

What's a Good Place To Work?



PERHAPS your first experience with business was a purchase at the corner drugstore or the neighborhood grocery. You soon realized that you liked to go into these same stores because the clerks were friendly and seemed glad to see you. As you grew older, you became more conscious of the attitude of the owner and the people who worked in the

stores where you shopped. You judged stores by the people who ran the business and by the quality of the products sold.

In this way, some basic points for judging the store, the office, the bank, or other business have become a part of your system of deciding where you will shop. These basic points are the people and the products or services.

If your father was in business, you learned to associate another idea with business — namely, that the business had to make money to pay wages to the employees and to make a profit for the owner.

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Therefore, from your own experience you have learned three good tests of a business concern:

What kind of persons makes up the business?

What quality of products or services is produced?

Does the company pay its employees well and make a profit for the owners?

In other words, you can agree with the statement, "A business must be economically sound and socially desirable."

Whether you begin your career in an educational institution, in governmental work, in a trade association, or in a social service agency, these same standards of worth or usefulness may be applied, to a certain degree. A business is based on transactions where goods or services are exchanged or sold for the purpose of making a profit. This means that a monetary profit for the owner becomes the number one objective. From an employee's viewpoint, only a successful company can give you security and opportunity.

Therefore, if you decide on a career in business, you should accept the fact that a business must make a profit to exist. And you must be willing to accept your responsibility to contribute to the financial success of the business. You must be a paying investment and produce a fair return on what the company invests in you in the way of salary, training time, and equipment. It is said that American industry as a whole has an investment of \$6,000 to \$25,000 per worker.

Everyone likes to be on a winning team. So, in joining the business world, you will find it both more pleasant and more profitable to work for a company that is *financially sound* and that recognizes the importance of having employees feel *financially secure*.

If you are graduating from high school or college, or if you have been working in a field other than business, some advisors will say that *any* experience in business is helpful. They may suggest that your main objective should be to get a toe-hold and then make the most of the opportunity to learn and advance in some line of work.

It is true that few of us are able to pick and choose the job we want. But there is no reason for stumbling blindly into a

position without using the information that is available to try to fit yourself for and into the *right job*.

You are fortunate if you have chosen your education and experience to fit yourself for a field of work. You have made a good start on a career if, at the time of graduation, you have a clear vision of what you want to do and where you want to go in your profession.

Unfortunately, many young people have no specific goal. They have not troubled to find out about the great diversity of work in business. They have not thought about the possible application of their school training in terms of useful work. As you know, businesses are not labeled *History 342*, *Sociology 26*, or *Mathematics 400*.

Let's say that your education has given you a broad, liberal background, with special emphasis on one specific field such as Secretarial Work, Advertising, or Home Economics. Then you will be wise to make a study of the business concerns that offer *different* applications and specializations in your field. Such a position may give you more opportunity to learn and test your ability than a specialized position.

Some women now at the top in their profession have begun at the bottom and worked up step by step in the same field. Many more top-ranking women have begun in one line of work and, through observation, initiative, and an expanding vision of opportunities, have found a new field of work more challenging and more compatible with their abilities.

There is no one road to success in the business field. And very few women who are in executive positions arrived there by luck, through family connections, or by waiting for a break. They got to a top position by *working* for it, not by *wishing* for it.

So, let's say you have the education, the ability, and the will to work in a field of business. Let us consider, then, what is a good place for you to work in order to set your course for a successful career.

1. Does the business sell products or a form of service such as publicity or consultations? Have you the training, ability, and desire to be useful in such a business and to give your best efforts to promoting these goods or services?

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2. Do you like the people with whom you will work?
3. What is the reputation of the company concerning service to the community, relations with employees, and contacts with the public?
4. Are the wages adequate to meet your financial responsibilities?
5. What are the opportunities for training, learning, and advancement?

What Does the Business Have To Sell?

Whether you have lived in a small or large city, you probably have only a vague idea of the many kinds of businesses represented in your community. In a large city, the number of businesses is totally bewildering, even to a native. As one girl said, on coming to Chicago, "There must be thousands of kinds of jobs I've never heard about. How do I know I wouldn't like one of them?" The answer is that no one person can know of all the types of specialized work that go into making our American way of life so successful.

