



**Find Your Dream Job, Ep. 072:
How to Get the Most Out of Your First Job, with David Mariano**
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Mac Prichard:

Hi, this is Mac from Mac's List. Before we start the show I wanted to let you know about my new book, Land Your Dream Job Anywhere. I've been helping job seekers find meaningful, well paying work since 2001, and now I put all my best advice into one easy to use guide. My book shows you how to make your resume stand out in a stack of applications, where you can find the hidden jobs that never get posted, and what you need to do to ace your next job interview. Get the first chapter now for free. Visit MacList.org/anywhere.

This is Find Your Dream Job, the podcast that helps you get hired at the career you want and make a difference in life. I'm Mac Prichard, your host and publisher of Mac's List. I'm joined by my co hosts, Ben Forstag, our managing director, and Jenna Forstrom our community manager. This week we're talking about how to get the most out of your first job.

How you approach your first job can make a big difference in your career. Our guest expert this week is David Mariano, the host of Finance Career Launch podcast. He says the most successful people in a first job focus on learning and relationships. David shares these and other tips with me later in the show.

Every year, high schools and universities send new classes of graduates into the workforce. Ben Forstag has found a list of six common mistakes recent graduates make at work. He tells us more in a moment.

What skills should you master now in order to meet the future needs of employers? That's the question of the week. It comes from Taireez Niswander in Vancouver Washington. Jenna Forstrom shares her advice in a few minutes.

As always, let's check in with the Mac's List team first. Now, Jenna, Ben, we're talking this week about first jobs, so I want you to think for a moment about that first professional position you had after college. What did you do to get the most out of that experience, and what was that first job?

Ben Forstag:

I think I've shared this on previous shows. My first job was working as an outdoor education coordinator, which is basically a fancy way of saying I lived at the summer camp year round and took school groups through the summer camp experience and the outdoor education experience. I think, given my age at the time and given the kind of work I was in, it would have been really easy to kind of just treat it like a joke of a job or a non-job, because it was a fun place to work, and it was a pretty relaxed place to work. I think where I got the most value out of that job though was by taking the job seriously and really trying to do my absolute best, and not just using it as a paycheck.

Jenna Forstrom:

My first job when I was in high school was lifeguard which I think is a very professional job for a 16 year old because you're responsible for the life and safety of anyone who's six months and anyone who's 80 years old or even older. We had some really old ladies come in and to aqua aerobics or master swimmers. Then after college my first professional job was I worked at a consulting start up here in Portland, Oregon focused around sustainability, and I just learned a ton about setting up an office because we were a start up, and building my first website, and just a whole heck of a lot of things. I got the opportunity to help teach at MIT, so that was a pretty cool experience at 22, but yeah. How about Mac? What was your first job?

Mac Prichard:

Well, my first professional job after college was working as a fundraiser on a U.S. Senate race, and it was a job that lasted from June, right after graduation at the University of Iowa, through November, through Election Day. I knew it was going to be a short-term assignment, and to make the most of the opportunity I worked hard at building relationships with people on the campaign. It was a statewide race, so there were people scattered across four offices, and I made it a point to know who people were, and to build connections with them. I also, in order to make the most out of that opportunity, worked a lot, and I took advantage of training that we had not only during the day but also often on the weekends which helped me become a better campaigner.

I will say that I came into that position at age 21 having had various jobs for almost ten years, so I had a good work ethic, and I think that served me well. Were there things that you did, Jenna, both at the start up right after college and at the lifeguarding job to make the most out of the opportunities you had there?

Jenna Forstrom:

For me, with lifeguarding, it was a very structured program. The place I worked was covered through American Red Cross, and we had to commit to finishing up all these programs if you wanted to become a head lifeguard which is when you were 18 and a legal adult, so you had to go through and run every program at every facility, which at the time was like 15 different facilities, and you had two years to commit to doing that. Which I thought was really beautiful because when you're 16 and kind of a go getter you have something that you can't do in one sitting, and it takes two years to complete that process, but they help you, and they work with you, and put you in contact with other people to get this program done.

Mac Prichard:

You were committed to doing that process because I'm guessing some people didn't finish it.

