First impressions count
Giving a good first impression plays a major role in career success. Find out how to create a dynamic first impression both online and offline.

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS are important for everyone to master
Pg 3

CAREER CONNECTIONS will link you to career success
Pg 5

CUT OFFICE TENSION by following these methods
Pg 13

BRINGING THE WORLD TOGETHER
READ ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE GROWING TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR
PAGES 6 – 10
Roshan shares his thoughts on how this skill can be acquired by all.

Is entrepreneurship for everyone?

Roshan Thiran shares his thoughts on how this skill can be acquired by all.

Relax the brain

Terry Small shares a secret on how to de-stress an overworked brain.

Proper equilibrium

Is technology invading moments with your family?

High tension

Find out ways to defuse office tension.

Career tips

Email communication

BE INFORMAL, NOT SLOPPY

Your colleagues may use commonly accepted abbreviations when writing email, but when communicating with customers, everyone should follow standard writing protocol. Your email reflects on you and your company, so traditional spelling, grammar, and punctuation rules must apply. There is no excuse for sloppiness and be aware that thoughtlessness can completely destroy what is otherwise a professional message.

USE SENTENCE CASES APPROPRIATELY

Using all capital letters creates the impression that you are shouting. Using all lowercase letters looks lazy. To emphasise, use asterisks or bold formatting to highlight important words. Avoid using a lot of colours or graphics in your message as not everyone may be able to view these on their email.

KEEP IN MIND THAT TONE CANNOT BE HEARD IN EMAILS

Email communication is not able to convey the nuances of verbal communication. Some people use different tones of voice to infer varying emotion. This should be used sparingly to maintain professionalism. Also, do not assume that using a “smiley” will defuse a difficult message.

ANSWER SWIFTLY

Clients and customers send an email because they wish to receive a quick response. As such, emails should be replied to within at least 24 hours, preferably within the same working day. If an email seems to be complicated, simply reply saying that you have received the mail and that you will get back to the client as soon as possible. This will put the customer’s mind at rest and elicit some patience whilst you work on your reply.

KEEP IT BRIEF AND TO THE POINT

Grammatical correctness does not have to be wordy and long. There is nothing more frustrating than going through an email that is twice as long as necessary. Concentrate on one subject per message wherever possible.

CONNECTION PEOPLE

The first mobile phone I owned was a very large Nokia. Nokia is a rather interesting company growing from a groundup pulp mill manufacturing company to a rubber boot maker to a mobile phone company. But what I used to love about Nokia was the fact that it was a company “connecting people”. Telecommunication is the science and practice of transmitting information by electromagnetic means but Nokia understood better than anyone else that mobile phones were not about transmitting information; they were all about communication and “connecting people”.

Today, the telecommunications industry is an exciting workplace. There are numerous exciting roles in this industry. For marketing folks, the telco space is similar to the Fast-Moving Consumer-Good industry. Telcos spend huge amounts of their ringgit on branding and marketing making it an exciting space to be in for marketers. For engineers and technology enthusiasts, the telecommunications industry is constantly changing and innovating, giving them ample excitement to dabble in research, development and new product introduction. For the folks in finance and data crunching, there are so many exciting avenues and numbers to crunch in this industry. Every single telco customer usage, pattern and call is tracked. These can be analysed and studied to enable the number cruncher to propose new and exciting ways to increase yield and drive profitability. And it is a huge growth industry.

The changes taking place in the communications industry are truly revolutionary and Malaysia is at the heart of it. In fact, most analysts predict that more than 40% of the global telecommunications revenue will come from Asia.

The telecommunications industry does not just include voice products but also data networking, optical, wireless and next generation internet products. It encompasses networked applications, broadband access, intelligent buildings, and advances in silicon, software and services.

A year ago, I had the opportunity to spend some time with Henrik Clausen and his team at DiGi and see the excitement of the telecommunications industry first-hand. It is indeed a great place to start a career. And this week, we are going to take a deep dive into the telecommunications industry. We look at the key players in the industry; the exciting opportunities that it offers and we also look at possible career paths. These are all covered in our feature story on the telecommunications industry on page 6-10 in this week’s pullout.

The telecommunications industry is an exciting work place. There are numerous exciting roles in this industry. For marketing folks, the telco space is similar to the Fast-Moving Consumer-Good industry. Telcos spend huge amounts of their ringgit on branding and marketing making it an exciting space to be in for marketers. For engineers and technology enthusiasts, the telecommunications industry is constantly changing and innovating, giving them ample excitement to dabble in research, development and new product introduction. For the folks in finance and data crunching, there are so many exciting avenues and numbers to crunch in this industry. Every single telco customer usage, pattern and call is tracked. These can be analysed and studied to enable the number cruncher to propose new and exciting ways to increase yield and drive profitability. And it is a huge growth industry.

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As always, we have some great articles on leadership, career growth and other tips on how to continue to develop and further your career.

Enjoy your reading,

Roshan Thiran
Editor
myStarjob.com & CEO, Leaderonomics
Everyone can dream. Entrepreneurship is a key skill for everyone.

**Entrepreneurship Mastery**

- Deep technical entrepreneurship skills
- Breadth of management skills
- Entrepreneurship savvy
- Process expert

**Business Mastery**

- Strategic thinking
- Global perspectives
- Identifying opportunities from trends
- Industry awareness

**Personal Mastery**

- Personal effectiveness
- Self awareness
- Resourcefulness
- Influencing skills
- Communication
- Creativity
- Courage
- Persistence

**Leadership Mastery**

- Decision making
- Extreme leadership
- Decision making

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**BY ROSHAN THIRAN**

Roshan.thiran@leaderonomics.com

OST people dream of being their own "boss" at some point in life. However, we quickly lose that dream as the harsh realities of the world kick in. Some of us may have dabbled in a venture and if failed, adding further proof that we were not meant to be entrepreneurs.

