

The

JOB GUIDE

YOUR GUIDE TO CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Business Sense

All You Have is Your Name*

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Guest Columnist—Special to *The Job Guide*

We have all heard the statement, “You don’t get a second chance to make a first impression.” Unfortunately, many times this is a painful lesson. Granted, some situations simply don’t turn out the way we thought they would; however, when we are involved in a situation, whether good or bad, our names are attached and will be remembered.

Growing up, my parents did their best to teach my brother and me the importance of our family name. One particular example stands out for me. I was about six years old and was with my father in a local convenience store. While he was shopping, I noticed a package of gum lying on the floor and picked it up. As we were returning home from our outing, I reached into my pocket, opened the package, and began chewing “my” gum. I probably don’t need to go into detail about the events that occurred when my father learned his son had placed a package of gum in his pocket knowing he had no money to pay for it?

Now, to some, the fact that I took a package containing five small sticks of “Juicy Fruit” gum might not be such a big deal. But to my father, it was a lesson waiting to be taught. After a long talk and questions about the entire incident, my father chose a dreadful, but memorable punishment for me. As we

drove back to the store, I can remember the most sickening feeling come over me when my father said, “I want you to walk into the store and ask for the manager. Once you find him, introduce yourself and explain to him that you took a package of gum without paying for it. Then, ask him if you can pay for it now.”

Needless to say, my age probably helped keep me out of jail that day, but I will never forget the feeling I had when confessing my actions. Luckily, I was able to pay twenty-cents for the package of gum and return home. However, the debt I owe to my father is one I can never repay. For I could never place a price-tag on the lesson he taught me that day. We are known through our actions and for every action there is a reaction. And whether we realize it or not, others are taking note. When we make mistakes, and we all do, the choice is ours—either we take responsibility for our mishaps or we don’t. We must keep in mind though; we are setting an example for others to follow. It’s never too late to make a good impression and do what is right.

Maybe I would have learned my “Juicy Fruit” lesson somewhere else along the way, but I am sure that had I learned it later in life, it would have cost a lot more than twenty cents.

*One of a series of articles contributed by guest columnist Paul Vitale.