Jenna Forstrom:

Yeah. There are a lot of reasons why people didn't want to do it or couldn't commit to doing it. There was also a financial incentive, which when you're 16 the glorious \$2 raise was totally worth it, and that was just like a really fun project, and it was almost camaraderie based because my best friend at the time was doing it, and a couple other of my friends, so we would carpool, or we would say, "Hey, make sure when you train at such-and-such facility you get so-and-so because they're really good, or try to reschedule because you got so-and-so, and he's not so great." There was a lot of that. Almost like classes in college, that kind of thing.

When I was out of college, my boss was launching the startup, so it was setting up an office, building a website, just taking time to schedule and just learning that art of managing your calendar, manager someone else's calendar, being available to answer questions on the turn of a dime was just really helpful.

Mac Prichard:

Good. Well, thanks for sharing that, Jenna, and thank you, Ben, for sharing your story. Let's turn back to you, Ben, because every week you're out there searching the nooks and crannies of the internet, and you're looking for those

websites, tools, and books and other resources our listeners can use in their job search and career, so what have you uncovered for us this week?

Ben Forstag:

This week I want to talk about a blog post I found called Six Common Mistakes Recent Graduates Make and How to Avoid Them. This comes from the website Adweek. Now, Adweek is primarily a publication for people in the marketing and advertising field, but I think the advice they share here is applicable to nearly any young professional, and in fact I'd say it's probably germane to just about any worker, regardless of your age or field. The author of this post, Molly Folse, lists six common mistakes that young workers make. I thought it would be fun, or at least insightful, to see how many of these mistakes our younger selves are guilty of, so I'm going to read through them one at a time, and Mac and Jenna, you have to admit when you did this back in the day.

Mac Prichard:

Okay. I'm ready. How about you, Jenna?

Jenna Forstrom:

This is like Never Have I Ever, but work-related.

Ben Forstag:

Okay, number one, failing to negotiate.

Mac Prichard:

I'll cop to that. I think I didn't get smart about negotiation probably until job three or four. Whatever was offered sounded ideal to me.

Ben Forstag:

Yeah.

Mac Prichard:

What about you, Jenna?

Jenna Forstrom:

I've always negotiated.

Mac Prichard:

Smarter than I.

Jenna Forstrom:

Because I spent four years being at a college that told me that women would never negotiate, so I was like, I'm not going to make that mistake.

Mac Prichard:

Yeah. Good for you.

Ben Forstag:

Okay. Number two, moving too quickly without asking for help.

Jenna Forstrom:

Super guilty.

Mac Prichard:

This one I ... I think I was good at asking for help. Yeah, both in high school and in the first jobs in my 20s, too.

Ben Forstag:

Good. Number three, downplaying the importance of professionalism. Mac, I can already see you as wearing the suit when you were 16 years old.

Mac Prichard:

Yeah, I think I was born an old man, so formality came easily to me, so professionalism is something I've always paid attention to. Maybe it's one of the legacies of my Catholic education that just gives you a respect for hierarchy.

Jenna Forstrom:

Also super guilty.

Ben Forstag:

Okay, number four, not being patient about paying your dues.

Mac Prichard:

I think, again, perhaps it's having gone through parochial school and that strong sense of hierarchy. I always had a sense that I had to put in my time, but I also I think was willing to stand up and take risks, too, but yeah. How about you, Jenna?

Jenna Forstrom:

I think I was actually pretty good at this, but, that being said, when I was 16 through 18 I was going through a two year program to "pay your dues" to get a raise, so I think it made sense that everything else would take two years to get a raise or do anything of substance was kind of my mentality when I was 21, 22, so that helped.

Ben Forstag:

Okay, number five, gossiping or griping to fit in.

Mac Prichard:

Well, I have to confess that I did my share of gossiping and griping in my 20s, and I can remember in ... I'm embarrassed to admit this, but when I worked in Boston and for a nonprofit we got a new salary policy. It was released to the staff, and I thought it would be hilarious to put out a memo that took basically a bunch of

gobbledygook and said, "Here's the new policy explained." Then pasted in, and I remember it surfacing at a staff meeting and having to fess up to it, so yeah guilty, but I've learned.

Jenna Forstrom:

I just realized Ben hasn't weighed in on any of these.

Ben Forstag:

I'm pleading the fifth the entire show.

Jenna Forstrom:

Ben!