There are classifications of kinds of industries and of kinds of work common to many industries. In the classified section of the telephone directory, businesses are listed by types of industry, as: *Advertising, Insurance, Millinery*. Under each general heading are divisions of each type, as: *Advertising Agencies and Counselors, Advertising — direct mail, Advertising — displays*.

In the classified want ads in a newspaper, jobs are often classified according to the kinds of work requiring special skills and abilities, as: *Research worker in food company, Commercial artist, Insurance saleswoman, Buyer for department store*.

Thus you will see that one type of industry needs workers with many kinds of skills. Again, a person with one skill can look for work in a number of different types of industry.

In a small business, one person may do several kinds of work requiring quite different skills. This may prove to be an opportunity to develop initiative and to test your wings without too much supervision.

In a large company, there is great specialization. Departments are established for related kinds of work, and many people are employed to do the same type of work. In such a department, further specialization is often required, so that a job may be very specific and limited in scope. Thus, in a large company, you may



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find your training will fit you for work in several different departments. When you apply at such a company, the employment counselor tries to determine where you could be most useful and successful.

Of course, the classified telephone directory, the want-ad section of a newspaper, or any other published list of employment places, is very cold and impersonal. If you are joining the business world, you will lessen your confusion and indirection if you talk with people in your field of work and read all you can about companies in which you are interested.

Many companies publish booklets describing the products sold and the services offered to the public. These booklets are offered through professional magazines, talks given by members of the organization, and through professional and civic organizations. A study of these booklets will help you learn about the purpose of a company. It may give you some idea of how you might fit into the organization.

When you see an advertisement of a product of a company, read a news item about some activity of the company, or collect other information about the company, ask yourself if you would like to work for that company. Would you feel proud to help in the production and sale of those products? Would you feel proud to say "That's my company." Pride in your work and loyalty to your company are *musts*. The pay check is not a ticket to success.

Do You Like the People With Whom You Will Work?

Did you ever walk into a bank, department store, or office that made you feel welcome and *at home*, whereas a similar place of business made you feel insignificant and uncomfortable?

Every business concern has a *personality* quite as distinct as that of an individual. The people with whom you work play a very important role in determining how well you will succeed in your work. Human relations are so important that unless you *fit in* with an organization, so much of your mental capacity will be spent in irritation and resentment that you will not be free to do constructive thinking.

Of course, much of the responsibility for getting along with

the people in any business will depend on your own attitude. Are you too young mentally to appreciate and understand the adults who are in business? When you have reached the age to start on your career you should be socially adjusted so that your interests are broader than *the school* or *the home town*. The real test of a well-adjusted woman is the ability to get along with people of different ages, social positions, educational backgrounds, and viewpoints.

When you see the people who work in a business, try to think of yourself as one of them. Would you like to work with them? Or would you feel superior? depressed? irritated? afraid? distrustful?

A woman who had had many years of business experience was invited to take an executive position with a different organization. The opportunity seemed to be an excellent one. The company was well known and respected. The products produced by the company were of top quality. The executives seemed to be the kind who inspired confidence and for whom it would be a pleasure to work. The one question that remained for her was, "What about the people with whom I would associate in my daily contacts?"

This woman decided that the real test of the rightness of the job depended on the spirit that prevailed among the people employed by the company. Were they happy? Did they think this was a good place to work?

With these questions in mind, this business woman paused to consider the people with whom she would work. She sat in the lobby of the company office and watched the young office girls, the gray-haired women, the youthful messenger boys, and the older businessmen. In that large organization some 2,000 people were employed. Through the lobby, as in review, passed the living spirit of the company, the people with whom she would work! They were intelligent, sincere, businesslike, and friendly. They seemed like a big family working together for a common purpose. They looked happy.

That was the final test. *Then*, this professional woman knew it was a good place to work.

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What Is the Reputation of the Company?

