



# dealing with *critical* feedback

by Erika Osmundson, AgCareers.com Director of Marketing & Communications

**YOU'VE JUST RECEIVED** a piece of critical feedback and aren't sure how to move forward. Obviously hearing that you've done something wrong or displeasing to someone else is hard to handle (for most people). Some can let negative feedback roll right off their backs, but for those that can't, how do you make positive steps forward?

First, do you have a true and accurate understanding of what the feedback means? Critical feedback can come in heated discussions or moments of heightened emotion. Facts might not always be straight. We can tell ourselves stories in our heads to increase the magnitude.

Take a moment to reflect on the things that were shared. You may need to step away from the discussion for a bit,

but don't wait too long, or the situation can fester. Ask yourself if you fully understand what was discussed. If not, what are the points that you are unsure of and need more explanation? Ask questions. Have a candid conversation to clear up any misinformation. Most often, feedback is really about the result not the person. Identifying this, if it is the case, can help to tame personal emotion and reaction to critical feedback.

Once you know what the issue is, identify if and in what ways you can address the situation in the future. Create a game plan and follow through. If you are unsure if or how to make steps to correct the situation, brainstorm some ideas or alternate options. Then propose those back to the person that provided the feedback and ask for input.

Finally, reflect. What did you learn? How will you use that information to make changes next time? What did you learn in the feedback communication process? How will you implement what you've learned for the future?

Critical feedback that is constructive and for the betterment of the situation/business is one thing. Unconstructive feedback is another. Understand the difference. If feedback seems personally attacking or demeaning, you may need to consider your options. In extreme cases, consult with your HR team for advice.

Feedback should be a good thing, both positive and critical. It is what helps us grow. It helps us move beyond our norms and try new things. Feedback creates the change we need to drive business forward! **AG**



## tips for handling a poor intern manager

by Kristi Sproul, AgCareers.com Education & Marketing Specialist

**MY BIGGEST HOPE** is that you never have a reason to put the tips in this article to use! Ideally intern managers will be selected because of their competence, supervisory experience and ability to structure (and deliver) a meaningful intern program. The impact a manager has on an intern can either make or break the experience. Fortunately, 77% of respondents to our 2018 Internship Benchmark Survey, rated their supervisor as above average. However, 5% did not have the same experience and rated their supervisor as below average. If you find yourself in a similar boat how do you handle a poor manager?

[Seek out other professional mentors](#) in

the organization. Find opportunities to connect with other full-time employees that you could learn from. This may be in an official capacity through assigned project work, or you may invite them to lunch or coffee.

[Don't let it affect your work.](#) It's important that you still work hard and treat others with respect. Other leaders in the company will appreciate your commitment to your role.

[Do not bad mouth your manager...](#)even if you have plenty of reason to do so and even if everyone else is doing it. Maintain professionalism by taking the high road. The exception to this rule is if you or others have been verbally or

physically harassed, in which case talk to your Human Resources office immediately.

[Find out what makes them tick.](#) This may take some time and keen observation, but analyze what your boss responds best to, what time of day they are most approachable, and even what their personal interests are. Utilize this knowledge when approaching them.

While a poor manager can make you feel like you didn't learn anything during your internship, it does in fact teach you a very valuable lesson. It teaches you how not to treat others or behave in the workplace, and your future coworkers will appreciate your perspective! **AG**



# WHAT TO DO AFTER THE INTERVIEW

by Tiffany Tomlin, AgCareers.com Marketing Intern

**YOU MADE IT** through the interview and are waiting to hear back from your potential employer. Sure, you may no longer be preparing for a face-to-face conversation, but work is not yet done. If your goal is to set yourself apart from others, here are some ways to stay on your potential employer's mind.

**DON'T PANIC:** The saying, "there's no use crying over spilled milk" absolutely applies here. Before proceeding, forget about everything you may have forgotten to say and give yourself some grace. The interview process can be very stressful, and you do not want to take any negative emotions into the next step.

**MAKE USEFUL NOTES:** You may get the chance to bring up more key points later. To ensure you have valuable content for the next step in the post-interview plan, write down everything you thought went well while meeting with your potential employers, along with things to change if you get the opportunity to talk with them again. You can include these topics in a thank you note or mention them in a second interview.

**THANK YOU NOTE:** The most important task on your to-do list after the interview is to send a thank you note. If you're short on time, there is no need for a hand-written letter, but send a

professional, well-written email the same day as the interview to express gratitude to your potential employer. If done properly, this step will give the potential employer another look at your name and insight into your background.

