

Hugo Edwards Alumni Speech

Woodlands Meed Business brunch 13th November 2019

Hello everyone, some of you might have forgotten my name. My name is Hugo Edwards and I'm an ex Woodlands Meed student. After my last year at WM I moved to Plumpton College. When I first got here I was not really myself. I used to chuck my jacket round the classroom, kick off, get upset and angry. I kept saying 'I want to come back here, I want to come back here' because this place has been like home to me, all the staff looked after me, have taken care of me and if I was upset they would look after me so much. I told myself no, I've moved on, I want to be more confident and grow up a bit more. And I achieved that for my first year.

So now at Plumpton I do GCSE in maths and I do Agriculture. So that is looking after the cattle, the sheep, pigs and sometimes at Plumpton on Fridays I do Tractor driving. After my first year at Plumpton my mother and I applied for a job at Waitrose and partners. So when I signed up for it roughly two or three times they said 'the application closed weeks ago' but one of the managers at the office said 'we're gonna allow Hugo to have a job interview' and I was really happy and surprised that they allowed me to come in.

So I had two jobs interviews there and one of the things is, you have to smile a lot, say what hobbies you do, keep smiling because that's what they're looking for; that you're looking forward to working for them. So a couple of weeks later they wrote me a little note and said that I've got a job and I was quite emotional and then I started my first day and they said I would be doing any fruit and veg reductions so what I do is check they're in perfect date and perfect condition. Sometimes if I see products like peppers, cabbages and if I see they don't have dates on them at all I have to throw them away because there's a risk of people getting sick, ill, so I have to reduce that or throw it away as that's a risk.

Now I'm 17 I do driving lessons and they're particularly hard for me, but I need to keep going. Sometimes it feels like they're stopping me from doing it, but no I'm doing it, I've got to do this. The more I do it the more confident and grown up I will be and it's been the best experience I've had doing it.

The other things is, working is a really big step because one time I did something really bad when I was working. I logged off the tills and went for my lunch break but I didn't tell anybody at all so that was a bit of a mistake but the more mistakes you do, the more you know and the more better you will be at what you're doing.

Sometimes you get negative, sometimes very kind people when you're working. One of the negative people I had was my brother; it was a good experience though. I asked him 'did you want me to help you find something you needed or do you want me to help with your shopping' and he said 'not from you thank you very much' I just let him carry on shopping and he said 'bro I'm picking you up today'.

So when you've worked for a month, I received my uniform apron and my badge as well and when I was there for 2 months, (they gave me a 3 month trial), that means if they think about me staying or they'll fire me but they said they would like to keep me in Waitrose and make me a Waitrose partner and that means you get more involved into the brand and the business of Waitrose and they said they would be giving me a Waitrose and Partners discount and I was quite surprised how much they're offering for it and I said 'well my brother's not getting a single piece of it! I don't trust him one bit so I give it to my mum because I trust her.

Yeah, so, during the years since I left Woodlands Meed and during Plumpton I'm quite proud of what I've achieved, what activities I've achieved, and that's what I've been doing, so thank you very much.