Ben Forstag:

Moving on. Number six, not thinking about the future.

Mac Prichard:

Well, first of all I just want to give a huge shout out to Jenna who dodged the bullet of answering number five, but now I see we're at number six, so I will plead guilty to this one as well because I often was just caught up in the jobs I had in my early and mid 20s, and then didn't really think about what the next position was going to be or the one after that, and I finally figured that out in my late 20s and early 30s. Particularly when I was getting ready to go to graduate school I had to figure out what I was going to do the next five to 10 years. What about you, Jenna?

Jenna Forstrom:

I think I agree with you, Mac, as someone who just exited her 20s I've been super guilty of not really planning for the future. Well, I guess I know what I want to do, or I know what I want my legacy to be, but I don't think I have put together all the stepping stones. Like, I don't have a master plan. It's very vague and crystal-bally at this point.

Ben Forstag:

Thank you for being open and honest, guys, and thank you for giving me the pass on not answering any of these. I'll be honest, I'm guilty of all of them, or was guilty of all of them. If our listeners want to read more about this, either because they're new to the workforce or just want to reminisce on the good old days, they can do this by checking out the blog post called Six Common Mistakes Recent Graduates Make and How to Avoid Them. Again, this is from Adweek, and we will have the URL in the show notes.

Mac Prichard:

Well, thank you, Ben, and if you have a suggestion for Ben, particularly another quiz that you'd like Ben to have Jenna and I go through, or all three of us, please write him, and we'll share your idea on the show. His address is Ben@MacList.org.

Now, let's turn to you, our listeners, and Jenna Forstrom, our community manager, is here to answer one of your questions. Jenna, what's in the Mac's List mailbag this week?

Jenna Forstrom:

This week's question comes from Taireez Niswander, who was at our Career Opportunities and Change Communication event. She asks ...

Taireez Niswander:

Hi, my name is Taireez Niswander. I'm from Vancouver, Washington, and my question is what are the skills and knowledge necessary for future employers that would be essential for me to know and get to know now, so that when I am looking for a job in the future I'm prepared?

Jenna Forstrom:

Thank you so much for coming to our event and asking your question. We share a weekly resource in every podcast episode, and I think a lot of those would be really helpful in this situation. For example, Ben has shared the Jobvites recruiter national 2016 annual survey, and the best and worst jobs of 2016 which would give you a good idea of where to look and where not to look for careers, and then once you've done that, it will help you work backwards to figure out what skills you would need to do and learn to move forward in a specific career. Obviously this was about change communications in the communications industry, but I think you could do that for anything. I want to be a developer, so I need to learn code, so you can work backwards, or I thought I wanted to be in journalism, but after listening to Ben's podcast resource and learning that print is going away maybe I should look more into digital platforms. Using that.

Other just general ideas, practice your soft skills. Like every organization no matter your job you need to have good communication, good writing skills, be organized, show up on time, be punctual, but then also demonstrate your need or your desire to learn new skills, so oh I'm making this career pivot and I've learned code on the side, or I've been managing a budget at my household for my family of four, if you're re-entering the workforce. Just kind of talking about what you've been learning, what you've been reading, what's been interesting to you, what hobbies have you learned? Anything that makes you more personable in an interview, but then also shows that you're an intelligent human being who's apt to learn and grow.

How about Mac, Ben, do you have any tips?

Ben Forstag:

I think the skills you need and what employers are looking for is going to vary a lot depending on the industry, but I think you're right, Jenna, that there are certain skills that are widely applicable that every employer is looking for, and I think those include things like being able to write concisely and clearly, being able to communicate effectively using spoken word. I think there are also things like having some minimum proficiency in HTML or some basic coding. These might not be core to what you want to be doing in your new job, but they're really valuable skills that most employers recognize that this is a plus to bring you on the staff if you have some expertise in that. That would be my suggestion.

Mac Prichard:

Yeah, I agree with the point you're both making about the importance of soft skills. Writing, management, presentation, speaking [are all key] because, whatever occupation you choose, those are going to serve you well. Technical skills matter, and you need to master them. As regular listeners know I'm the ancient one here. I just celebrated my 58th birthday, and I remember when people used to put things like on their resumes back in the 80s ... Knowledge of MultiMate, good understanding of Lotus 1-2-3. These software packages that Jenna and even Ben are just blanking. What are you talking about?

