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People

“In the interview process, remember:

- Honesty is the best policy – be candid, honest, direct
 - You will know exactly what you’re getting yourself into by the end of an interview at Jennison.
- Identify people with a strong work ethic
 - Are you a team player?
 - Are you a good communicator?
 - Are you conscientious, detailed-oriented?
 - Do you understand the big picture?”

Michele S. Polansky, *Jennison Associates LLC*

“The key element to successful production is good people working well together. Every team has people with varying strengths and weaknesses. Managers need to learn how to manage different people in different ways, and understand that what motivates one person may not motivate another. The team members themselves need to learn how they differ and complement one another. Setting up opportunities to review the differences, the strengths and the weaknesses allows a team to develop. We use Birkman, but there are many systems that create a uniform language to explore individual differences in an objective way and help you to leverage the team’s strengths and manage the team’s weaknesses.”

Jackie Charnley, *Charnley & Røstvold, Inc.*

Organization

“Organization is key. I use a daily planner to keep track of my to-do’s, deadlines and reminders to myself. Sounds basic, but I am continually surprised by people I meet who do not maintain some kind of system to track all the important dates, to-do’s and reminders.”

Jill Bourgeois Plumb, *Capital Guardian Trust Company*

“When beginning a project...for many people, their first inclination is to sit down and begin filling in the parts they know they can easily complete. While this gives some “instant gratification,” a better approach is to take stock of the entire project at the outset. Take a look at which sections are going to be the most difficult or time consuming to complete, and get those sections underway. Spending some time up front to review the scope of the entire project and get everyone moving will ultimately save time as you near that all-important deadline!”

Susan H. Wheelock, *Wheelock Communications*

“Centralize coordination of assignments, and standardize and automate as much as possible through continual systems initiatives.

- Notification of new requests using a form indicating specifics such as due dates, delivery time and content.
- Notification to a small coordination team so nothing is missed should the coordinator be out of the office.
- Departmental calendar – entire team has access to calendar and all assignments. Consistency of routine
- assignments to individuals.”

Michele S. Polansky, *Jennison Associates LLC*

“Determine your internal distribution list before issuing new materials; distributing materials piece-meal wastes a great deal of time.”

Rose Turiello, *Deutsche Asset Management*

tips

from the Pros



Communication

“When you begin a large project, determine everyone you will need help from and put together a brief memo outlining the project time line. This way you’ve clearly communicated what is expected and when. And don’t hesitate to follow up with reminders as the deadline nears. It’s not unusual for your initial request to end up on someone’s back burner, so be sure to give your reminders with enough time left in the project for people to complete the work.”

Susan H. Wheelock, *Wheelock Communications*

“Overcommunication is key. Keep everyone in the loop as much as possible and share as much as you can (and as much as is appropriate) with colleagues who are assisting you with a project, with your data resources, and with your manager. Sometimes I might think my manager doesn’t need to know a particular detail about a project I am working on, but after briefly mentioning it, I learn that she knows something else related or has an additional comment that will really help my process!

If you have others assisting you with a project, or if others are responsible for a piece of a project that you have oversight of, always follow up with the individuals, touching base frequently and requesting information on the status of their work. Assuming that work is being done will only cause problems toward the end of your project when/if you discover that things you thought were being accomplished or completed were not done or were not done in time. One quick phone call or e-mail could save hours or even days of work later.”

Jill Bourgeois Plumb, *Capital Guardian Trust Company*

Communication

“Have constant communication with each other and the investment staff. Get and give feedback to and from the investment staff.”

Michele S. Polansky, *Jennison Associates LLC*

“You can’t overcommunicate. It’s better to risk telling someone something twice than to risk not telling them at all. We meet once a week with our entire staff to review all projects on our list, whether they are hot or in limbo. This keeps everyone aware of what might come up. Then we re-prioritize as needed (daily, sometimes hourly). The key to this process is a good list. Finally, it is tempting, when we are extremely busy, to say that we don’t have time for the meeting. But without it, we risk something falling through the cracks or working on the wrong priority.”

Corrine B. Holden, *Bockelman/Holden Group*

Teamwork

“The most successful projects are ones that an efficiently working team can take pride in completing. A great motivation for team members is information – understanding exactly how their role affects the “big picture” and the project really allows them to take ownership in their ‘piece of the puzzle’ and be proud when their part of a project contributed to its overall success.”

Jill Bourgeois Plumb, *Capital Guardian Trust Company*

“Train several people in the production process to increase your chances of having someone around who can help in a last-minute bind.”