Every business concern, whether small or large, has a code of ethics or set of policies which gives the company a *character* or *spirit*. This spirit, which permeates an organization or business, is determined by the owner or by the top executives who manage the business. The employees in the business are selected and trained to carry out this code of ethics in their work with fellow employees and in their contacts with the public.

As soon as an employer hires a worker to help run his business, a new set of relations is established. The greater the number of employees, the more complex is the problem of employer-employee relations, because each person has individual wants, hopes, and fears. The multiple-helper situation builds up an increasing need for a *human relations* or Industrial Relations Department. Such a department, made up of a group of trained persons or a single trained person, considers and analyzes problems that arise in the interrelation of the human beings in a company. This work is separate from the departments concerned mainly with the problems of producing and selling goods or services.

The responsibilities of a human relations department may vary from company to company. The usual purpose of this department is to weld all the employees into a family group that works together for the good of all.

Just as the members of a family do not agree, so, too, in a large business you will find differences of viewpoint. However, in modern business, management has set up a system whereby these differences can be discussed and settled with consideration for the rights of the individual as well as the rights of management.

When you consider employment in a business concern, it is important to learn as much as possible about the family spirit, the *working-togetherness* that exists. Much of your inner contentment on the job will depend on the attitude of the company toward the workers.

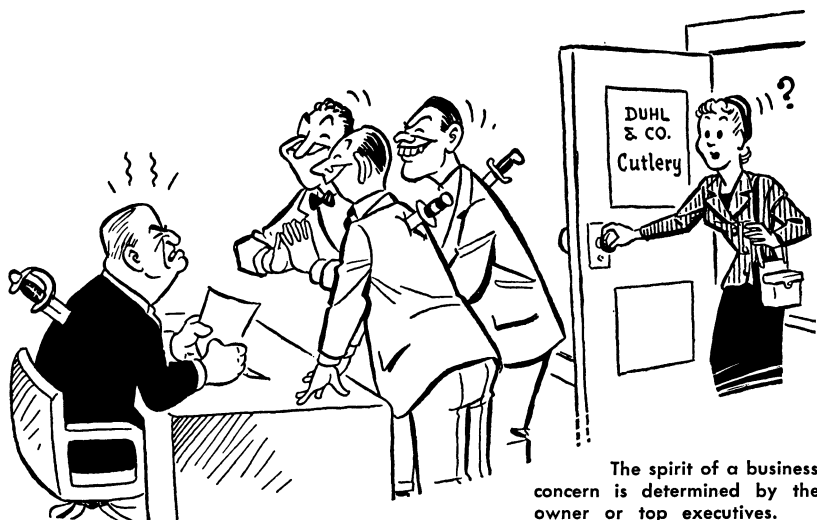
This is not the place to discuss the goals of organized labor and the attitude of modern business in regard to labor unions. As a business woman you may or may not be required to join a union, upon entering employment in a company. But surely

you will be interested in reading authentic articles and books on modern labor-management relations. You will want to know the facts about the objectives of organized labor to gain economic security, the opportunity of advancement, equality of treatment, and preservation of personal dignity. You will want to read, too, about management's aims to secure the economic welfare of the company, good industrial relations, freedom to manage, and businesslike relations with employees.

Whether or not your type of work is included in the unionized labor, it no doubt will be affected by the unions operating in the company and by the relations that exist between the unions and company management.

If you are entering a business for the first time, you may have little knowledge of the responsibility assumed by modern business for good industrial relations. Mr. Clarence Francis, Chairman of the Board of General Foods Corporation, has analyzed this responsibility. "Today," says Mr. Francis, "most managements . . . operate as trustees in recognition of the claims of employees, investors, consumers, and government. The task is to see that each gets a fair share of industry's reward."

This modern viewpoint of *service* must play a vitalizing role in establishing a background for your thoughts and actions when you enter business. When you look for a place to work, try to find out whether or not the company has this concept of service.



The spirit of a business concern is determined by the owner or top executives.

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Many company booklets and publications contain statements of company policies, ideals, and ethics. But the best evidence of the workability and effectiveness of a code of ethics is the attitude of the employees at work and away from work.

Here is an example of a company statement of principles for enduring, successful business:

Deal honorably with all people.