Jenna Forstrom:

I have no idea what you're referring to.

Mac Prichard:

I know, and today we're learning new software apps and other packages, but they will come and go, but the soft skills that you brought up, Jenna, will serve you throughout your career, and that's a foundation of bedrock that you can build on, and the sooner you get started mastering those skills the better you'll be served.

Ben Forstag:

Yeah. You never know what the future technology you're going to be using is, or if you're moving into a new field the exact thing that they're going to want you to do, and that's why I think it's so important to build up your experience in things like project management or, again, good writing because you're taking complex ideas and distilling it down into understandable pieces. If you can do that in one field you're more than likely going to be able to do that in a new field as well.

Jenna Forstrom:

Chances are that's a question that you'll get asked in an interview. It's a personality thing, like tell me the last book you read. Tell me the last news ...Like what are you reading? What are you absorbing? It helps you on multiple fronts.

Mac Prichard: Demonstrating that you're learning and curious, those are great traits as well.

Well, thank you, Jenna, and you as well, Ben, and thank you for the question. If you have a question for us please email us. You can write Jenna. Her address is easy to remember. It's Jenna@MacList.org, or call our listener line. That number is area code 716-JOB-TALK. That's 716-562-8225.

We'll be back in just a moment, and when we return, I'll talk with our guest, David Mariano, about how you can make the most of your first job.

Most people struggle with job hunting. The reason is simple: most of us learn the nuts and bolts of looking for work by trial and error. That's why I produced this podcast, to help you master the skills you need to find a great job. It's also why I wrote my new book, *Land Your Dream Job Anywhere*. For 15 years at Mac's List I've helped people in Portland, Oregon find meaningful, well paying, and rewarding jobs that they love. Now I've put all of my job hunting secrets in one book that can help you no matter where you live. You'll learn how to get clear about your career goals, to find hidden jobs that never get posted, and ace your next job interview. For more information and to download the first chapter for free visit MacList.org/anywhere.

Now let's turn to this week's guest expert, David Mariano. David Mariano is the founder of Finance Career Launch, a career development site that includes a podcast, course, and other resources. He's also a director with Western Reserve Partners, a middle market investment bank. In his career, David has worked with company owners, CEOs and CFOs as an advisor, part owner, or executive. He joins us today from Cleveland, Ohio. Thanks for coming on the show, David.

David Mariano:

Yeah, Mac, thanks very much for having me on.

Mac Prichard:

It's an honor. Today we're talking about that first job, and we've all been there. We've all gotten out of the car, or stepped off the bus, or maybe just walked to work and walked through that front door, and it's our first professional position after high school or college. We want to talk about how to get the most out of that opportunity, so David, let's start with relationships. What's your advice about building relationships in that first job, and why does that matter?

David Mariano:

Yeah, I mean I think it's really the most important thing in your first job that carries you through the rest of your career as well, though. I mean, getting to know names and faces, that's important. Networking in general is important, but it also helps you understand how your work relates to other areas in the company, and I think that really helps to give you an appreciation for what you're doing, the importance of it, but then it also can open your eyes to other opportunities, and when you talk to other people ... To do this you have to talk to other people, right? To learn what they're doing, and I remember my first real internship I didn't do a great job of this. I could have done better.

I did better as I got older, but I worked for a manufacturing company, and I was in the accounting department. Interacted with some people there, and interacted with the CEO even, which was great. I felt special, but quite honestly I wish I got out on the plant floor to understand how the business fit together. How the financial piece that I was working on fit within the overall organization, and it really ... The older I got, and the more I've done this, it really gives you an appreciation for what you do, and helps you understand your own job a lot better when you understand how it impacts others in the company.

Mac Prichard:

I imagine ... Certainly I can remember being nervous about approaching people outside my department or my unit in that first job, and just not quite sure how to do it. What are common barriers that prevent people, David, from speaking up and reaching out to people not only on their team, but also outside their department, and how do you see people overcome those barriers?