I remember my first "official" business venture when I was at university. A few of us got inspired by Michael Dell and decided to start a company assembling computers and selling to students.

We were crushed and gave up. Our little team disbanded and we took up "real" employment. But the desire to make a living from our passion was so strong that we started our own "boss" at some point in life. However, we quickly lose that dream as the harsh realities of the world kick in. Some of us may have dabbled in a venture and if failed, adding further proof that we were not meant to be entrepreneurs.

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You will be put to the test in a simulated setting to manage a dynamic company. A variety of business and leadership exercises, including rigorous coaching will be provided throughout the programme. Highly experienced consultants will lead intensive group discussions that will push you to break idle barriers. Emphasis will also be placed on the creation of winning and innovative teams that are proficient at executing strategy in order to deliver effective business results. This and so much more because you deserve to be at the forefront of your industry.

THE REWARDS OF PARTICIPATION:
• Business strategy formulation and execution expertise
• Effective and efficient decision-making skills
• Discernment of customer needs and competitor dynamics
• Business acumen skills in variance analysis, cash generation, return on assets, and profitable growth
• Profound understanding of strategy, innovation, and sustainability
• Innovative and critical thinking that allow practical forecasting and risk mitigation
• A stronger, united team sharing the same goal and mission
• Understanding of personal strengths and a focus on potential areas of improvement
• Committed plan for personal leadership development

THE EXPERTS:
Carlo Peratoner has over 15 years of experience in finance, sales and marketing, engineering, management and information technology and is co-owner and partner of TRI Corporation. He was also founder and owner of Client Relationship Systems, Inc.

Gerry Mattia is a consultant with TRI Corporation and founder of Mattia & Associates, Inc. She is a member of GE’s Global Leadership Training Center in NY and specialist in Leadership & team development and creative management training.

Roshan Thiran is Chief Executive Officer of Leaderonomics. He was previously the Director of Global Talent Management with Johnson & Johnson and was also with GE for more than 12 years. Roshan has won numerous awards, including the global HRM award and the Malaysia HR Leader Award.

Eric Lau is the Executive Director of Leaderonomics. He has extensive experience in leadership development and strategic brand building in multinational companies such as Unilever and Unilever. He was previously part of the training faculty at Dale Carnegie Training.

WHAT DID THE PAST PARTICIPANTS SAY ABOUT THE SIMULATION?
“The simulation was very real and exciting. I felt it was like an on-the-job training more than anything else. Coming from a non-financial background did not make me feel ‘out of the league.’”
Siti Hajar Mohd Dahlan
Head of Talent
MALAKOFF CORP. BERHAD

“The fast paced group-breakout sessions, which were the major part of the program, are very challenging and it certainly helped enhance teamwork and quick-thinking skills. I most definitely benefited professionally from this unique program.”
Tennukal Raj
Managing HR & Administration
THE STAR

“I have seen the most hardened skeptics become absolutely engaged in the simulation experience, and the change in their energy levels, business acumen, and subsequent productivity have been consistently remarkable.”
Steve Kerr
Executive Director, JWMI Chancellor University
Former CLO, GE and Goldman Sachs
JACK WELCH MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

“TRI Corp. enabled us to take a much more strategic view toward executive talent management – what its key issues and challenges are. More importantly, they helped us solve our pain.”
Kevin Wilde
Chief Learning Officer
GENERAL MILLS
By PREMA JAYABALAN
prema.jayabalan@leaderonomics.com

E it looking for that perfect job or bringing your career to the next level, creating and cultivating a broad and deep network of professional connections is vital. As clichéd as it may sound, the term “It’s not what you know but who you know” is true when it comes to widening your horizons to reach your career goals. Sometimes, valuable experience and an amazing grade-point might not matter if you are competing against the CEO’s daughter for a job. She obviously has the better connection. A network is your professional family unit built from a myriad of links comprising colleagues, acquaintances and a professional community where support, knowledge and contacts are gained. When it comes to your career, your network enables you to extend your reach and expand your opportunities. If this element has not been a part of your agenda this year, you might want to take some time to leverage on building your professional connections because:

**IT OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES**

A diversified network of professionals opens up an unusually extensive range of potential projects or career opportunities. The more people who know you are interested in a certain type of work or are handling a particular project, the more people who can potentially help you with contacts, information, referrals, and advice. Besides, having a large number of people who are aware of your skills and expertise and who will always have your name in their mind, should assist you when career advancement opportunities arise.

**IT PROVIDES VALUABLE KNOWLEDGE**

Another advantage of having a wide pool of professionals in your network is the chance to learn and educate yourself in your preferred field. People with the talent and expertise that match your needs will be able to teach and advise you through mentoring or coaching.

**IT BRINGS YOU BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**

This network community with which you have links can also assist you when you are in need of business opportunities. These may include detailed information, investors, as well as trustworthy and experienced partners. You will have the liberty to research and pick the most suitable candidates based on your wide number of connections.

These are some of the reasons as to why it is important to have a solid network under your belt. However, you want to build your connection base with much care and not come across as someone who scares people off. How do you increase your benefits by staying connected with others who are in the industry? These can be done through various communication methods:

**IN PERSON**

If you are one who loves to connect with your contacts face-to-face as you believe in the personal touch, then schedule meetings and make arrangements to meet key people on a regular or occasional basis based on your requirements. You can meet over coffee, lunch or dinner. If you choose to be more interactive, then meet over a game of golf or squash. You can also make it fun by throwing a party or a small get-together at your place, just to unwind and mingle.

