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An Alumni perspective on what current Citadel Students should consider as they engage in their career search.

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## January 2008

TO: Citadel Cadets  
FROM: Advice from an Alumnus from the Old Corps

When you move into the workplace, in whatever field you choose, be mindful that we are all problem-solvers for our employers. Do not carry your personal issues and baggage into the workplace. We are paid to deal with the issues of today and resolve problems. You are expected to carry your own personal baggage on your own time. When given an assignment, you go do it to the best of your ability, and don't stop until it is completed. In the end, it is a pride thing, similar to Saturday Morning Inspection (SMI) ... we do it because we have to do it, not necessarily because we like it.

For example, one summer years ago, a young rising Citadel junior came to work with us. One morning his co-workers came to me and said he was asleep at his desk at 8:30 in the morning. Before his supervisor was contacted, I hauled him into my office and told him that when he reported at 8:30 that he needed to be wide awake and ready to work. He started to offer his excuse and I cut him off, with "It doesn't matter! You were hired into this company and are being paid to accomplish a set of assigned duties. We don't pay people to sleep at their desk." You can imagine, where I took that message ... I am convinced he did not sleep a wink for another 3 days. Although that happened years ago, the story still runs around our office when we say someone from The Citadel will be coming to work for us, either permanent party or summer job.

We have had another who came to work for us who burned up a lot of time on personal calls during work hours, brought some personal issues into the workplace, and was largely distracted from doing his assigned tasks that were only partially completed when he left. I chose not to light this lad up because his direct supervisor was convinced she could turn him around. Bottom line, the damage was done; he will not be invited back due to poor work ethic and habits.

The workplace is highly competitive ... if you can't perform, there are two or more people waiting in line to take your place. As Cal Ripkin, Jr. said in his book Get in the Game, when asked about his secret to playing 2600+ consecutive professional baseball games, he responded, "It's really rather easy, you show up everyday, go out on the field and play to the best of your ability."

The clear message here is that you represent yourself first, The Citadel second and Citadel Alumni third. There is a higher expectation of performance from those who come from The Citadel. Indeed, I submit that is why you all selected The Citadel in the first place, to make an investment in yourself, to see if you could complete the course and eventually reap the rewards, including joining the Citadel network.

On the bright side, we have a bright newly minted 2007 grad working with us. We hired him temporarily for a specific function, which he has whipped into shape. He has proven to be a fine asset, appreciated by those who are working around him. He keeps his head down. He is quiet and focused. He doesn't whine or complain. He goes about his job energetically and consistently. He will be invited to join our company at the end of his provisional period. Well done!

Again, let me say, most people expect more from Citadel cadets and graduates ... it's a fact. If we don't measure up, it casts a dark shadow on the rest of the Citadel Alumni. Alternatively, when we do step up and excel at our mission assignment, whatever it may be, it casts a bright glow in all directions and all Citadel Alumni benefit. You should be reminded as Citadel cadets and future Alumni that you carry this torch for all of us ... its family and brotherhood / sisterhood.

As the Navy SEALs like to say, "You don't have to like what you do, sometimes you just have to do it." We will all have good times and bad times. We will all have rewarding times and challenging times. Look back on your tenure at The Citadel and you can see the highs and lows. When you move into the big league of Life, you will experience the same thing. Make it count for something!

Chaplain Crumpton was the long time Chaplain to The Corps of Cadets when I was a cadet back in the early 70's, and he used to tell us all the time, "Good, better, best, never let it rest until your Good is Better, and your Better is Best."

We all know that The Citadel demands a lot from us, and the most successful among us have a certain attitude and work ethic. Slackers don't do well at The Citadel, although some will slip through. Similarly, employers are looking for people who have integrity, good work ethic (accountability and responsibility) and have a good attitude. When you show up every day with those attributes and work to the best of your ability, you will succeed and the rewards will mount ... over your career.

I pray this message will assist you in understanding when you enter the larger working society, your employers will have high expectations of you, and you can choose to step up, or be trampled by those who wish to take your place in the line-up on the playing field of Life. In the end, you must individually decide if you wish to be a spectator or participant. The participants are on the playing field working at getting better and contributing; while the spectator can only wish from the sideline ... choose!

Go Dogs!

*Kevin M. Elmore, CPCU, ARe*

*Director of Marketing and Administration*

*Companion Third Party Administrators, LLC*

*P.O. Box 100159*

*Columbia, SC 29202-3159*

*Kevin.Elmore@companiongroup.com*