

# **Letter to my younger self:**

## **Things I wish I knew when I first started working**

### **Objectives**

Highlight the difference between school and work so recent graduates have an easier transition into work life. Share knowledge and experiences on important career lessons so others don't have to learn them by repeating our mistakes.

### **Target Audience**

Undergrad and graduate students, people who have just entered the workforce.

### **Format**

Presentation. There will be one lesson per side e.g. "Learn to say no", and one of the speakers will share a story.

### **Session length**

50 minutes

### **Description**

In school, the goal is to get you educated. You are given assignments, you get graded, you do your projects and depending on the class, you have an opportunity to do a presentation. In the real world, the goal of a company is to get as much productivity out of you as possible. Recent graduates often carry the school mindset into their first jobs, and only discover the difference a year or two into their career. We want to bring these issues to the forefront so current students and recent graduates can avoid common pitfalls.

We are going to divide the lessons into three categories: career, financial and networking. Here are some sample lessons from each category:

#### **Career**

You have to find out how you are evaluated, and show your good work  
Know the difference between "coding" and "getting a project done successfully"

#### **Financial**

When you get a job offer, you're expected to negotiate.  
Understand the value of stock options

#### **Networking**

A professional network is like a savings account; you should build it before you actually need it.  
Do not eat alone! Use meals as opportunities to meet others.

There will be a handout with book references so attendees can investigate the issues further on their own.

## Speaker Bios

### Chiu-Ki Chan, Square Island LLC

Chiu-Ki started her career at Google, where she learned the ropes of working in an engineering company. She ultimately discovered that it is up to her to take charge of her career, and has been involved with various mentoring efforts ever since. After almost 7 years at Google, Chiu-Ki went to work with two different startups. Last year she decided to go independent, and she now runs her own mobile app development company.

### Rupa Dachere, CodeChix.org

Rupa Dachere is a software engineer and founder of CodeChix.org. She has worked in the Telecom, Datacom and Mobile industries and is always keen on learning new technologies. Having worked at 3 startups and 3 multinationals over a period of 16 years and living through both success and failure scenarios, has given her a lot of experience beyond the technical/engineering aspect of a job. She is currently the chief organizer for CodeChix Hacking sessions, Speaker Series, Seminars/TechTalks and is a co-organizer for the CodeChix Hands-on Workshops. Apart from that she is an avid hiker, cook, sole homeowner (aka impromptu plumber, painter, electrician, gardener etc.) and into north-indian as well as other classical and folk music.

### Christina Schulman, Google

Christina Schulman has been a software engineer at Google for four years. She has previously worked at several startups, including Lycos, MediaSite, and Take Two Interactive. She is the co-founder of Pittsburgh Geek Night, a high-tech networking event that has been running since the first dot com boom, and was selected by Pittsburgh Magazine as one of Pittsburgh's "40 Under 40" in 2000. She received a BA in Computer Science from Princeton in 1992, and has been learning career lessons the hard way ever since.

## References

- Babcock, Linda. Women don't ask : negotiation and the gender divide
- Ferrazzi, Keith. Never eat alone and other secrets to success : one relationship at a time
- Fisher, Roger. Getting to yes : negotiating agreement without giving in
- Frankel, Lois. Nice girls don't get the corner office : 101 unconscious mistakes women make that sabotage their careers
- Klaus, Peggy. Brag! : the art of tooting your own horn without blowing it.
- Patterson, Kerry. Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High