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Hecs Have Double Job

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Hecs Have Double Job

Need Skill and "Pedagogical It"

Genevieve A. Callahan, editor of Sunset Magazine, San Francisco, Calif., and an Iowa State home economics graduate, recently compiled a booklet, "Preparation for the Business Field of Home Economics."

This is the first of a series of reprints from the booklet. It is published by the Home Economics in Business Group of the San Francisco Bay Region and may be obtained from "Sunset Magazine" or from Miss Alice Edwards, American Home Economics Association, Mills Building, Washington, D.C. Price 10c.

V A R I O U S jobs make various demands upon the individual, but all home economics in business jobs have certain "pre-requisites" in common. Training and personal qualifications go hand in hand; neither can be said to be more important than the other, for both are essential.

She shows others

—how to do it

Certain courses in the home economics curriculum should be stressed for any girl who expects or hopes to enter the commercial field in any capacity. First of all, she needs skill in the manipulation of materials—for the commercial home economics job deals primarily with the handling and display of things. She may have been an A student in food or textile chemistry, in "family relationships" or history of costume design, but if she cannot actually make a good pie with neatness and dispatch, or cut out, fit, and sew a smart dress, she might much better forget all thoughts of making a success in the business field. Theory is a splendid foundation for practice, but is no substitute for it.

Having developed skill in the handling of materials, one must be able to show others how to achieve the same results. Courses in public speaking, demonstration teaching, and journalism are invaluable preparation for commercial work. Practically everyone in the business field of home economics must daily show people personally through demonstrations, or by means of printed matter (which includes photographs and drawings as well as words) how to do certain things with certain foods, equipment, furnishings, or fabrics.

In addition to facility with words—both written and spoken—and with the hands, some knowledge of office routine and methods is necessary for every would-be business home economist.

Filing is not to be overlooked. How to file one's own collection of booklets and bulletins is a problem in itself; and how to organize office files, and to train one's secretarial help in keeping them in usable order, is a much bigger responsibility than it appears on the surface.

The ability to use a typewriter is extremely valuable in any line of work; in fact, it is required in many commercial jobs, for there are always reports to be sent in, and handwriting is an unsubstitutability substitute for the typewriter. Typing and shorthand, too, frequently function as the opening wedge into a good business opportunity for the inexperienced girl. But more of that later.

Spelling, grammar and arithmetic, while apparently out of fashion, still are just as much needed as ever in the business world. In an editorial job, particularly, one simply must know how to spell and punctuate, as well as to construct sentences that convey the meaning one has in mind. Knowing how to write a good letter—and how to dictate it as well as to write it out by hand—is of vital importance, for even in an editorial office, the home economist must write more letters than articles.

That a girl should have a year or two of teaching experience in order to crystallize and organize her fund of knowledge as well as to gain poise in dealing with persons and in handling situations, before she attempts to find a commercial position, is advised by practically all home economists in the business field. In addition to the reasons given above, such experience helps her to keep her balance and to keep from becoming too commercial in her point of view when she does enter the business field. The home economist in a commercial firm, you know, must act always as an intermediary between the firm and the homemaker.

And we have said nothing yet about personal qualifications—about intelligence and personality, which, no matter what the books may say, are actually of more importance than mere diligence in doing what one is told to do.

One piece of personal equipment the girl entering the business field must have been endowed with by nature: that is, a promotional mind. She must be a missionary at heart, filled with a desire to lead homemakers to better ways of homemaking—which means, of course, buying and using the particular commodity with which she happens to be dealing, whether it be magazines or maps, biscuit flour or oven glass, soap or sewing machines.

Along with this missionary zeal, she

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needs a personal magnetism, the sort of something, which, in teachers, that noted western educator, Brother Leo, calls "pedagogical it" and which is illustrated in a rather exaggerated manner by Sister Aimee McPherson. Frequently overlooked is the fact that buoyant health contributes to this magnetism of which we speak. We need scarcely remark that good health, both physical and mental, is a matter of vital necessity to the home economist in a business position. "Days off" are almost out of the question.

A winning, charming personality is not one hundred percent dependent upon natural endowments; it is something that can be developed and improved by constant attention to one's best traits, and by unremitting work at weeding out the less desirable ones. The building of a pleasing personality cannot be done merely by reading books on charm and the like; it can be done by working to apply to oneself what one reads or hears or thinks might be desirable.

This winning personality that means so much to the business home economist—and, of course, to every other human being under the sun—is largely founded upon a sincere interest in and liking for people as individuals. This trait, which also may be encouraged to grow and flourish is vitally necessary because it makes it easy for one to meet the public. Even if one is inclined to be bashful and timid, she can learn to forget herself and thus overcome her timidity by means of her interest in others. There is no place for the misanthropist in the field of home economics in business.

There are dozens of other helpful traits that could be and perhaps should be listed: tact; versatility, adaptability, and resourcefulness; a sense of the significant; the ability to concentrate, yet keep an eye on details—one's tickets and trunks, for example, or one's stenographer's or cook's progress with a piece of work, and so on; quickness of mental and physical reactions, but slowness of such emotional responses as anger. Particularly must one be impersonal in her viewpoint. She must not look upon criticism from her superiors as a personal affront. A college girl does not flare up, or worse, cry, when her employer or office superior points out something poorly done. By the same token, if her boss does give her a kind word now and then (not many of them do it often!) she is not justified in imagining that he is in love with her, or has any designs whatever except to increase his business. The rule, as expressed by successful business women generally is, be a charming, delightful person always, but keep an impersonal viewpoint of it is humanly possible.

The value of good personal appearance is not only not demanded, though it is surely no handicap; but that well-groomed look of sparkling, positive cleanliness is tremendously worth striving for, when applying for a position and ever afterward. Hair, nails, teeth, shoes, and clothing all are subject to searching scrutiny. In this connection, the importance of a clear complexion and of normal weight should be stressed. If you are conscious that you are even five or ten pounds overweight, and that your skin is not all that it might be, do something about these drawbacks before you set out to look for a position.

A NEW booklet, "The Sciences at Iowa State College," has just been released. It was compiled by R. W. Beckman of the Journalism Department. In it is a new aerial view of the campus and over 60 pictures of students, professors and campus scenes.

This booklet is being distributed by the Division of Industrial Science to high school libraries, where it may be read by students interested in Iowa State College.