David Mariano:

I mean, one is just being shy, right? Sometimes whether it's being young or even just if that's part of your personality, sometimes you're just shy, and it's hard to do that, and I think ... First, connect with the importance of it because it is important, and even if you're shy, even if you're softer spoken or less likely to go out and just introduce yourself, perhaps there's a way to get an introduction from someone that you do work with, and just express a sincere desire to understand what that other department does, and I think if you approach it in the right way, and ask with sincerity, and say, "Hey, I really enjoy working here. I would love to learn more about the rest of the company or that other department."

I think people are usually willing to help you when you ask with solid motives. Honestly, another barrier, the flip side of that is not wanting to ... Or not thinking you need to, I guess that could be another reason not to do it, and I think just trying to, again, connect with why you're there, and not assuming you understand the rest of the business. Not assuming that from whatever chair you sit in that you really have a full picture of what's going on, so I think the other side of that is having the humility to go out and ask, and ask for some help if you need it.

Mac Prichard:

Yeah. I've heard some business consultants talk about what they call learned ignorance, and even though you may know the answers to many questions, there's great value in just asking lots of questions because you'll learn unexpected things if the subject is a familiar one to you, but you get great insights if it's a brand new topic and understanding what others are doing.

David Mariano:

Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. Guilty as charged. I mean, sometimes you get focused on what you're doing, and you want to do a good job for good reasons, but it's helpful to get outside your comfort zone sometimes, too.

Mac Prichard:

I could imagine another barrier, David, might be that people who are in that first internship or professional position think, "Well, gosh, I need to follow my job description. I'm here. I'm paid to do this, and if I focus just on that, that's the path to success in this organization." Why might not that be a good idea, David? Why should they think beyond the job description?

David Mariano:

Yeah, well, I mean absolutely. You need to do a good job on what you're doing, but every job evolves, every position evolves, and ultimately we all end up doing things beyond our job description, so you might as well start preparing for that in a way by just talking to other people, and starting to understand things that might broaden your knowledge, your actual knowledge, but then it might also broaden your opinion of what your job is in the first place because there are always unwritten things within job descriptions. There are always unwritten assumptions or unwritten possibilities that when you get outside of your little bubble, your job description, you start to understand that more. You start to see things that you could be working on. Possible projects you could get involved in, or opportunities, or people you could work with in other departments.

Then there's the very practical principle of the more people you know within an organization, the more people who know you exist, and if you are doing a great job, if you get outside of your group or department or little community, the more people that know you and that are familiar with your work, I think the more likelihood that you'll either ... If it is an internship that you'll get hired full time or if you are there full time already that you'll have influence throughout the rest of the organization, and you'll be able to grow and achieve whatever goals you have.

Mac Prichard:

I see some people when they think about the importance of building relationships in the workplace they focus only on the boss or the VIPs. David, why might that not be a good idea?

David Mariano:

Well, that's a limited group; a limited person. That one person can only see so much. That one person only has so much influence. Especially these days, more and more decisions are made with multiple people involved, so if you're ... Depending on your goals you might need the acceptance, the approval, the check from some other people in your organization, so I think knowing people outside of your group, outside of just your boss is useful. Could benefit your career, but then also just there's the learning that you get from that as well. Understanding other people's perspectives because there is never one path to something, so your boss might have arrived in his or her spot for one reason. There could be another department head down the hall that got to his or her spot for a different reason, and you'll arrive for a different reason. I think seeing those things is really educational, helpful, and I think you can start to really understand yourself and what you might be able to achieve.

I don't know if you were going this route as well, but I mean not just talking to your own boss, but talking to your peers or would-be peers, or people who are even less experienced than you. I think there's always a reason to just continue to build your network internally, and meet people who either could help you down the road, or who you could help, and who you might be working with someday, so I think the more people you know at some level is the better.

Mac Prichard:

Yeah, and I think it's always a good policy just in general both in and outside the workplace to treat people the way you want to be treated, because it just makes for a better life, but also in terms of a career strategy it's a smart approach too, because I'm sure you've seen this and many of our listeners have, too. Today's intern or administrative assistant is tomorrow's manager or even CEO or president, 5, 10, 20 years down the road, so you never know who

you're going to meet and where they might end up, particularly if you stay in a field, one field or one community, for a long time.

David Mariano:

Yeah, absolutely.

Mac Prichard:

You talked about the importance of learning. What are some of your best tips, David, for someone who's new on that first job or in that first internship to not only go out and talk to folks, but to learn, and what should they focus on learning?