Megan Wadsworth, *Deutsche Asset Management*

“Attempts to Offset the Stress-Department Culture

- Acknowledgements
 - THANK YOU!!!!
 - You’re doing a great job!!
 - Mishaps are not treated as degradations, but learning experiences.
- Humor – whenever possible!!!!!!!
- Downtime
 - It’s okay to come in a few minutes late
 - It’s okay to take a longer lunch or chat with a friend
- Take your vacation days!!!
 - Divide and conquer immediate tasks so you can leave early for holidays, team sports leagues, etc.!!!
 - Plan early so everyone has a chance to request a day after Thanksgiving or Christmas off!!!!”

Michele S. Polansky, *Jennison Associates LLC*

tips

from the Pros



Quality Control

“Avoid last minute edits. A chart or graph should make one simple point. If the graphic attempts to achieve several objectives, no one will be able to make heads or tails of it. This problem becomes clear minutes before going to press...egads!”

Margaret Patterson, *Margaret Patterson Company*

“Proofing process: First proof to ensure accuracy. Second proof to ensure accuracy and presentation. For the final sign-off, ask if the presentation is presentable (e.g., page order, color clarity, logos, etc.)”

Michele S. Polansky, *Jennison Associates LLC*

“PROOFREAD! Don’t let anything go out without having another pair of eyes look at it. Develop a buddy system so that people check each other’s work.”

Kristie Philbin, *Fidelity Investments*

“When proofing, place your materials on a slanted surface to ease strain on your neck and back. Run the first draft on a colored paper, light green is best because black on white is the most difficult for the eye to read. Always mark your drafts first, second, etc., and add proofer’s initial. Never proof your own material as the final proof. Always use spell check, but never trust it completely!”

Patricia A. Holmes, *Charnley & Røstvold Inc.*

Written Materials

“Don’t be afraid to differentiate your materials with a different look and a unique format. Investment materials should reflect your brand and style, but do not necessarily require a conservative look. Experiment with new ways to describe your process simply. Use these rules:

- Articulate your story – simply and swiftly.
- Create a written piece that tells your story and facilitates understanding of your strategy.
- Use the highest quality materials you can afford.
- Stay away from glossy anything unless it’s a reprint of a published article.
- Consolidate. Don’t be lazy about putting collateral materials together. Bind your offering memorandum.”

Jane N. Abitanta, *Perceval Associates, Inc.*

RFPs

“If you do not have an acceptable success ratio with your RFPs, identify the problems.

- You’re responding to RFPs for which you do not qualify.
- Your responses lack cohesiveness.
- Your responses do not answer the questions being asked.
- Your responses are presented illegibly.
- Your responses are inaccurate.

Common mistakes that investment advisors make from the prospect’s perspective are:

- The investment advisor does not meet the search criteria.
- The investment advisor treats the RFP response as a presentation and includes graphics and information that is not requested.
- Fancy formatting that is either difficult to read or difficult to disseminate to trustees.
- Omitting questions and responses.
- Non-responsive answers.”

Patricia Brennan, *Brennan Associates*

RFPs

“Create an Operational Procedure Flow Chart. This chart assists with the response process. Begin the chart with who makes the business decision as to whether a proposal is being accepted. Use the chart to create a time frame as to getting the response from the business owner. If the firm will respond, then a request form must be completed. Then the form is submitted into a tracking database that details the project plan and timeline. A project development planning meeting takes place to determine the single point of responsibility for content and packaging and affords the production team the opportunity to raise questions and discuss positioning. At this point, it is helpful to determine who will manage the production process, as well as sign-off and delivery of RFP response. The flow chart tracks each of the steps in the production process and ensures that a project plan is defined, deadlines are achieved, and resources appropriately allocated.

Additional tracking tools:

- Proposal Request Form
- Weekly Project Log
- Presentation Request Form”

Jillian Rudman, J. Rudman & Associates

RFPs

“For RFPs, remember that it always takes longer to assemble the final copies than you think. If there are a lot of exhibits or appendices, organize them ahead of time and make the necessary number of copies. Use a highlighter to go through the text of the RFP to check that you’ve properly labeled everything both in the text and on the appendices. This kind of planning ahead buys you a significant amount of time to double check everything for accuracy before you send out your proposal.”

Susan H. Wheelock, *Wheelock Communications*

“Provide preliminary notification to compliance and other departments for RFP related information. Divide & Conquer!!”