Another avenue which can be leveraged is convention meetings. Meeting at conventions not only provides you access to educational sessions but also gives you the chance to get together with colleagues from out-of-town. A small breakfast, lunch or dinner meeting at the halls could bring about valuable career developments. Attending corporate events helps tremendously as well. Don’t shy away from these invitations. Attend them and extend your network by meeting and associating with people. Pass your cards around and make yourself known as this may bring in fantastic contacts that can impact your career.

**VIA TELEPHONE**

A simple call to say hello goes a long way when it comes to networking. You can engage in conversations, send text messages and even participate in group chats via telephone. This will keep you in the minds of your contacts and help with your career endeavours.

**GO VIRTUAL**

Relationships can be built virtually through emails, online courses, conference calls and virtual committee meetings. Besides that, you could build your network through blogs, chat rooms and forums.

When the need arises to enhance your career prospects, you can always visit suitable and relevant blogs or forums in order to meet people with similar backgrounds. This is a fun and interactive way to get to know a person, exchange information as well as to gain more insight and knowledge on matters pertaining to the growth of your career.

**USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO YOUR ADVANTAGE**

The current trend to stay connected is the social media platform which is expanding fast. It is the most effective and convenient way to stay in-touch with colleagues and friends, even if you don’t speak with them on a regular basis. Furthermore, it can be accessed through your mobile phone. With the types of networks available now, it is easy to categorise your connections. LinkedIn, which caters for professional networking, can be used for all your business and corporate links. Facebook, which is for more personal use, can be availed of for friends and colleagues, even family. Then, for the occasional hello or to make yourself available, there is Twitter.

A very important aspect to take notice of whilst connecting is to make sure that the relationship is mutually beneficial for both parties. No one likes or wants to help a selfish person. If the relationship you have with the people in your network is not only about you, your career advancement and your job search, then this is a sign of bad networking.

Whilst interacting with your connections, always remember to talk about something other than your self. Ask about their well-being and discuss general topics which make it clear that you are not using them for their connections.

It is important to be a resource for them too, as this will help both parties maintain a healthy, good relationship. The right way of connecting to people and staying in a good network plays a pivotal role in the journey towards improving your career.
Malaysia's
TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

TELECOMMUNICATIONS LIBERALISATION

By PREMA JAYABALAN
prema.jayabal@leaderomics.com

Until the mid 80s, the telecommunications industry and especially the mobile phone sector was dominated solely by the Government. Then, the Prime Minister announced the Malaysia Incorporated policy and the Parliament approved of the Privatisation Act, which led to the penetration of private firms, foreign firms partnering Malaysian firms as well as a number of government-linked companies into this industry. This change was incorporated to welcome foreign investment and technology as a way to widen the economy. Foreign direct investment and foreign portfolio investment were encouraged to engender more exports and produce job opportunities as well as to attract foreign investment into the equities market. This seemed important after the plunge in the economy which led to a recession from 1985 to 1986. Before this change took place in the industry, telecommunication services provided by the public sector had increased the cost of doing business because of the long wait to get a fixed-line.

The new law gave the opportunity to these bodies to raise funds in the capital market which was channelled towards financing the development and implementation of new technologies deemed relevant and suitable for the telecommunications industry. An example of this would be the laying of optic fibre cables. There was also a gradual turn in the regulatory framework which changed from the authoritarian and hierarchical command and control approach to one where an independent regulatory authority was set up that was made accountable to all stakeholders in the industry. This was considered empowering as stakeholders were able to contribute their ideas into the policy making process to increase the new independent regulator’s legitimacy. This mutual connection brought upon an evolution of a new network governance which would not have sustained itself without the participation of all stakeholders.

Yesterday

Today

Tomorrow

WHAT LEADERS SAY ABOUT THE TELCO INDUSTRY

DATUK MOHAMED SHARIL TARMIZI
Chairman, Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission

“The Malaysian communications and multimedia industry has evolved rapidly over the years. Household broadband penetration has risen from 11% in 2006, to 33.7% in 2009 and to 63.9% as of August 2012. During the same period, mobile penetration rose from 72.3% of the population in 2006 to 103.4% of the population in 2009 and to 133.3% as of February 2012. The Government and the industry are rising to the challenge of providing ubiquitous, faster, and reliable services brought about by the increased use and adoption of digital lifestyle. Hence, the communications and multimedia industry is poised to continue its growth and this must be supported by the development of capabilities amongst industry professionals. We hope to be able to attract the best and brightest to be part of this transformation process.”

DATUK SERI ZAMZAMZAIRANI MOHD ISA
Group chief executive officer, Telekom Malaysia

“A career with a telecommunication company provides a wealth of opportunities for job seekers offering huge potential to grow involving multi-disciplinary skill sets and competencies. The telco industry is at the forefront of this digital revolution. It is changing lifestyles and the landscape of almost all industries. Mobile is currently defining the industry for the decade.”

SANIDIP DAS
Chief executive officer, Maxis Bhd

“Telecommunications are shaping changes at a frenetic pace in modern society particularly with the way we communicate, multi-task and access information. The impact of telecommunications has had in transforming lives is staggering, from voice calls to broadband internet, to ‘life services’ such as education, healthcare, to even moulding social behaviour. Innovation, technology, deep understanding of consumer behaviour, lifestyle and media are all at the heart of this business. Being at the cutting edge, telecoms offer successful career opportunities to talented young aspirants who are well-rounded i.e. people who are technologically savvy, agile, creative, contemporary, irreverent to the past, keen students of human behaviour. Besides this, they need to possess strong business, service and marketing acumen.”

