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After School Special

Nearly 3,000 student members of AICHE expect to graduate this year (many this month, some in December), and we want to welcome them to the profession with a few words of wisdom. I asked my colleagues at AICHE headquarters to share their favorite advice for new grads. Here are some of their replies.

Recognize and embrace diversity. There are many different opinions and viewpoints. Listen to them all and adopt freely, but always give credit. (Joe Cramer)

Respect the expertise that other professions and specialties require. If something seems trivial to you, it is conceivable that you don't have the knowledge required to think it through. Respect other professions just as you would like yours to be respected. Things are deceptively simple or deceptively complex, but more often than not — they are deceiving. (Amit Gupta)

When you shake hands, do so with a firm grip. When you speak, look people in the eye. When someone is speaking, listen until they are done. (Jeff Wood)

Stay at least five minutes past quitting time. Don't take extra time at lunch. Attend your local AICHE activities. Get out into the plant and get to know the hourly employees — there's a wealth of information there. (Paul Butler)

Be curious about everything and keep an open mind. The best opportunities are not always the ones that seem best at first glance. Keep your options open and never turn down something that has not yet been offered to you. (Jack Dean)

Think about appropriate communication. Some things are best said via e-mail, others by phone. But sometimes it's best to communicate face-to-face, if possible. (John Vasko)

There are approximately 660,000 words in the English language. Chances are, one of them is the word you are looking for. Avoid gibberish, jargon, and (especially) business-speak. The most important words you know are *please* and *thank you*. (Tim McCreight)

Know how to use words properly — the spell-checker won't tell you *it's* should be *its*. Don't say *he was like* when you mean *he said*. (CFM)

When traveling internationally: Travel light, but with an expandable suitcase. Carry gifts for your hosts. Always speak respectfully and err on the side of formality until your colleagues indicate familiarity is acceptable. When presented with a new food, try it, you'll probably like it; if you don't like it, at least you will have hard data. (This advice doesn't apply if you have food allergies or sensitivities.) Try to learn the key words of the language: Please, thank you, hello, goodbye, yes, no, coffee, beer, and restroom. (Scott Berger)

Don't be discouraged if success or opportunities don't come immediately. If you put the effort in, good things will come in time. If things come too easily, you'll never accomplish anything great. (Dov Harrington)

Practice your 20-second elevator speech every morning in front of the mirror. Learn the culture of your profession and employer. Be ready to act and take reasonable risks. (Camille B.)

C. Michael Armstrong, the CEO of AT&T, told the Worcester Polytechnic Institute Class of 2000: Make sure Monday is your favorite day of the week. Enjoy what you do, and do what you enjoy. (Joanna Ziemlewski)

There is not nearly enough space here to include all that we want to say. You can read more — and discuss this topic further — on our blog at <http://chenected.aiche.org>.

Congratulations, graduates, and good luck in your new endeavors!

Cynthia F. Mascone, Editor-in-Chief