

WHAT YOUR CAREER CAN TEACH YOU

This issue's theme of career lessons is rather daunting – and it assumes that a career is a planned and linear beast, which we all know it is not. When I started my working life after university, married women weren't required to have superannuation and inflation was running at around 6 to 8 per cent. I can almost guarantee that by the time I finish full-time work, self-driving and electric cars will be readily available, but I'm not going to try to anticipate inflation or interest rates.

I have only three career rules that seem to have stood me in good stead over a full and satisfying working life.

1. Don't wear a white shirt if you're taking a client (or anyone important) out to lunch or dinner – particularly relevant if Italian food is involved.
2. Always leave a role when you are feeling good about it and everything is in order, never when things are tough or you're disappointed or disillusioned.
3. If things are looking pear-shaped, tell the affected people immediately while you simultaneously work on a fix.

These guidelines may sound a little flippant to you and, of course, as with any successful career, my own has had its share of difficult years, nasty bosses, mad employees – and those wonderful days where everything goes just right.

Good advice for a successful career is easy to find on websites and around the office coffee machine and, although it might sound like you've heard it all before, there are a few perennial truths that are worth reminding ourselves about:

- **Balance is essential.** If you're too fat, too stressed, too unhealthy or too tired, then something else in your life will be suffering – and sometimes that's good sense. Make time to be the best all-rounder you can be; your staff, colleagues, families and customers will also be the beneficiaries.
- **Learn and diversify.** Unless you're Stephen Hawking, it's probably good to have a few plans to learn

more. This will fall into the 80/20 rule – 20 per cent of what you learn will affect 80 per cent of what you do. How do we know which 20 per cent? Ah, that's the exciting and frustrating part.

- **Teams and collaboration make sense and make money.** You can go fast alone, but you'll go faster and better together.

By the time this issue of *INCITE* has been published we will be voting for the ALIA Board elections for the 2017–19 term. If you were successful in your nomination – congratulations! It's a wonderful team to join. If you didn't nominate and would like some more information, drop me a line at patricia.genat@alslib.com.au. And if you are not successful, please don't take it personally but be happy that the leadership of your organisation is in such demand. 🙌

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