

Talking Points Prepared for Jay Timmons
President and CEO, National Association of Manufacturers
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Thank you, **Juanita**, for that very kind introduction. You are a strong leader whom I admire greatly. You and so many folks here this evening from the business advocacy community have been great partners and allies for the NAM.

Thank you, as well, to **the Fund for American Studies** for the outstanding work you do to train future leaders—and also for this award.

You know, it's a privilege to be recognized simply for doing a job I love and for speaking out for values I believe in.

It's also a great honor to share the stage alongside my good friend and home state senator and former governor, **Mark Warner**...as well as Senator **Cory Gardner** who is quickly making his mark in the Senate.

And I have to give a special shout out to my friend and a friend of Minnesota manufacturers, **Sen. Amy Klobuchar**.

These three Senators are individuals of character who improve our country through the work they do today, and who – I hope and predict – will be entrusted with greater leadership roles in the future.

There's a reason for that. In a town that's divided, in a country that's divided, they have shown the commitment to advance values that unite us.

I'm thinking specifically of the four core values that make America exceptional: Free enterprise, Competitiveness, Individual Liberty, and Equal Opportunity.

Too often one party focuses on just the first two of those principles, while the other party focuses on the other two.

When you can bring all four principles together...that's when you can move this country forward.

So I encourage the future leaders in this audience to follow the examples of these three leaders. If you do, you won't go wrong.

One of the things I was asked to do is offer some pieces of advice this evening to those of you launching your careers.

So I jotted down a few thoughts. Some is advice I followed. Some is advice I wish I had followed. Many of the people in this audience are successful today because they applied these rules as they climbed their career ladders.

1) **Take advantage of every reception or free meal.** Not to save a buck—but to meet people that perhaps someday you'll work with. And don't drink alcohol while you are there. Save that for another time. Instead, be strategic and nurse a glass of club soda. Because when you're clear-headed and others around you might not be, you'll pick up on a lot and learn much more.

2) **Dress for success.** My dad said you'll never be overdressed unless you wear a tux to a picnic. If the invite says "business casual," wear a tie anyway. You'll be noticed. People will talk...and they will remember.

3) **Always ask for more to do.** Get your job done first and do it well. But then ask for more. Never shy away from more work.

4) **Respect. Respect. Respect.** Respect diversity. Respect those with whom you disagree. Listen, even when the other person is wrong. You'll be better able to advance your point by learning more about the other side of an issue. Protect your integrity and admit error if you screw up – everyone does. Be inclusive and respect the “nerd” in the group; don't ignore him or her. That person may well be your boss someday.

5) **Communicate effectively.** There is nothing more powerful than the written word. Do away with emojis, abbreviations and focus on expanding your vocabulary. Get over your fear of public speaking and practice in front of audiences. And related to #4, don't disrespect those you are speaking to by using profanity. It's a weakness. If you can't make your point without cursing, then it probably isn't work making.

6) **Join organizations.** I was a member of College Republicans and Young Republicans. Your future boss might be there. You'll find the peers you'll work with for years, just like I did. But in addition to organizations where you will make professional contacts, also find an organization – like a charity – that lets you give back. For me, that was the Washington Humane Society and I've been amazed at how my work there has intersected with my career.

7) **Use social media wisely.** It's not something I had to worry about so much in my younger years. But everything you do is recorded for history. So think before you tweet—or Snapchat. One word: screenshot.

8) **It's not about you; it's about the team.** One time when I worked in a Congressman's office, I thought it would be good idea to fax out a press release about something *I* was doing, a press release about *me*. Well, as you might guess, that Congressman quickly became my former employer. A few years later, I decided to make a political statement while I worked at the RNC. I publicly took on an incumbent Congressman on an issue I disagreed with him about. I was called into the office of the RNC's senior advisor, Charlie Black. I was scared to death. Thought I would be fired on the spot – and probably should have been. But in his wise way, he counseled me instead. He said: “You're very passionate. You can choose to use that for good or bad. I suggest good. I suggest you be a team player.” He was so right. If you want to a good leader, you also need to know when to support the leadership of others.

9) **Learn for life.** The allure of this town is great. I caught the political bug, so bad that I didn't finish my degree. There's a lot I missed...not just a piece of paper, but the exposure to new concepts. After college, keep learning. Read books, especially about things you don't think will appeal to you. It's the only way to expand your horizons.

10) **Get to know the boss.** Don't be shy. Don't hesitate to ask him or her questions. And be prepared if you have the opportunity to do so. I tell my team: no question is a bad question.

So, there you have it. Ten tips for success.

If you can commit to some or all of those, you'll get noticed. And someday, you will be offering your own tips that enabled you to become the leaders that I know you will be for America's future.

Thank you again to the Fund for American Studies for this honor.