

# Today's graduates are missing this one 'common' thing

In the years since the 2008 Recession, gallons of ink have been spilled giving advice to young people on how to land a decent paying job. It seems that a young person must do nothing less than have a hefty volunteer record, a perfect GPA from an ivy league school, and three to four internships if she expects to become more than a barrista at Starbucks.

But in our quest to help students find a good job, we may have forgotten to give them the most helpful – and simple – advice of all. Anthony Maybury, a product of the Greatest Generation with a stellar career, explains this advice in a booklet called [Common Sense Business for Kids](#):

*"I began my journey in business in my hometown, a small town in Ohio. I was a teenager in the 1930s and back then it was much easier for young people to find work than it is today.*

*I got my first job in a shoe-shine shop, shining shoes. Then I worked in a hardware store, stocking shelves. These were small ventures, but I learned a great deal just by observing my bosses, our customers, and the successes and failures of the businesses.*

*I married my high school sweetheart, served in World War II, then came home and started a family and got a new job.*

*There was little in my youth that 'prepared' me for success in business and, when I returned from the war, I had no opportunity to attend college. Yet, by the early 1960s, I had become the Western regional sales manager for one of America's major commercial coffee companies. Eventually, I became West coast general manager (which was considered a very high position in the company) and was successful enough to retire early at the age of fifty-five.*

*How did I succeed?*

*I had ambition, and **I appreciated common sense.***

Maybury's common sense played out in three simple ways in the business world:

1. He demonstrated a willingness toward hard work.
2. He was open-minded and always looking to learn from his experiences.
3. He applied what he learned from experience to his career.

According to Maybury:

*"Many people think they have common sense – but they don't. And really, when it comes down to it, they just don't think. That's where their problems come in."*

Whether outright or by implication, today's young people have been taught that college is the golden ticket to landing a job at the top of the pile. Do we need to reverse course and once again teach students that it's not so much what one learns in a classroom that brings success, but how much a person can learn, process, and apply from the lessons learned in everyday life?

Do American students need an injection of pure common sense?