David Mariano:

Well, there's a lot there. There's a lot of possibility there. I mean, focusing on what your role is, what your job is, is fundamental and should go without saying, but I think making sure you're doing a great job, you're seeking excellence in what you're supposed to be doing is first and foremost, and doing whatever you need to do to get to that point. Whether that is talk to other people, asking for help, seeking additional resources. I think that those are all things, and that should be your primary goal, but then I think trying to get involved in just other projects, and this is related to the talking to people thing, but trying to get involved in some projects that might not be directly related to what you do day to day. Again, can help you develop that broader skill set and help you ... If you don't work with teams already, can help you possibly learn how to work in a team environment. Can help you learn how to figure out problems, solve problems, for the organization in a different way. I think those are some of the biggest opportunities to learn on your first job. Just seeking those situations out.

Mac Prichard:

We've been talking a lot about learning and relationships, and people can learn new skills, but culture and fit matter a lot - especially at that first job. What's your best advice, David, about how to learn a company culture and find a way to thrive within it?

David Mariano:

Just getting involved with people. Depending on the size of the company there could be clubs or groups or ... I know some of my first jobs there were softball teams and intramural ... I guess they weren't called intramural sports at the work level, but volleyball leagues, and that's how I kind of connected with the people that I worked with, and I have to imagine a lot of companies there's other things that people do to just get connected with people. You get to know people on a deeper level than just what you do with them side by side in your work environment. I think doing those things are really the best ways to get to know the people, get to know the culture. I mean, not every company is ... There's a culture in every company. We know that, but not every company has those values and what they want the culture to be as documented and advertised or written as some others.

I think in some organizations you'll have to just jump in and be a part of things. While another organization may have some very explicit explanations of, hey here's our culture; here's how we expect you to live it out. So I think, depending on what end of the spectrum your company is or whether you're somewhere in between, you kind of have to adapt to what's there, and get involved in whatever way that you can.

Mac Prichard:

Now, we can all benefit from mentors no matter what stage we're at in our career, but at the start of that first job what advice do you have for people who are looking for a mentor? Either inside or outside the workplace, and what's the best way to work with them?

David Mariano:

Yeah, being completely transparent, I would say sometimes it's ... I wish I had a better answer for this. I wish that there was a way to go out and find that person that would be with you side by side and help develop your career, but I think that's a hard thing to find in a lot of scenarios, so I think looking to people within your company who have done similar things to what you want to do, who have the character that you want to have when you're at a certain level, or who are living out certain principles that you admire. I think observing those people, whether you work with them side by side or maybe just grab a cup of coffee with that person on a one-off basis or over time, I think you can learn a lot from them.

Then I would also include looking outside the organization. Reading books, reading leadership materials, listening to podcasts like this one and others that you can learn from people who have done certain things. I think those are really the easiest, the quickest ways to learn about what to do with your career, what to do as a professional. Like I said, some organizations are better than others. Honestly, I'm in the finance space, and it's not the most nurturing industry. It's not the most nurturing market to be in, so there aren't those true mentors that we all seek, but there certainly are people that I've looked up to that I can take away pieces of them that I can say that characteristic, that trait, that habit can take me far, and I want to adopt those things while maybe I leave out some of the other things that aren't so attractive to me.

Mac Prichard:

Well, it's been a terrific conversation, David. Now, tell us what's next for you.

David Mariano:

Yeah, sure. Thanks for asking. Well, I run the podcast Finance Career Launch, and I have a website that goes by the same name, FinanceCareerLaunch.com, and we just re-launched the podcast in January of this year after taking a little time off, but if you go to the website you can also sign up right now for a free seven part video course called The Seven Pillars of a Successful Career in Finance, and it is focused on financial professionals, but a lot of what is in that free course really applies to anyone who's working in any situation. It's really fundamental. I call them skills, habits, and mindsets that are present in the most successful people I've seen, so that's something they can go get for free, and take a look there - especially if you're in the finance space, but if not, you might learn something from that, too.

Mac Prichard:

Well, I haven't had a chance to take your course yet, David, but I have listened to your show, your podcast, and you're right. You focus on the finance space, but I found lots of great content there about careers for any industry you might work, so I encourage our listeners to check it out, and we'll be sure to include links to your website, your podcast, and your course, in our show notes.

