

# FLORASEARCH, INC.

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## SIMPLE COURTESY

By Bob Zahra

Executive search consultant Michael Garnes said, "There are two types of people

in the world: givers and takers."

There are also the courteous and the discourteous, the polite and the impolite, individuals with good manners and those with bad manners. A continuum connects the disparate poles between courteous and discourteous, good and bad, etc.

Emily Post said, "Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter what fork you use."

Why is simple courtesy a topic worthy of consideration under the umbrella of hiring (and being hired) in the greater horticulture industry? A person could argue convincingly that in the last 10 years certain national leaders have made it a point to lead our country to repudiate traditional courtesy and traditional good manners, arguing that toughness alone has primacy.

Here's a question: Is the candidate who's interviewed as a likely new employee in your company treated with the same

respect as the possible new customer? How the hiring authority interacts with a candidate says much about the hiring authority and even more about the company, and it can be argued that the potential, excellent, long-term employee is every bit as important to the company's future as the possible new customer—in many cases more so. Both should be treated thoughtfully, respectfully and courteously. Toughness has its place in the overall picture, but not at the expense of good will and simple courtesy.

As a candidate in pursuit of career advancement, do you respond promptly or are you casual about keeping your commitments to the hiring authority? As Ms. Post wrote, do you have a "sensitive awareness to the feelings of others?" Being reliable, doing what you say you'll do, is inextricably tied to "hireability" and promotability. The days of innumerable horticulture employment options for the upwardly mobile may be upon us now, but—for the same reason stock market charts don't point straight up year after year—neither does hiring. The wise person recognizes the inherent short-lived nature of life-changing employment opportunities and is prepared to seize immediately the most advantageous. It

can take a lifetime for an incumbent industry leader to retire.

Of all the positive things one could say about Johnny Carson—funny, intelligent, talented, perfect posture, great dresser—comedian Steve Martin said, "Johnny was polite."

The talented industry individuals who are discourteous, who are unthoughtful or are insensitive to the feelings of others, will not reach their true potential. They may retire happily right where they are, but they're unrecruitable and un promotable. They won't come close to achieving the contribution of the people for whom they work.

On the other hand, it's altogether possible to drive a hard business bargain, while at the same time remaining polite and courteous. In this small town we call the international horticulture industry, all of us will continue to bump into each other throughout our careers and it seems wise to plan accordingly.

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