HENDRIK CLAUSEN
Chief executive officer, Digi Telecommunications

“Malaysia is riding on the wave of the data revolution which is today a key driver of national growth. The telecommunications industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in Malaysia, and continues to accelerate the growth of many other businesses. Being in a globally linked industry at its most exciting phase of evolution, talents in this field will be at the forefront of ICT development, and have the opportunity to acquire and develop through an international perspective of business.”

AFZAL ABDUL RAHIM
Chief executive officer, Time dotCom Bhd

“Here’s the current conundrum, Baby-boomer boards and Gen-X management teams are trying to figure out what makes the Gen-Y-ers tick. They are a rather strange lot, with seemingly different priorities. I suppose we’d better figure this out quickly – there are more of them than there are of us!”

The Malaysian telecommunications industry has done extremely well in the last year, contributing 4.9% of Malaysia’s GDP, more than any other country东南亚国家联盟. The Malaysian telecommunications revenue is close to RM12 billion, close to Singapore’s RM13 billion. The mobile penetration in Malaysia is 133.3%, whereas Singapore’s is 129.1%. The penetration of fixed-line is 63.9% as of August 2012. During almost the same period, mobile penetration rose from 72.3% of the population in 2006 to 103.4% of the population in 2009 and to 133.3% as of February 2012. The Government and the industry are rising to the challenge of providing ubiquitous, faster, and reliable services brought about by the increased use and adoption of digital lifestyle. Hence, the communications and multimedia industry is poised to continue its growth and this must be supported by the development of capabilities amongst industry professionals. We hope to be able to attract the best and brightest to be part of this transformation process.”

Note: Voice defined as fixed and mobile voice, Data defined as Internet access, voice, SMS and MMS, Internet defined as fixed and mobile.
Irdawati makes people’s lives easier by coordinating and educating people

WHAT IS COOL ABOUT TELCOS...

- There are always challenges in the telco industry. Everyday is a challenge and I look forward to that. I love challenges and go where there are challenges. In telcos, I have found something interesting that I am passionate about. It makes me see things differently.
- When I was in revenue assurance, it was very interesting to see the network and how it delivers service to the end customer. First we had telegrams, fixed lines then mobile phones, then SMS. Now it is MMS, then EDGE, now 3G and fibre broadband.
- Almost 20 years ago, everyone depended on telegrams. They were the "in" thing. It took four hours to inform my cousin teaching at the Felda scheme in Tasek Chini that my grandmother had passed away. Nowadays, you take only minutes to communicate with someone abroad. You can MMS pictures, Facebook them, tweet your status and what’s happening where.
- This is true communication and it is very exciting. I am in the industry that connects people and this is the most amazing thing I have seen. You don’t see this in other industries. In telcos, everything changes rapidly; you have to adapt to the new technologies very fast. If you don’t, you will be left behind.
- Now everything can be in one box at home that can connect you everywhere.
- In a few years’ time, we will not need to spend much on the company or the server, as everything will go into Cloud.

JOURNEY TO CURRENT ROLE...

- I spent two years as an accounting assistant in Kodak Malaysia at their peak, when coloured photos were first introduced. It made me see things differently as it was an MNC company.
- I then worked for two years in a system integrator and learned about Network.
- I was with a leading mobile operator for nine years - first in accounting and finance for five years, then in revenue assurance for four years, where I learned about products and sales.
- I have been with Time for almost three years now.

VALUE I ADDED TO TIME IN CURRENT ROLE...

- I manage products in terms of development from concept to the actual product or service. I monitor the market to determine what customers need from service providers and how to improve the service.
- If I help my customers achieve their targets in terms of cost savings or service, I am satisfied.

SKILLS/QUALITIES I NEED TO TAKE ME FAR IN TELCOS...

- Be open about things to be done
- Be clear about objectives
- Be a people manager

SUCCESS MANTRA...

- Love what you do. You cannot work just for the money.
- Have passion in what you do, and it will create a successful career for you.
- Have a supportive boss/great mentor as this will benefit your career.

WHAT IS COOL ABOUT TELCOS...

- The telco industry is very exciting because the new technology that has grown around it has never stopped evolving. The constant challenges and upgrading are also exciting, and the network is increasing.
- The telephone has moved from something nice to have to a necessity. This is part of the excitement of the industry as the telco platform enables a lifestyle which is more enriching.
- The telco industry is a high-tech industry and you cannot stop learning.
- We are providing a vital service, as in other industries. In telcos, everything changes rapidly; you have to adapt to the new technologies very fast. If you don’t, you will be left behind.
- Now everything can be in one box at home that can connect you everywhere.
- In a few years’ time, we will not need to spend much on the company or the server, as everything will go into Cloud.

JOURNEY TO CURRENT ROLE...

- After graduation, I joined Lion Computers, a manufacturing company, for a year.
- When Maxis was just starting in 1995, I joined the transmissions department and helped to design and build the network.
- I took three years off from 2008 to 2010 to explore options outside, first with a vendor and then a fixed operator.
- I rejoined transmissions in Maxis in 2010.

VALUE I ADDED TO MAXIS IN CURRENT ROLE...