David Mariano:

Very good. Thanks, Mac.

Mac Prichard:

Well, thank you, and David, thank you for being on the show.

David Mariano:

Yeah, it was my pleasure.

Ben Forstag:

Let me start off by saying I know this show is called How to Make the Most for Your First Job, but listening to some of the comments that David made I think we could probably say that these are things that most job seekers should be doing in their jobs, and hopefully you learned it in your first job, but if not things you should be incorporating into your workflow right now.

Mac Prichard:

Yeah, I thought there was a lot of wise advice here. Even if it was your third, fifth, or seventh job if you're not doing these sorts of things that now is the time to start.

Ben Forstag:

Exactly, and the one I really liked was taking the time and the effort to go out and meet people outside of your department or in the small kind of group that you work with in an organization because I think learning and understanding all the complexities that are inherent in any organization, that is always going to serve you well. The person who kind of knows how everything works has a unique position in an organization, and is always really well valued. That's also, frankly, how you find these opportunities that might not ever get advertised or aren't even formal jobs, right? You can position yourself in an organization as the guy or the gal who knows how things work, and that's an invaluable place to be.

Mac Prichard:

Yeah, as David was making that point I was reminded of a conversation I was part of when I was in the governor's office. We were talking about two people in the Oregon political world, and one was struggling, and the other wasn't, and was having success. Someone in the room said, "Well, gosh, she's got so many allies, and he doesn't." It wasn't that it was a formal alliance, but one person had a very strong network that extended beyond the organization they represented. The other person never really got out of their small unit, and the lady who had that network was well served by it.

Jenna Forstrom:

Ben totally took mine. I like that point, too, but I think it ties into like, again, what we've been talking about. Like it's really important to know the admin when you're coming in to interview for a job, and when my dad's advice when I started working as a lifeguard, he said, "Get to know the janitor." I was like 15, and I was like, "Why?" He goes, "Because he's an important person in any role." I think that's so true here even at Mac's List. Like, Anneka... Who's our office manager, can email the team that runs this building if the HVAC goes out or something. It's just really important to know more than just your immediate team because, A. when you start a new job you have the perfect excuse to get to know you. Like, "Hey, I'm new. I'm just trying to figure out how everyone works together, so like tell me about yourself; who are you? What do you do? Like, what's a pain point?" Then kind of piece it all together and have that fresh eyes point of view.

I also thought it was really interesting that he talked about the art of finding a mentor is kind of ... Even he struggles with that, and I think it's so apparent to younger people when they're starting a new role. Like, seek out a mentor. Maybe it might not be your boss, but who in your new company, new role, do you want to spend time with, and who seems open to that conversation? Again, if you're going around playing the newbie role, "Hey. Who are you? What do you do?" Maybe you'll find something like, "Oh, I didn't know we had a job XYZ, and there's a person there that's been doing it for 30 years. How do I get into that, or how do I learn more about that? Would you mind meeting me for coffee once a week or once a month or whenever?"

It seems like almost tangentially you could find both ... Get to know your team, and then also find a mentor through just that one exercise of spreading yourself out, and getting to know more people outside of your immediate team.

Mac Prichard:

I agreed with both of your points, Jenna, but I especially like your point about, and your dad's advice, about reaching out to the janitor at that first job because people in support positions often they move up, and I know David and I talked about that, and you don't know where people may end up in their career, and where they might be particularly if you both remain in that field. If they do stay in that position they often develop relationships with people at many different levels of the organization, so they may have the ear of the CEO or the president because they've been there so long, and they've developed a personal relationship, so don't take somebody in a support role for granted. Again, you should treat people the way you want to be treated, but remember it's also a good career strategy as well.

Well, thank you both, and thank you, David, for joining us, and thank you, our listeners, for downloading today's episode of Find Your Dream Job. If you like what you hear, please sign up for our free weekly newsletter. Now, in every issue we give you the key points of that week's show. We also include links to all the resources mentioned, and you get a transcript of the full episode. If you subscribe to the newsletter now, we'll send you our job seeker checklist in one easy to use file. We show you all the steps you need to take to find a great job.

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Until next time, thanks for letting us help you find your dream job.