WEEK 10 CAREER SERVICE HOMEWORK

**Elevator pitch:**

I recently graduated from Boise Codeworks which is a fullstack coding bootcamp. I spent a period of 13 weeks dedicating over 500 hours to building out full-stack applications. I had the opportunity to not only code independently, but also participate in partner-programming as well as implementing SCRUM and agile methodologies. Prior to attending Codeworks, I spent four years managing various stands for a national drive-through coffee chain. I was actually the manager over the busiest stand in our franchise with an annual revenue over $1,000,000. I am used to delegating and making quick decisions under pressure which makes me easily adaptable to high-stress situations and short-term deadlines. My experience and history in customer service allows me to effectively communicate to large teams and colleagues with ease. I also have experience working in sales, overlooking and communicating contracts with clients. After spending years working in customer service, I decided to pursue something more intellectually stimulating that I could build a long-term career out of which brought me to software development! I would love to be able to use my communication skills and management experience to help mentor others and fulfill a role where I may be communicating face to face with clients.

**STAR questions:**

**Describe a time when you had to interact with a difficult client or customer. What was the situation, and how did you handle it?**

I was working as a manager at a coffee stand that was experience product shortages. We were out of the usual plastic cups we used for ice drinks and instead were preparing them in paper cups. I had a customer who was upset with a barista over their cold drink being served in a paper cup. I excused the barista so I could talk to the customer and hear their concerns. I made sure to listen to their feelings and acknowledge why they were upset. I reassured the customer that their drink was made exactly the same, despite being served in a different cup. I apologized for the inconvenience and provided them a coupon for their next visit. I also suggested they could bring their own cup and we would be more than happy to prepare their drink in that! The customer was appreciative of me willing to listen to their concerns and giving them a coupon to bring back. The customer then began bringing their own mug which gave them a discount every time they returned, ultimately making them happier and saving them more money.

**Give me an example of a time when you had to think on your feet.**

While I was a manager, our coffee stand experienced a blackout in the area. All of our espresso machines were down as well as our point of sales system. I had to identify how we could continue serving customers despite not being able to make over half of the menu or ring them up. I identified all of the products that we could continue to serve without requiring power. I directed my staff to apologize to customers for the inconvenience and to inform them of the products we were still able to serve. I grabbed a piece of paper so we could write down and track any and all cash transactions being made in our till. I also directed my staff to take advantage of the down-time and focus on some much-needed cleaning. When the power came back on, I went back through and manually added any transactions we made and was able to keep track of the numbers and everything was on. We were also able to get some stand-cleaning done that we otherwise were not able to dedicate as much time to.

**Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully persuade someone to see things your way at work.**

As a manager, one of my many duties was ensuring product quality and consistency. One day I noticed an employee making a drink incorrectly. I asked the barista how she learned to make it that way and why she chose to do so. After hearing out her answer I suggested walking her through the appropriate methods of making the drink, making sure to explain each step and why we it’s important to make the drink in this specific way in order to ensure the best taste. After completing the drink, I prompted the employee to try the version they made and the version we made together. The employee was able to taste the difference and therefore understand the importance of making the drink accordingly to ensure the best quality of flavor!

**Describe a time when your team or company was undergoing some change. How did that impact you, and how did you adapt?**

I previously worked for the same company for a period of over four years. About three years into my employment, the original owners decided to sell their franchise to a new couple. This was definitely a change as I had been working with the same people for over three years! I chose to stay open-minded and embraced the change with open arms. I thought this would be the perfect opportunity to prove myself and decided to become ‘the best manager possible.’ I put a lot of effort into harvesting an effective management style centered around fostering a sense of community within my staff. I made it clear to my team that I would never ask them to do something I wasn’t willing to do myself. Within a couple of months of working under our new owners I was transferred over managing the highest grossing stand in our franchise!

**Describe a time when you saw a problem and took the initiative to correct it.**

While I was a manager, the stand I was overseeing was experiencing some short staffing. I asked my staff for any volunteers who may be willing to work some extra hours or work outside of their typical scheduled availability. While making the schedule, I scheduled one of my staff-members who volunteered on a day they were not typically available. I made the mistake of not explicitly asking the employee if they were ok to work that day and they expressed their dissatisfaction with me after the schedule was published. I acknowledged the employee’s feelings and my lapse in judgment. I apologized and tole the employee that they deserve to have their time respected and that I would make sure to always double-check with them in the future. I assured her that I would work the shift for them instead and we worked together to restructure her schedule so that she was still able to reach her desired hours for the week. We both came out of the conflict with a better relationship and respect/understanding for each other!

**Whiteboard problems:**

I have been regularly attending whiteboard Wednesdays throughout the cohort and have gained some great experience with working out problems in front of peers! When I have been presented with a problem, I first start off with asking any clarifying questions. I then will walk through and narrate my logic and approach to solving the problem. The process has taught me the value and importance of pseudo-coding before writing code which is something I have begun practicing anytime I am coding now! I have also continued to search out various whiteboard and logic problems online to practice.

**Questions for Employers:**

1. What are some of the most important qualities you look for in potential employees?
2. If an employee expressed concerns with a conflict in values (whether a colleague, or boss) how would you respond?
3. What are your opportunities for advancement and what does the process look like?
4. What behaviors or qualities does an employee need in order to be successful within your company?
5. What are the next steps in the interview process?