie, and the tingling, heady sensation of hearing your own voice!

But these rich wines are not to be gulped willy-nilly. There are many bitter lessons to learn. Study carefully the following outline of the strategy and tactics of meetings.

1. *Never Be at a Loss for Words.* If you cannot give a ringing, extemporaneous speech—and so few can—it is wise to prepare a series of little talks, complete with gestures and a few jolly anecdotes, that will fit the subject of any meeting. Some suggested topics:

*“We’ve all got to Pull Together on this!”*

Or:

*“We’ll lick them at their own game, damn it!”*

Other dandy ones will come to you.

2. *Be Decisive.* Your own mind must always be clear, and made up, whether or not you understand what everybody is talking about. *Leave the shilly-shallying to others.* Yours must be the steady hand to which others turn.

3. *But Avoid a Decision.* There is an anticlimactic, soggy feeling about a meeting after a decision has been reached. There is little danger of this, as we will see, but don’t relax. You will know that the little problem at hand is only the *excuse* for the meeting. Yet to some, your remarks—inspiring as they may be—will have a hollow ring if delivered after the decision. Follow this easy method, if a meeting is in danger of ending:

*“Well, that seems to button up the matter, eh Finch?”*

*“Really? I don’t get any nourishment out of that at all! Let’s re-examine!”*

(You can always re-examine.)

4. *The Sleeper Play*. Never speak first. Let the others talk themselves out. Then come slowly into action:

*“As I sit here and listen to all of you, it seems to me that there’s one basic fallacy to all your reasoning.”*

(At this point, go ahead and say what you had planned to say in the first place. It is not necessary to have listened, except in a general way, to what has gone before.)

5. *The “If George Were Only Here” Device*. If someone opposes you, try to have the meeting when he is out of town. Then preface your remarks with: “If George were only here I’m sure he’d agree that—” Proceed then to demolish George’s entire position.

6. *The All-Out Attack, or Sweeping the Meeting Off Its Feet*. Effective, yes, and exhilarating, too! Some prefer simple shouting or table pounding, but the true virtuoso can cry, roll on the floor, stand on furniture, remove clothing, gag, spit, and use flip cards and slide films. All these have their places.

7. *Underplay*. A good variation of the above is the reverse twist. You can create a crushing effect by underplaying. Assume a wounded expression, and say in a tiny, hurt voice:

*“Why do you do this to me?”*

This is most effective if you have previously terrorized the meeting, or if you have a reputation for unusual ruthlessness.

8. *The Filibuster*. This is of value only if an opponent has to make a train or see a customer or client. Read a file of fifty or sixty letters, more or less related to the subject.

9. *Be a Meeting-Leaver*. The true Meeting-Leaver rarely attends meetings—he just leaves them. This is good. It places you somehow *above* the meeting you’re leaving, and implies that you’re going to another that is more important.

*“Wish I could stay longer with you fellows. Another meeting, you know—”*

At the other meeting (and there is *always* another meeting somewhere) you say the same thing—but *do not return to the first meeting*. Remember this. *Never go back!*

10. *Beware the Do-It-Now-er!* At every meeting there will be some crude fellow who does not understand the true purpose of the Meeting as a Forum and Sounding Board. He will always try to “get something done.” He may open a meeting like this:

*“Well, fellows, this is something we really should be able to decide in five minutes. I just want*

*a quick reaction.”*

He will soon find himself without friends—and perhaps without employment.

Occasionally something *will* have to be decided. The decision will be made by the one really in authority, who wouldn’t have attended the meeting anyway.

*“Well, Finch, what did you boys decide?”*

*“Uh, we didn’t quite resolve it, J.B. But it was a good meeting.”* (Meetings are always “good” meetings.) *“I think we all see the problem clearly. I presented my case about buying, both pro and con.”*

*“Mostly pro, I hope. I bought it this morning.”*

You will soon learn that the heart, the very lifeblood of modern business is the interoffice memo. If you're a good man with a memo you have small cause to worry.

The memo, like the meeting, is concerned only incidentally with its apparent subject. The main object of the memo is to *impress the people who read it*.

#### NEVER COME STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

The neophyte can be spotted quickly. He comes right out and states his business. Since very few problems can't be covered in a paragraph or two, the reader is finished with it rapidly, and the whole point of the memo is lost.

A good man can expand the simplest subject into three or four closely written pages, during the course of which he can inject sympathetic understanding, wit, and a few well-chosen anecdotes. Those who read it will see that he not only has a complete grasp of the subject, and of the entire industry, but that he is a capital fellow, and is somehow slightly above the whole thing.

#### HOW TO GET PEOPLE TO READ MEMOS

Memos are like seeds in the forest or the eggs of a salmon. The waste is staggering. One authority feels that if one in ten falls on target, or is at least partly read, the mission is accomplished. Another feels that one in twenty-five is a fair average. This is defeatist thinking! Make sure *your* memos are read. Address them to the highest officer who might be even remotely connected with the subject, especially the man who is in charge of those you are trying to impress. This name is usually referred to as "nominal sendee," or "reader guarantee." Address it:

**To: Mr. Biggley**

**From: Pierrepont Finch**      cc.

Under "cc.," or "carbon copy," list all those you're trying to impress.

This will make some of the carbon copy people read it on the chance that Biggley *might* read it and refer to it.

It is, of course, unnecessary to send out Biggley's copy.