- I oversee the connecting of the base stations back to the core, and the design and planning of the transmission network.
- My exposure to a wide variety of technologies - microwave, fibre-optic and Vsat – and liaising with my peers within the industry has brought me to where I am today.
- My job entails managing a team of engineers in designing, building and developing the transmission network for voice and data, and supporting operations to maintain a healthy network in terms of quality, availability and performance.

SKILLS/QUALITIES I NEED TO TAKE ME FAR IN TELCOS...

- Technical strengths – As I joined in 1995 in the early days of Maxis, I had the opportunity to be involved in the selection of the sites and the equipment, and even in dimensioning the network.
- Management skills from attending courses and on-the-job experience.
- People skills – We need to have people to commit to what we do. For them to commit to me, I must commit to them. There must be balance between technical strengths and people skills.
- A good relationship with those within the organisation and outside the organisation.

SUCCESS MANTRA...

- We have to work smart and when things don’t happen, there is a reason for this. We must positively see what we can do to enhance decision-making and responses to market trends.

WHAT IS COOL ABOUT TELCOS...

- It is a very noble industry. It connects those that have a need to pass information, either via voice, data or visual mode. It is a service-oriented industry and serving with the heart is essential.
- Believe in service. Service is the only differentiator for lasting customer experience.

JOURNEY TO CURRENT ROLE...

- I was an auditor in a major audit firm.
- I joined TM as the head of finance in VADS Bhd in 2007, and have recently been assigned to manage a line of business in TM.

VALUE I ADDED TO TM IN CURRENT ROLE...

- Being a business finance manager is about giving management the eyes to make decisions accurately and in a timely manner. It helps management to respond to the market trends.

SKILLS/QUALITIES I NEED TO TAKE ME FAR IN TELCOS...

- Knowing the business is key in giving the right business analysis and advice.
- Professional integrity is vital for success.
- Timely analysis makes a great difference.
- Business risk is a living matter and being sensitive to it is critical to business.

SUCCESS MANTRA...

- Success comes with hard work, dedication, lots of sincerity and truthfulness.
This industry has three primary areas of specialization namely: operations, technology and sales and service. The diagram above depicts the various jobs and tasks that are involved in the industry. Each of these three categories corresponds to the roles of many telecommunications professionals.

As with other industries, the telecom profession is made up of individuals coming from all walks of life. This means that in order to excel in the industry, you need to be open-minded and passionate about new ideas and challenges.

In the past, a telephone call only served the purpose of making and receiving calls. With the introduction of text messaging, the trend shifted to offering more services. This trend has since evolved further with the introduction of the internet, which has opened up a whole new world of opportunities for telecommunication professionals.

MALAYSIA'S TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

IN 2009, THE INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTED
3.4% OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) WITH AN OVERALL REVENUE OF RM158 BILLION.

OVER 40,000 PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY WITH OVER RM24 BILLION PAID IN WAGES AND SALARIES.

THE COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY IS A NEED FOR A POOL OF QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED TALENT. TELCOS CAN NOW OFFER EXCITING AND CHALLENGING JOBS TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERS AND TECHNICAL STAFF.

WHAT IS A HIT OR A CURRENT TREND? COULD YOU PROVIDE SOME EXAMPLES?

- The increasing demand for faster and more reliable internet connectivity.
- The rise of mobile devices and apps.
- The growth of social media platforms.
- The trend towards virtual and remote work.
- The growing importance of cybersecurity and data protection.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SOURCE OF SATISFACTION IN YOUR ROLE?

- The opportunity to work with cutting-edge technology.
- The chance to contribute to innovation and development.
- The ability to challenge and grow personally.
- The potential for career advancement and leadership roles.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU ENCOUNTER IN YOUR ROLE?

- Keeping up with the pace of change in technology.
- Managing multiple projects and priorities.
- Communicating effectively with a diverse team.
- Dealing with customer complaints and issues.

WHAT ARE SOME TECHNICAL SKILLS REQUIRED IN YOUR ROLE?

- Knowledge of telecommunications networks.
- Understanding of technologies such as 5G and Wi-Fi.
- Proficiency in systems design and implementation.
- Experience with coding and programming.

WHAT ARE SOME SOFT SKILLS REQUIRED IN YOUR ROLE?

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work in a team and lead projects.
- Problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- Emotional intelligence and empathy.

WHAT ARE SOME QUALITIES YOU LOOK FOR IN A CANDIDATE SEEKING A ROLE IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY?

- Technical knowledge and expertise.
- Good problem-solving skills.
- Strong communication and collaboration skills.
- Ability to work under pressure.
- Desire for continuous learning and development.

WHAT ARE SOME TRENDS YOU SEE IN THE FUTURE OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY?

- The integration of telecommunications with other industries such as healthcare and education.
- The expansion of 5G and its applications.
- The growth of blockchain and its use in telecommunications.
- The increasing importance of cybersecurity and data privacy.

WHAT ARE SOME TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS CONSIDERING A CAREER IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY?

- Study and become proficient in telecommunications-related technologies.
- Gain experience in related fields such as networking and IT.
- Stay up-to-date with industry news and developments.
- Network and connect with professionals in the industry.
- Prepare and present at conferences and events.
- Pursue advanced degrees or certifications in telecommunications.

WHAT ARE SOME REASONS WHY YOU CHOSE TO WORK IN THIS INDUSTRY?

- The opportunity to work with cutting-edge technology.
- The potential for career advancement and leadership roles.
- The chance to make a difference in people's lives by providing access to communication.
- The potential for high salary and benefits.
- The chance to work in a dynamic and challenging environment.

