

# Parking Business SKILLS

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The other day I was going through some old photo albums of my time in the Air Force. There were photos of my time at Alconbury England, Zweibrücken Germany and Pleiku Vietnam. I even had a Basic Pay rate sheet from 1968 showing my pay at \$324.90 per month. That number is correct: \$324.90 per month. As I turned the pages I came across a page titled 'skills needed for the 1990's. There was no date on the page and no author's name. I realized that these are not just skills for the 1990's these are also Parking Business skills for anytime.

*There are ten skills on the list:*

**ANALYTICAL THINKING** – the ability to generate and weigh a number of alternative solutions and to make a sound decision regarding a plan of action. Many of us are faced with decisions every day. Do we purchase a new parking management system that brings everything under one umbrella? Do we outsource and how do we charge for parking permits? To systematically and

analytically think through all of the decision points to arrive at the correct decision is critical.

**RESEARCHING** – the ability to recognize when more data is needed and to use references to obtain appropriate information. We all know the International Parking Institute (IPI) is an excellent research tool. When I needed information on In-car Meters I found it on the IPI web site. Visit your library and take their class on how to use their research tools. Don't forget the internet.

**ORGANIZING** – the ability to order and install systems and routines to maintain order. I love the last three words of the sentence "to maintain order." Can you imagine if you had no parking enforcement in your organization? There would be chaos. "No Parking," "Reserved Parking," "Handicap Parking" signs would mean nothing. How would you control revenue or sell permits without being organized?

**SPEAKING** – the ability to express yourself fluently and intelligently both one to one and in front of groups. Public speaking is one of the greatest fears a person has but it is one of the most important to conquer. As the leader of a parking organization we are constantly called upon to explain why we towed a four-star general's vehicle, put a citation on a highway patrol vehicle or explain next year's budget. If you express yourself fluently and intelligently you will get your point across and get funding for all of the line items in your budget.

**WRITING** – the ability to use proper spelling and grammar to express ideas. Once you have committed your words to paper they are there for everyone to see so they must be correct. When you publish parking rules or some change in policy or procedure at a university all of the English Professors will critique your work and send you a pass/fail grade. You always want to pass.



**HUMAN RELATIONS AND INTERPERSONAL** – abilities to relate well to persons from varied backgrounds, particularly to appreciate cultural differences. To help me with appreciating cultural differences I ensure that my staff resembles my customer base. On staff we have a 79-year old gentleman from Panama. He is teaching me Spanish. We have students, African Americans, Caucasians, male and female. Each brings a different point of view and each makes our organization stronger.

**QUANTITATIVE & SCIENTIFIC REASONING** – an understanding of the basic concepts and principles of mathematical and scientific processes. Mathematics and science are the springboards to the innovations of the future. When someone says Boolean Algebra, integers or Pythagorean Theorem we should know a little something about the subject because they are the building blocks of many of the things we do and use.

**ETHICAL APPLICATIONS** – the ability to understand the historical roots and to apply moral standards and appreciate values in the work setting. The dictionary defines ethics as the study and philosophy of human conduct, with emphasis on the determination of right and wrong. I believe conducting yourself in a way so people know that you will always make the morally correct choices.

**UNDERSTANDING OF TECHNOLOGY** – ability to apply basic principles of technology including keyboarding and data manipulation. Many, many, many years ago when I graduated with a bachelor degree in Business Administration and a minor computer information systems DOS was king. Now there is a new form of techno babble out there. If you cannot speak techno babble you need to hire someone who can. That is what I did. I am now taking classes in techno babbleology so I can keep up with the rapid changes taking place in our industry.

**CAREER PLANNING** – the cultivation of a personal sense of direction and desire for improvement which includes a willingness to learn. Keeping up with technology is a large part of the learning process. Other issues in the world are important also. Global warming, gasoline prices, personnel rule changes and the need for alternate transportation make it mandatory that we attend classes, seminars, research articles, get organized and talk to our friends and peers so that we can stay informed on what is going on in the world and in our parking industry. ■

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