

Go to parents work day

By working and observing a realistic situation of a business I managed to learn as well as encounter dilemmas and whole atmosphere that workers such as my dad experience near enough every day.

On Thursday 22nd April after a early 5:00 start to Terminal 5, Heathrow airport, i knew that the day was going to be busy and a hard task .The backlog of all the flights because of the volcanic ash cancellations, made the airport much more chaotic than usual, still I was prepared to step up to the challenge and endure a hard day of work.

Firstly I worked landside, the area before security. Although my dad is a pharmacist at Boots, in order to understand the shop as a whole I offered to involve myself into a variety of Jobs. I helped to merchandise a range of products, learnt how to take ones BMI and the procedures of dispensing a prescription. By also flicking through the large book of rules and regulations for Boots staff, it made me realise how the staff are strictly obliged to follow a set system and do everything 'by the book,' especially because medicines were involved. It was not too hectic, so I presumed the job was fairly easy, but the worst was still to come.

At 8:00 it was viable for me to get a temporary security pass, from the manager. I was granted this and after having a full body and clothes scan, I walked onto the spectacular Terminal 5, airside. Failing to resist temptation, I consumed breakfast and went to the boots store .The biggest difference between the two stores was the number of people. As the customers could not bring any drinks, creams, make up, etc, over 100ml through security, they all purchased products from airside. Many people would just keep entering the shop. It was not crowded but just gave me plenty to do. I started by stocking the shelves with cosmetics, and getting to know the areas. I then helped serve customers, some of them beings foreign, to show them allocated areas which they needed. Then I insisted to go on to the till. After a short session on how to operate the tills, I started scanning items for the customers, then asking for their flight number then allowing them to pay, giving them change if necessary. Some hours passed and after fulfilling my desire to browse around the terminal, I headed home, proud of my work and wanting to do it again.

After my visit, I learnt 4 main things .Firstly I learnt to recognise and followed the status of people in the shop and the roles of different people .This included the managers, pharmacists, dispensers, consultants, operators and sales staff. I observed quietly, who made the decisions, and the followers and leaders. Secondly, I learnt how to act with members of staff. In one way, I learnt to have jokes with these lovely, welcoming people, yet the ability to learn from them and repeat their actions was even more rewarding. Thirdly I learnt that I do not want to do something in these fields. Since all passengers were flying, they were all in a very good mood, which made things very enjoyable. I would like to work there maybe for a Saturday job, but not as a career. This is due down to the fact, that I am a visual, creative person. Everything in all chain shops, including Boots has to be very process driven. You have to follow standard procedures. One day jobs are fun and a good experience, same with two days, even a week, but doing these jobs 24/7 or practically every day, however nice the people are, it would be too repetitive for me, driving me into boredom. And finally, the aspect that has taught me the most is customer interactions. It may be hard to imagine, but the boots in Terminal 5 has a vast difference to the standard high street Boots store. The whole place is much more organised but chaotic in terms of quantity's of customers. Many of the customers are foreign, residents or unlike whereas a high street store one knows where every product is, many haven't been to Boots T5 so are not able to find products. This forces more staff, to help the customers. When I showed the customer their required product, I tried to use some typical sales strategies, not directly , but steering them towards the more expensive version. I had to also interact with the customers by the till -That and the whole experience was very enjoyable and, you may hear this all the time from doctors and dentists, but it actually felt very gratifying and rewarding that you were successfully helping somebody else. Roshni Patel

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