WHAT ARE SOME ADVICE YOU WOULD GIVE TO PERSONS CONSIDERING A CAREER IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY?

- Keep your skills up-to-date.
- Stay informed about technological advancements.
- Build a network of contacts in the industry.
- Be open to change and continuous learning.
- Be willing to relocate for career opportunities.

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WHAT ARE SOME TRENDS YOU SEE IN THE FUTURE OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY?

- The continued growth of mobile devices and apps.
- The expansion of 5G and its applications.
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**WHY JOIN THE TELCO INDUSTRY**

The telco industry is very interesting because technology evolves exponential-ly. One year is long in the telco industry. What was valid a year ago is no longer valid now. The life-cycle of telecommunication devices is now only six months to a year. The ever-changing customer demand and technology are challenging and they cause us to constantly review the way we do business. This keeps our job interesting. You have to thrive on challenges and change. I enjoy challenges and what I really love about this industry is that it gives me great satisfaction when I manage to solve problems in my daily work with my skills and problem-solving ability.

The industry is moving towards offering solutions for lifestyle choices. Therefore, we need graduates from all industries. Fresh grads need to understand what their interests lie and try to find where their interest lies. They need to be prepared to work hard to constantly update their competency and knowledge of the technology involved because of the rapid technological advancement. They must be prepared to face challenges that are constantly evolving. Young professionals should consider moving into telco as that is where the excitement is. It is a field that will be very interesting for people who seek challenges. In fact, the telco industry is the best place for this.

Be restless – challenge the status quo. There are always better ways of doing things.

Explore all the different facets and areas available – you might be able to find a niche in a most unexpected area – and sometimes, you may even have to create this niche for yourself. For example, in the telco industry, you can predict with certainty what the industry will look very different. It is sometimes dog-eat-dog, and the landscape is ever-changing, not regimented, and the landscape is in abundance. Young people will definitely have a lot to contribute and there is room for everyone in this advancing industry.

We need quick and agile learners

The telecommunications industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. The picture is no different in Malaysia. The change that we are seeing is unimaginable even a few years ago. High-speed networks are proliferating, smart devices are getting richer in features and form at a startling pace and the world is progressively getting consumed by social networking.

Joining a telco allows you to be at the forefront and to be a pioneer.

This is an exciting industry for those who want to seek new solutions, to innovate and grow their capabilities and have the power to dream, to imagine. We look for talents who bring with them a perspective in their variety, quick and agile learners with high levels of self-awareness and resilience.

The legal aspects of the telco industry can be very interesting, mind-boggling and even heart-breaking at times, when you cannot close a deal. It still boils down to the intricacy of the law – how you play with it, how you tip-toe around it, and how you become creative about it.

Joining a telco requires a technical background.

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If you are keen on Internet technologies, the telco industry should be in your radar.

**C-TALK**

**Name:** Azeen Khan Osman Khan  
**Role:** Group chief strategy officer/Chief operating officer network transformation SBU  
**Company:** Axalta Group Bhd

Fresh grads, experienced hires and professionals – if you’re looking for challenge and a fast-paced industry in a state of change, where no one can predict the future and there is room for growth, join a telco. We can use all sorts of talented people from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines. The kind of people we need in the future will come from a much more diverse range of backgrounds. Are we going to be a telco a few years from now? Are we going to be an information broker? Are we going to be a media company? What are we going to be? It’s unclear, so I think people from different backgrounds do have the ability to join and help shape even what we are as a company years from now.

We hire from everywhere and not only those with telco backgrounds. We have hired a range of diverse talents from a variety of disciplines who are looking at new products for us in adjacent industries. Ultimately, the pool of experience that we’re looking for as a company has broadened significantly. How many jobs are there where your job becomes more difficult than easier as you go along, because the whole fabric of what a telco keeps changing; not only do the goalposts change but even what they look like. No one can predict what the industry will look like five years from now. The only certainty is that it will look very different.

Not all telco divisions are telco-centric and not all require a technical background.

It’s a very interesting industry to be in, very fast-paced.

The telco industry does not just enable communications into a platform for lifestyle choices such as health, travel and social aspects. It is just one of many industries. The industr 

**Name:** Suriahni Abdul Hamid  
**Role:** Head of human resource development  
**Company:** DiGi Telecommunications

Our dynamic and fast-paced industry challenges us to continuously evolve. We have embraced the power of the Internet and are bringing people together by enabling greater connectivity through mobile communications. This is the industry for those who seek themselves at the cutting edge of Internet technologies.

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I simply love the telco industry. Ours is more advanced than a lot of the other Asian countries’

**Name:** Emily Wee  
**Role:** Vice-president, business & media operations, new media  
**Company:** Telekom Malaysia Bhd (TM)

The telco industry is very interesting because technology evolves exponential-ly. One year is long in the telco industry. What was valid a year ago is no longer valid now. The life-cycle of telecommunication devices is now only six months to a year. The ever-changing customer demand and technology are challenging and they cause us to constantly review the way we do business. This keeps our job interesting. You have to thrive on challenges and change. I enjoy challenges and what I really love about this industry is that it gives me great satisfaction when I manage to solve problems in my daily work with my skills and problem-solving ability.

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**Name:** Ahmad Nasri Mohamed  
**Role:** General manager, transformation office - IT and network technology  
**Company:** Telekom Malaysia Bhd (TM)

The telco industry does not just enable communication between two parties. It has now evolved beyond telecommunication into a platform for lifestyle choices such as health, travel and social aspects. It is just a matter of time that all our devices will be integrated and have sim cards. You will soon be able to control your TV, microwave, other electrical appliances and even check the health of your loved ones remotely. The telco industry is definitely the way forward, on the cutting edge. We encourage young professionals to consider joining telcos. It is full of challenges, has high learn-
FAMILY... UNINTERRUPTED!