Michele S. Polansky, *Jennison Associates LLC*

Production

“Run a costs analysis to determine whether or not it is wise to produce repeat materials in house. RFPs yes, but product sheets and market commentary newsletters bog down the works if the in-house staff is unprepared or electronic equipment is insufficient to do the job. Outsourcing can be a blessing.”

Margaret Patterson, *Margaret Patterson Company*

“Production Process

- Prioritize by delivery time
- Monitor supply levels on a weekly basis
- Maintain your equipment
- Back-up color copier should the primary one need service
- When necessary, divide and conquer, or if all else fails – KINKOs!!”

Michele M. Polansky, *Jennison Associates LLC*

Production

“Choose standard paper and inks (e.g., no coatings, no metallic ink) to avoid printer jams caused by residue buildup.”

James Moyer, *Deutsche Asset Management*

“Be patient with PowerPoint. It is a very klutzy application with buggy filters and hair-pulling print problems. Advise co-workers and clients that simple is better. Explore the application with reckless abandon to discover little known alternatives (how to make page numbers smaller, how to apply fill effects, how to make an import file have a transparent background). These capabilities are in the menu, just not in logical order.

Keep a specifications file for traditional media. Colors, fonts, paper selections, print quantities, etc., can be referenced at the drop of a hat. Hire very experienced outsources to handle commercial printing. Mistakes are enormously expensive.”

Margaret Patterson, *Margaret Patterson Company*

Technology

“In order to meet the various deadlines of multiple projects with multiple participants, we devise a spreadsheet in Excel, which details each task per client, the expected completion date and the responsible party. We review this internally on a regular basis to ensure that we do not miss any tasks where we are the responsible party. We also review the spreadsheet monthly with our clients to keep them on track with their responsibilities and deadlines. This “task and timeline” report also serves as a reporting tool for our clients to their partners and others in senior management. We tried using Microsoft Projects, but found the reports less clear.”

Ashley Rabun, *InvestorReach*

“Electronic output is getting less expensive every day. Price shop, but never sacrifice for small savings. Cross-platform problems can be minimized by sharing PDF documents. Have the staff review a “picture” of your new brochure or product sheets. A PDF file opens easily, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader (download this free from the Internet). No one can change the document, but everyone can react to it. You can also review logo designs that are formatted as PDF files. PDF files are not font dependent. They look *like they should* whether or not the viewers have the correct fonts on their systems.”

Margaret Patterson, *Margaret Patterson Company*

“We use FileMaker to keep track of all jobs for all clients.”

Corrine B. Holden, *Bockelman/Holden Group*

Web Sites

“Web site development can be a smooth process if pre-production goes well. By that I mean, providing information to the web site developer. A veritable basket case of miscellaneous ideas will run up the budget. I recommend beginning with an organization chart of information. The “tree roots” configuration of a typical organization chart is much the way a web site works as viewers navigate. As a web site is edited, have objective observers review the site for consistency.

The web site is a visual medium, so be prepared for visual recommendations that will greatly effect content.”

Margaret Patterson, *Margaret Patterson Company*

“Remember that what reads well in your written materials will largely be ineffective on your web site. The resolution of characters on most PC screens is not nearly high enough for written text. Don’t use the top right corner of the screen for important information – Internet users have largely become accustomed to advertising appearing in this space and are likely to ignore information placed there.”

Jane N. Abitanta, *Perceval Associates, Inc.*

“Web sites require an iterative process. Your site is never going to be “done.” Plan to start small and then add content and functionality. Web sites rarely stand alone. Plan to integrate your site with your other communications media. Writing for the Web is different than writing for print. It is non-linear and lacks some of the organizing conventions that we are used to with paper.”

Chela M. Mitchell, *Frank Russell Company*

A Great Sum Up...

- Hire good people who work well together, like each other, and understand the importance of teamwork.
- Have people experienced in dealing with “Chinese fire drills.”
- State-of-the-art technology and equipment.
- Repeatedly stress the criticality of advance notice to eliminate these crises before they gestate.
- Have no hesitancy to go outside and spend money to get the job done. A pervasive sales culture makes this easier to execute.
- Try to incorporate as much boilerplate as possible without sacrificing the customized look.
- Have mainstream product detail on-line to allow others besides product specialist to create sales material, if necessary.
- We also have a no-tolerance policy for moving up deadlines and our employees are constantly reminded that the flogging will continue until morale improves!

Joseph S. Martino, U.S. Trust Company of New York

the Pros

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