

## **PART I**

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# BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL

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## CHAPTER 1

# TAKE THE PRO TO LUNCH

I work in a big office, more than 200 people on two floors in the financial district of my city. The rookies sit in the boardroom, sometimes 15 to 20 of them, almost all late twenties to early thirties, all out in life, and all anxious. Occasionally, as I wander around the office to blow off steam, I'll stop, sit on a desk facing them, and talk to the young people informally, off-the-cuff, about how the money management business has changed over the years, what they should be paying attention to, and how to plan their future in the business. No one tells them these things. They hear nothing about institutional memory, what makes markets move beyond daily news bytes and how to really build a successful business and future.

Recently, one of the rookies came to see me in my office. "Can I come to work for you?" he asked.

"I'm flattered," I said. "But my team is complete for now. But I will come by occasionally and speak to you all."

"We don't get this stuff from anyone."

"What did you major in, in college?"

"Economics."

"That's too bad," I said. "I try to hire people who majored in the classics. Or in history, or English. I want to surround myself with young people who know something about the past. Because knowledge about the past will help you so much with your future."

I would suggest that all of you, no matter what jobs you have or jobs you want, seek out the oldest people in your present company, or the

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people who have worked there the longest. If they're still employed after long service, they must have something special to offer. So you should invite them to lunch, to *buy* them lunch. They'll be happy to do it and will tell you tales that will give you a different appreciation and insight into your business and the industry it's in. It will be much more valuable to you than most of the orientation and the too-often colorless meetings you attend regularly. These older people will be generous and important to your growth, because no one ever asks them to share their experiences, their histories. Often they might appear to be curmudgeons or seem intimidating. Set that aside and approach them graciously. They need the interchange as well, and will be very glad you asked them out.

It is important as you build a career to develop friends, both older and younger than you. The older ones can shape your development. The younger ones can keep you thinking young.

**Take an old pro to lunch.**