Operate efficiently.

Research constantly to improve products and services.

Pay equitable wages, provide opportunity for advancement, and maintain a sincere concern for the well-being of employees.

Sell not only products but good behavior as well.

Earn a profit sufficient for the company to fulfill these responsibilities and to provide shareholders with a fair return on their invested savings.

The reputation of a company is not determined by writing a code of ethics, for the written statement indicates the *intent* of management. The reputation is dependent on the *fulfillment* of the code.

Here are some statements of company policies. Would you like to work for such a company?

Our policy has always been to consider our employees as individual men and women, not just workers, and we have tried for many years to merit the confidence and trust of all members of our organization.

The welfare of the company and that of its employees are closely tied together. In the long run, what the company can do for its employees depends on how efficiently we all do our job, and how productive we are in contributing to the over-all success of the company.

In a report to shareholders, the president of one company called the personnel *the organization's greatest asset*:

It is axiomatic that the shareholders' investment in land, buildings, and machinery is of the greatest value when the facilities are operated by an efficient, smooth-working group of employees. Our products and our services are well and favorably known to the consuming public through the efforts of our employees, who are loyal to the idea that we make the best products and provide superior service for our customers. The personnel is the shareholders' greatest asset. All through its history, Swift & Company has always been a good company to work for — perhaps not always so good as it is today and certainly not so good as I hope it will be in the years ahead. . . .

I should like to emphasize the fact that industrial relations to be sound must be a two-way proposition. We have a right and a duty to insist upon employees giving the company the same fair treatment that they want and expect to receive.

In conclusion, we should like you, the shareholders, to realize that it is not the efforts of management alone that make a profit possible on your investment, but it is the combined effort of all of us, as employees working together, that assures success. In short, good industrial relations is sound investment.

(signed) JOHN HOLMES
President, Swift & Company

You will notice that the phrase *human relations* keynotes these statements of policies. Everyone in an administrative position is charged with the responsibility of maintaining good human relations with the employees. The Industrial Relations Department of a company is known largely because of its work on wage-and-hour questions. But the real concept or purpose of such a department covers many services that aid the financial, social, and health standards of the employees. These services help to make the company a good place to work.

Are the Wages Adequate?

The reason most of us work is to earn money to buy the things we need and want for ourselves and our dependents. Very few women work in business just for the luxuries of life. Most of them have one or more dependents, so that the financial obligations of women are often as great as those of their men co-workers.

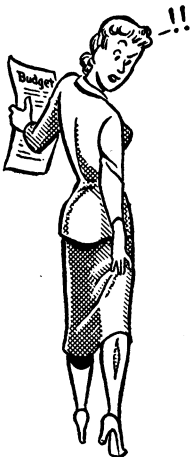
There are still some inequalities in women's salaries as compared with men's in the same kind of work. But more and more the tendency is to pay a salary commensurate with work done, irrespective of sex. The beginning salary paid a girl graduate may be higher in many occupations concerned primarily with women's traditional interests than that paid in fields formerly considered suitable for men only, such as banking, investments, real estate, law, or insurance.

Salaries are fairly uniform from company to company for the same kind of work. When you start that climb up the ladder or move on toward a top position, you should consider not only the pay check but other benefits that add up to the total remuneration received for the position.

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A good place to work is in a company that offers you a salary plus other considerations which must be evaluated in terms of your needs. Listed briefly here are some of the services, or *plus values*, which you should know about in judging whether the salary is adequate:

