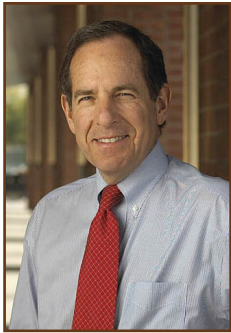




FEATURE



Six Things to Consider When Considering a Management Career

[By Ira Jackson]

I'd offer six suggestions to young people thinking about a career in management.

First, make sure that management is right for you—that you really enjoy marketing or finance or human resource management or corporate communications and other aspects of organizational life and management responsibilities. Take the test by working for a company or an organization to see whether it feels great—challenging but appropriate, hard but enjoyable. Management isn't right for everyone, so take the time to explore and invest in a couple of internships, even if they are unpaid, to see what it's really like and whether it meets and matches your career aspirations and professional/personal needs.

Second, get as much experience as you can before entering graduate school and going for the MBA. This might mean taking three or more years off between college and business school, or it might just mean packing a lot of relevant management and leadership activities into your life at an early age. The point is that you will be able to bring those experiences to the classroom, which will make the learning more relevant—and will make you not just a student, but a bit of a teacher as well.

Third, be discriminating about where you decide to get that MBA. It's a buyer's market, which means that there are literally hundreds of schools to choose between. Find the right fit in terms of not only location and reputation, but institutional culture. Some schools focus on placement, others on finance; some on research, others mainly

on teaching. We at the Drucker School, for instance, offer an unusually intimate setting with small classes; a very diverse, global student body; and a values-oriented approach that emphasizes ethics, integrity, strategy, leadership and teamwork—which makes us perfect for some, but not right for others.

Fourth, find a great mentor or supervisor and a good company to work for. Again, the point is that you have choices—in graduate schools, in careers, in companies to work for. Everyone entering any profession is eager to find that wonderful first job and to get a fast break. But take time to be sure that you will be proud to say that this is where you work and that you have an opportunity to learn from people who you respect. You will spend more time at work than with your family, so make sure that the company you keep is one that you really enjoy, can grow with, and learn from.

Fifth, remember that management is basically about people and organizations, about doing things right and doing the right thing. Good management is needed in every sector of our society—business, to be sure, but also in the not-for-profit sector, which is 10% of our economy, and in government, which is about a third. So think about applying what you know about management not only in a business, but also in a public agency or in a community organization where the demand and need for skills is high.

And, lastly, think about using your management training to do well and also to do good. Peter Drucker, considered the founder of modern management and the person for whom my school is named, asked: "What do you want to be remembered for?" Even as you set out on your career, find a balance and look for opportunities to not only be successful but to do something significant. Society needs your talent and ambition and skills and energy; we also need your idealism and creativity and commitment to leaving the world better than you found it.

About the Author

Ira A. Jackson is the Henry Y. Hwang Dean of the Peter F. Drucker and Masatoshi Ito Graduate School of Management at Claremont Graduate University. The Drucker School engages in extensive research and teaching designed to produce more effective managers and more ethical leaders for all sectors of society. While offering MBA and EMBA degrees, the Drucker School considers itself an "M" school, not a traditional "B" school, and focuses on both competence and compassion, analysis and intuition, leadership and teamwork, and doing good and doing well.

Throughout his career, Jackson has brought entrepreneurship and excellence to government, higher education, and the nonprofit sector. At the age of 26, he was chief of staff to Boston's Mayor Kevin



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White. At 32, he was the Senior Associate Dean of Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, where he helped lead the school during its period of rapid growth and institutional transformation.

He left the Kennedy School to become commissioner of revenue for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where he was credited with being one of the architects of the "Massachusetts economic miracle." Jackson established an innovative model of "honest, fair, and firm" tax administration that restored public confidence in the integrity, professionalism, and responsiveness of the agency through vigorous reforms. His leadership was recognized by the Massachusetts Taxpayers' Association with their first Lyman Ziegler Award for Outstanding Public Service, and his management style and experience is the subject of a widely used management case study written by Professor Robert Behn of Duke University.

Jackson served as Executive Vice President of BankBoston for a dozen years. During his tenure at BankBoston, the company consistently received Outstanding Community Reinvestment Act ratings from federal regulators for leadership in strengthening inner-city communities. This leadership was recognized by the Conference Board with the Ron Brown Award for Corporate Citizenship at a ceremony at

the White House. Jackson's role in helping to support and expand CityYear earned him their Big Citizen Award. For his work in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, the Kennedy School presented Jackson with its Outstanding Alumni Award in its second year.

Jackson returned to Harvard as the director of its Center for Business and Government at the Kennedy School and later became the first president of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation in Atlanta.

Prior to coming to Claremont, he was president and CEO of the Arizona State University Foundation. Under Jackson's leadership, the Foundation achieved close alignment with the University, restructured and strengthened its board and governance structure, and made strides toward becoming a highly professional, donor-centric, and entrepreneurial institution. The Foundation, an independently governed 501(c)3 organization whose chairman is Craig Weatherup, former chairman and CEO of PepsiCo, has \$621 million in assets.

During his tenure, ASU's endowment grew by 45% to \$403 million, investment returns on the Foundation's pooled endowment fund increased 22%, and fundraising from individuals, corporations, and foundations virtually doubled from its historic base to \$150 million.

Throughout his career in business, government, and the university, Jackson has been active in civic and community life and has assumed leadership roles in a number of innovative nonprofit organizations including CityYear, Jumpstart, and Facing History and Ourselves. He chaired the United Way's award-winning Success by Six campaigns in Massachusetts, chaired the program and grants committee of the Boston Foundation, and has been a leader in a wide variety of other organizations, from the New England Council to the South Boston Neighborhood House.

Jackson received an A.B. from Harvard College and an M.P.A. from the Kennedy School of Government, and attended the Advanced Management Program at the Harvard Business School. He is co-author (with Jane Nelson) of *Profits with Principles: Seven Strategies for Delivering Value with Values* (Doubleday, 2004), described by Tom Peters as "a stunning achievement....and a survival guide for business executives and a survival guide for capitalism itself."

Jackson is married to Martha White Jackson, a teacher and community activist. They have four children: Kate (28), Joseph (25), Matthew (22), and Alex (19).

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