By ZAID MOHAMAD
zaid@smartparents.com.my

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VERY time you walk into a busy restaurant, there is a chance that you will notice a family having meals together. This may warm your heart to see a family gathering such as this, as it somehow brings back fond memories of your own parents and siblings and your experiences as a family. You may even find yourself smiling as you recall the jokes, sibling banter and laughter, while enjoying the food and company.

If you expect to see the same joy and happiness from the family in front of you in a busy restaurant today – you may be sadly mistaken. Something seems to be missing. There are no jokes, smiles, or cheerfulness. Instead, you see many serious faces who are intently staring into something, and it's not the menu. Yes, everyone is holding an electronic gadget and is busy pushing and sliding their little screens, oblivious to the environment and people around them.

Such is the state of a family gathering today. This scenario is fast becoming a normal scene either at home or in a public place. Before we start blaming others, let’s be honest and admit that all of us are guilty of being “electronically invaded” one way or the other.

Electronic Invasion

Yes, electronics have invaded our family lives. There are very few moments when we don’t stare into one of our screens. Most of our working hours are spent in front of the PC. Our lives depend so much on it. It is quite surprising how much human interaction has been sacrificed to enable activity on all the electronic gadgets.

Family First

There are actually plenty of opportunities to have family time in a day. In the morning, make it a point to join the kids at the breakfast table, no matter how brief. Take the opportunity to drive them off to school. Pick an interesting topic to talk about along the way. Try to focus on positive aspects and not on scolding or nagging. In the evening, do your best to join them for dinner on most days, and definitely on weekends.

When you do, please ensure that all electronic gadgets, including the mobile phones and televisions, are switched off. Make it an electronic-free hour. Enjoy and rediscover the art of conversation. Get to know each other again. Encourage them to open up and share how their day or week has been. Make the interaction positive and interactive. Again, avoid the urge to be judgmental, to scold or to nag. There will be plenty of time for that later.

In doing these small things, we can effectively regain a healthier balance between the needs of our job and those of our family. That short hour allows us not only to enjoy a delicious dinner but more importantly to reconnect with family members. The dining table becomes a place of joyful interaction, laughter, and playful teasing. Soon, the yard will be a playground once again. The virtual world of televisions, mobile phones or online contents is no match for real life experiences.

All in all, the most important issue is that we are putting our family first. We can then rest assured that we are well on our way to creating many more priceless moments which no electronic devices can provide, no matter how smart they are!

Zaid Mohamad is a certified parental coach and the best-selling author of Smart Parents, Brighter Kids and Smart Parents, Richer Kids. Log on to www.SMARTParents.com.my or write to him at zaid@smartparents.com.my

By TERRY SMALL
terry@terrysmall.com

TIS the season to be stressed. Everyone I know seems stressed. The holidays have a way of doing that. A little stress is good for your brain, but too much stress causes many problems. One such problem is that stress creates a kind of “trap” for your brain that makes it hard to escape the stress cycle. In other words, where the brain is concerned, stress seems to feed on itself.

Robert Sapolsky, professor of neurology at Stanford University, puts it this way:

“Stress pathways are diverse and involve many regions of the brain in feedback loops that can sometimes greatly amplify a response. The process begins when an actual or perceived threat activates the sensory and higher reasoning centres in the cortex. The cortex then sends a message to the amygdala, the principal mediator that precipitates activity in the amygdala. The amygdala releases corticotrophin, which stimulates the brain stem to activate the sympathetic nervous system via the spinal cord. In response, the adrenal glands produce the stress hormone epinephrine; a different pathway simultaneously triggers the adrenals to release glucocorticoids. The two types of hormones act on the muscle, heart and lungs to prepare the body for ‘fight or flight.’ If the stress becomes chronic, glucocorticoids induce the locus coeruleus to release noradrenaline which communi- cates with the amygdala, leading to the production of more CRH- and to ongoing reactivation of stress pathways.”

Translated into lay language: NOT GOOD FOR YOU OR YOUR BRAIN.

“Why is it that some people manage to be relatively stress-free? It seems to me that they are ‘otherwise focused’. They spend more time thinking about other people than about themselves. It’s amazing how stress seems to melt away when we stop thinking about ourselves. Here is a story that Dan Clark tells: ‘A friend of mine named Paul received an automobile from his brother as a Christmas present. On Christmas Eve when Paul came out of his office, a street urchin was walking around the shiny new car, admiring it. “Is this your car, Mister?” he asked.

Paul nodded. “My brother gave it to me for Christmas.” The boy was astounded. “You mean your brother gave it to you and it didn’t cost you anything? Boy, I wish…” He hesitated.

Of course Paul knew what he was going to wish for. He was going to wish he had a brother like that. But the lad said Paul all the way down to his heels. “I wish,” the boy went on, “that I could be a brother like that.”

Paul looked at the boy in astonishment, then, impulsively he added, “Would you like to take a ride in my automobile?”

“Oh yes, I’d love that.”

After a short ride, the boy turned and with his eyes aglow, said, “Mister, would you mind driving in front of my house?”

Paul smiled a little. He thought he knew what the lad wanted. He wanted to show his neighbours that he could catch a ride home in a fancy automobile. But Paul was wrong again. “Will you stop where those two steps are?” the boy asked.