**FOLLOW-UP EMAIL:** During the initial interview, you should have gotten an estimated time frame that you will be hearing back from them. If that period has come and gone, then it is time to write a follow-up email. The purpose of this email is to reinforce your interest in the job. **AG**



## SOCIAL MEDIA DO'S & DON'TS

by Kacey Toews, AgCareers.com Talent Solutions Sales Specialist



**THERE IS NO DOUBT** that social media plays a huge part in our everyday lives, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't have a sense of etiquette with how we present ourselves there. Remember: if you wouldn't want grandma to see it, you probably shouldn't post it! Not only do friends and family see your profile, but potential employers may take a look around as well. Here are a few do's and don'ts when it comes to your social media profiles and what can make or break you getting the job.

### DO'S:

- Post positivity! If you post negative comments or opinions, this could be a turn off to a future employer.

- Google yourself, just to see what is out there. Its good to check just in case someone has tagged you in an embarrassing photo or post that you may not be aware of.

- Share interesting content that you are passionate about.
- Interact with others in a supportive and positive manner.
- Socialize with your peers.

Sometimes friending a classmate or lab partner might result in networking opportunities down the road so keep your connections close.

### DON'TS:

- Upload or post anything you don't want everyone to see. If you have

second thoughts about posting something, just keep it offline.

- Trash talk. The beauty of social media is that everyone can express their own opinions on their chosen platform, so be respectful of others' opinions and if you don't like it, you can always unfollow or unfriend.

- Brag! Its nice to highlight accomplishments and proud moments, but make sure that's not the only type of posts you are making.

- Use foul language. Nobody likes a potty mouth, especially in the workplace.

- Assume that your profile is private. Nothing online is truly private! **AG**



## 5 QUICK TIPS TO BUILD

# A GOOD REPUTATION AT WORK

by Kristine Penning, AgCareers.com Creative Marketing Specialist

### WHEN YOU FIRST START a

new job or are just beginning your career, if you're anything like me, you'll want people to like you and respect you right off the bat. The key to earning a good reputation quickly lies in working hard and remaining humble. Here are my top five recommendations to build a solid reputation at work quickly.

#### *Do something without being asked.*

Take initiative and do something for someone else, or work ahead on a project or task that's upcoming. Putting in the work and the time, perhaps even ahead of time, to get something done not even (yet) assigned to you will impress quickly.

*Try figuring it out on your own.* While you shouldn't be afraid to ask questions (because you are learning and questions should be welcome), it's also important to try fending for yourself early on. If you encounter a problem or find yourself unsure in a situation at work, try using your available resources to solve it on your own. This, just like doing something without being prompted or asked to, also shows initiative and independence.

*Practice patience, humility & kindness.* These three are some of the most important traits you could ever possess. Everyone wants to work with someone who is kind, humble, and patient. Display these qualities by listening well, respecting others, taking ownership and apologizing for mistakes,

giving credit to others when due, smiling, and saying thank you.

*Be an asset.* With humility in mind, also don't be afraid to offer your opinion, ideas, or suggestions in places where welcome and where it could help or improve something. Show your coworkers and manager that you are a good hire and a valuable team member.

*Welcome challenges and new experiences.* You prove accountability when you are willing to take on or try something new. This is especially true if this task or experience is something new to your organization/business, or if it is a difficult or menial job. Growth occurs outside of your comfort zone. Professional growth increases your value as an employee. **AG**



## why you should tell your non-ag friends ABOUT AG

by Bonnie Johnson, AgCareers.com Marketing Associate

**IF YOU'RE MAJORING** in agriculture, thank you! You recognize the importance our industry plays in food security, sustainable energy, and environmental quality around the world.

I mentioned "Agvocating" to someone outside the industry, and they asked, "Is that even a word?" Well, it's not officially in the dictionary, but we're working on that!

You may wonder why you should give away the secret of this vital industry? Why should you tell your non-ag friends about our important industry? After all, you don't want more competition vying for your dream job!

It's a job seekers' market, and there

is a real labor shortage in the ag and food industry. We need people with agriculture degrees and farm experience, but we also need diverse experiences and education. Various educational backgrounds are already experiencing success in our industry. When we look at applicants on AgCareers.com, 37% did not have an ag degree and 32% were not working in agriculture.

In the USDA report on Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in Food, Agriculture, Renewable Natural Resources, and the Environment 2015-2020, it's estimated there are only enough U.S. graduates in these fields to fill 61% of the jobs.

A quick search of AgCareers.com reveals the variety of positions available: Project Engineer, Research Chemist, Accountant, Public Relations Director, Software Developer, Logistics Coordinator, IT Administrator, and Digital Marketing Manager.

Employers may need to look beyond the college of agriculture to fill nearly 40% of openings. It's clear there is plenty of room to share the story about the breadth of careers available in agriculture and food with friends across campus, and in other colleges.

So, tell your friends, share facts (not hype) on social media, and let's Feed the World with Talent! **AG**