#### THE SECONDARY TARGET

The secondary target is the person who really has to do something about the memo, if he can find the right paragraph. This fellow, probably in some menial job, will receive the ninth carbon, which is not readable, except in a general way. It is sufficient to call him up:

*“Say, don’t know whether my memo got there yet.”*

*“Oh, yessir, it did, Mr. Finch. Little trouble reading it.”*

*“Well, don’t bother. I can tell you in a nutshell. J.B. called from the agency and wanted to make sure you ship out a case to Akron.”*

*“Oh, yes. I will.”*

*“Fine.”*

The subtleties, the sly humor, and the gentle wisdom of your five closely written pages will have been lost upon this dolt, but no matter. Your purpose has been achieved.

### **DON’T PIN PEOPLE DOWN**

It is not considered cricket to pin people down to specific details in a memo. If you ask a colleague if he has “seen” your memo and he answers yes, accept the statement. Those who ask what he thought of paragraph three will soon have few friends.

### **WHAT TO DO WITH OTHER PEOPLE’S MEMOS**

There are two schools of thought on this. One holds that it’s enough to place a bold red check on the upper right-hand corner. This shows your secretary you have “seen” it. She will then place it in a neat pile until you “have time to read it.” This, of course, will never be necessary. Instruct her to throw away all memos six inches below the top of her pile.

The other procedure is to take freshly received memos, and, before reading, return to sender with a penciled note at the top. “Mighty clear exposition!” is always good, or “See you’ve really thought this through!” This way is more trouble, but it will make you friends.

If there is anything you really have to *do* about a memo, have no fear! The sender will phone you, as noted above.

### **SAMPLE MEMO**

Excerpts from a sample memo are printed here, almost exactly as they appeared in Finch’s personal file. No need to add that names—and an occasional fact—have been changed.

Study this carefully. It is a fine example of the memowright’s art, coming as it does in the middle of Finch’s early, or bold, period. But do not try to imitate it too slavishly. Remember that a memo is *you*, and one that may express another’s personality will do you scant justice.

#### **Memo**

To: Mr. J. B. Biggley

Date:

The copy to J. B. Biggley, the “nominal sendee,” was not sent, as explained above.

cc. Messrs.

Axel

E. Biggley

D. Osterly

Cottery

Sprockett

Fribble

Taffle

Lightly

Womper

The above names are “impressees,” or those the sender was trying to impress. They are always listed in alphabetical order—no use offending anyone! The “executor,” or the one who was supposed to do something about the memo, was a lad named Bud Frump of the shipping department. His name was never actually included in the typed version, but was written in red pencil on the tenth carbon. See “Secondary Target,” above.

#### **From: Pierrepont Finch**

Some authorities favor “Mr. Finch” in this position, but there is a certain disarming modesty and easy familiarity about plain “Pierrepont Finch.” In fact, some of Finch’s better-known memos were signed simply “Pont Finch.”

#### **SUBJECT: THE WICKET SITUATION**

Never neglect a resounding title! This memo could have been titled “Put Plenty of Excelsior in Future Wicket Shipments,” since that was the real, or secondary, purpose. A clod would have done so, but not Finch!

#### **Few of us are aware of the alarming situation that confronts us with regard to our current wicket shipments.**

This is good! It alerts the reader, puts him on his guard against real danger, and keeps him going through the meaty, or impressive passages. The sure-footed memowright knows the value of the word “alarming” in the first sentence. It is a particularly well-chosen word because it indicates that even though there is a real threat, you are on top of it.

#### **I think first we should all be brought up to date on the background.**

“Background,” too, is good. All memos should have plenty of “background.” It promises rich rewards for those who follow you through the ensuing paragraphs.

#### **And because—though I hesitate to say it—the wicket background has become more or less inseparable from my own, I may have to sketch in a few personal details.**

You are losing readers here, face it! But plunge on. This is the real treasure, or pay dirt, that you are bringing to your carefully chosen group of readers.

**My intimate connection with the wicket situation dates back to its very inception.**

At this point the memo becomes technical, and will be of small value to the lay or non-wicket reader. Suffice it to say that two or three closely written pages follow. One who threads his way through this treasure trove will discover that—lo!—Finch not only has a firm grasp on wickets, but on the entire industry as well. The branches are fairly groaning with such ripe fruit as this:

**—Furthermore, my long research into the matter led me to the conclusion that—**

**And:**

**Though this is only my *personal* belief, it is one that few, at this stage, can dispute!**

**Perhaps the following anecdote will help to illustrate my point. Wander with me back through the years to the old Maple Street Plant.**

For a page and a half one well-turned phrase follows another. The story, charming as it is, has little to do with the wicket situation. Its purpose is finer, higher, and broader. Rare indeed is the reader who does not emerge with the conviction that Finch is a capital fellow, stouthearted, clearheaded, brave, and reverent.

**“Take your money,” I said. “A Biggley boy I began and a Biggley boy I’ll stay, damn you!”**

After a few more scattered bon mots, Finch concludes thus:

**There are a number of major steps that we can surely take in the future, but for the moment, aside from packing more excelsior in the wicket cases, we find ourselves in somewhat of a cul-de-sac. However, time will tell.**

Small reason to remind the critical reader that this is true artistry, and in the Finch tradition. Finch has disposed of his real, or secondary, subject with a rapier thrust, piercing it concisely in one parenthetical phrase: “aside from packing more excelsior in the wicket cases.” A fine example to follow!

**(Signed)**

**Ponty**

Though actually all copies—except the one to Bud Frump—had “Ponty” written in longhand at the end, the impression conveyed was that the *others* were signed “P.F.” and

that *only your own* was signed “Ponty,” personally, in a spirit of brotherly affection. Finch’s secretary had long since become expert at writing “Ponty” so that it was indistinguishable from the real thing.