1. Pension plan, bonus, share of profits, and paid-up insurance are methods used by different companies as extra dividends for good work.
A *pension* paid to employees at a certain age, usually 60 or 65, after a certain number of years of work may be paid by the company with no contribution from the employees.
A *bonus* to employees at the end of the fiscal year is another type of "thank you."
A *profit-sharing plan* is used by some companies to pay employees a percentage of the year's profits either in cash, stock in the company, or paid-up insurance.
A *cooperative insurance* plan is sometimes used to foster savings by employees and to increase the amount of money paid into the insurance fund by the employer.
2. *Vacations with pay* are usual in positions on a yearly basis. The length of the vacation varies from one to four weeks depending on the company, the length of employment and, sometimes, the rank of the employee.
3. *Payment of dues* in professional societies and reimbursement for certain expenses incurred in the work are allowed for certain positions in some companies.
4. An *Employees' Benefit Association* may be in operation in a company. This is a low-cost insurance supported by contributions of employees who join this service. It carries benefits to the employees in time of sickness, accident, and death.
5. *Group life insurance* at low rates may be available to employees.
6. A *Savings and Loan Association* operated by employees for the benefit of employees may prove to be a great help to the beginner.
7. *Sickness and accident payments* may be allowed according to the length of employment by some companies.
8. A *medical department* for consultation and treatment of accidents and illness incurred at work is maintained by larger companies.
9. *Group hospitalization* is available in most companies. Such a plan for hospital care is operated on a nonprofit basis by the hospital corporation. Different classifications are available to employees to allow a choice of benefits and payments. This is an optional service offered under the guidance of the company. Dues or fees are deducted from the pay check.



Are the wages
adequate?

10. A *cooperative plan for medical care benefits* may also be offered by the company. It is a voluntary service which the employees may elect to join.
11. *Cafeterias and restaurants* operated by the company usually afford savings in the cost of lunches and other meals during working hours.
12. *Other benefits of a monetary value* may be available in a company. These are usually discussed with an applicant at the time of an interview.
13. *Social security benefits* now cover almost every type of work. According to the Social Security Act, the federal government collects from the employer a percentage on all salaries up to a certain amount per year. Of this, the company pays a certain percentage and the employee pays an equal amount which is deducted from the pay check. At the end of the year, the employer furnishes to the employee a withholding statement. A booklet explaining this act is available from the Social Security Board or the company. In it are listed payroll deductions and the corresponding benefits at age sixty-five. (*That may seem an absurdly long time away, but time doesn't stand still, even for a woman!*)

Other Considerations Which Influence Value of Salary

1. The cost of transportation to and from work may take much or nothing from a pay check.
2. The cost of living in a location reasonably accessible to work may take a considerable portion of a pay check.
3. Specific expenses for the job in the way of uniforms, type of dress, and special attention to appearance, a car for business use, membership in professional organizations, contributions to special funds may reduce a pay check considerably.
4. Occupational hazards which may affect health should be weighed against the salary offered.

What Are the Opportunities for Advancement?

A good place to work means not only congenial co-workers, a company of good reputation and wages, and benefits in proportion to your ability, but also an opportunity to advance in your chosen work.

Some women may be willing to mark time in a job, with no thought of advancement. But today, more and more women have hitched their wagons to a star of leadership. The opportunity for advancement is very important to these career women.

A company's policy for promotions is important to you the beginner, too.

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Are promotions made from the ranks?

Are there training classes and other opportunities to learn new skills?

Are employees encouraged to continue to study and learn so as to fit themselves for better positions in the company?

Is there a great turnover of personnel in the company or do service records of employees show that they think this is a good place to work?

Is there a counseling service where an employee may discuss her problems in human relations and receive an evaluation of her ability for the job or for a better job?

Does the head of the department in which you will work recognize the ability of women to do executive work?

Are there women in executive positions and does the company encourage leadership in women?

Is the company sound financially so that you have the right to expect a continuation of the job and reasonable expansion of your kind of work?

These are questions that you must consider if you have some experience and maturity and have determined to succeed in your chosen work. As a beginner, you can have less choice of positions but you will be wise to know the importance of working where there are opportunities for advancement.

How do you find the answers to these questions? Not by sending a questionnaire to every company you know! Employers do not have the time to answer letters full of questions about job opportunities. But you can write to the Industrial Relations Department or Personnel Service of a company. State that you are interested in work with the company and ask for a booklet giving information about the organization.

If you are fortunate enough to have an interview, you may ask if there are training classes and opportunities to advance. No doubt during the interview special benefits and regulations will be discussed.

The Right Job

A good place for you to work is a financially sound company of good reputation where you will associate with people you like and have the opportunity to increase your skills in a line of work that is profitable to you and the company.