He ran up the steps. Then in a little while Paul heard him coming back, but he was not coming fast. He was carrying his little crippled brother. He sat him down on the bottom step, then sort of squeezed up against him and pointed to the car. “There she is, Buddy, just like I told you upstairs. His big brother gave it to him for Christmas and it didn’t cost him a cent. And some day I’m gonna give you one just like it, then you can see for yourself all the pretty things in the Christmas windows that I’ve been trying to tell you about.”

Paul got out and lifted the lad to the front seat of his car. The shining-eyed older brother climbed in beside him and the three of them began a memorable holiday ride.

That Christmas Eve, Paul learned what Jesus meant when he had said: “It is more blessed to give…”

Merry Christmas everyone! In the next Brain Bulletin you will learn an amazing secret to triple your reading comprehension.

Terry Small is a brain researcher who believes that everyone is a genius. To interact with Terry, email: mystarjob@mystarjob.com
THE 21ST CENTURY WAY!

HERE ARE SOME POINTS FOR YOU TO PONDER ON A SATURDAY AFTERNOON...

1. ONLINE = OFFLINE
   What does your profile picture on Facebook or LinkedIn say about you? Ask five friends to give you some feedback in this regard. Is it congruent with the image you want to portray to the world? Does it say “Happy - Friendly” or “Happy - Crazy”? Employers might engage in a background check prior to your meeting. Don’t let your personal life drive your first professional impression, even if you have nothing to hide. Remember: what people see is what they believe.

2. YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH
   When people ask you what you do, don’t just say, “I’m an accountant, or I am in sales.” Learn how to confidently tell others who you are and what you do. Say who you are, mention who you work with and what you help them with. Try this: “I am (your business), I work with (your target market) so that they can (the desired results).

3. HAVE A GOOD GRIP!
   A good handshake will make someone feel appreciated and connected to you. If you don’t have control in how you touch or shake hands, you could come across as nervous or out of control. A limp fish handshake will give the impression that you are insecure whereas a bone crushing handshake will intimidate people. Some people do not offer to shake hands due to sensitivities of religion. You need to customise this action to the person, culture and situation.

4. COLOURS CAN MAKE OR BREAK YOU
   Colours evoke emotions and influence people’s perceptions of you. Red incites excitement and passion. Good if you want to stand out in the crowd, but it brings your professionalism a notch down. Brown says stable and calm, but not the perfect colour to wear if you want to project a fun and trendy image. Colour sets the tone for your meeting. So choose wisely!

5. WHEN IN DOUBT, OVERDRESS
   Not sure what the proper attire is? Dress up rather than down! It is always better to have people smiling and say, “My, you look great!” than to have people frowning silently at your casual look. You will always earn brownie points by standing out and looking your best!

6. ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ONE
   Look at your surrounding teammates. The first impression that the team makes is the first impression YOU make. Good teams create good chemistry and inspire confidence in their first impression. Make sure your teammates are all dressed well. Each and every one of you has to live and breathe the same corporate brand.

7. USE THEIR NAMES
   The most beautiful sound in the world is the sound of your own name. So repeat it after your initial handshake, “Nice to meet you Alan.” It makes them feel special. But don’t stop there! Learn the names of their pets, children, and spouses. Mention them in follow-up conversations – “How is Ellie doing in college?” or “Has George found the garage equipment he was looking for?” It creates the impression that you care.

8. WHO’S THAT GUY?
   Know who you are meeting. Do some research and look them up on LinkedIn or Facebook. Knowing what people look like and what they do will make you feel more at ease on the day of your meeting. Find out what the organisation does, as this will also allow you to appear more knowledgeable and familiar during conversations, and avoid any unnecessary faux pas.

9. I AM HERE FOR YOU
   Since this is your only chance to make a first impression, be 100% in the moment. In a culture where nobody has spare time for an exclusive conversation, you have to be different. Make sure that you give people your undivided attention. Make eye-contact, actually think about what the other person is saying and give genuine, well thought-out answers. The other person will pick up on this specialised attention, and in return will begin to like you. God gave us two ears, but only one mouth. Stop and listen.

10. LEAVE YOUR OVER-INFLATED EGO AT HOME
    Whilst a lack of confidence may force you to shy away from venturing out and trying new things, an over-inflated ego may cause you to over-extend yourself. So, think about this, if you possess the following symptoms... a) You think that no one is above you. b) You think of no one but yourself. c) You think that everyone should worship you. Get rid of them! No one likes an arrogant, pompous person. If you have only “Me, Myself and I” in your vocabulary, then it is time to relook at yourself.

11. BEFORE YOU HIT ‘SEND’
    Spell and grammar check anything you send out – emails, promotional materials, blog posts, etc. Be sure to check your subject lines too, as nothing makes a bad first impression like misspellings and typos. And while we are on this topic, consider this: Plain looking emails that lack your contact information, logo and branding will not do your business any favours.

12. STROKE THEM BEFORE YOU POKER THEM!
    One of the best ways to make yourself memorable is to find something nice to say to the person on your first encounter. Notice something complimentary about their outfit, the designs of their office or even the concept of their business, and mention this before you start asking them questions. Always focus on your prospect first. A sincere compliment is always a welcome boost to someone’s day!
You are a brand

Choose, my dear!

Are you taking care of your brand?

By ANABELLE CO-MARTINENT

anabelle.co@hotmail.com

You are presented with two cups of coffee. One that is in a plain white paper cup while the other cup’s exterior shows the green round logo with the siren-mermaid picture with in. Which one would you choose?

My point for both scenarios: branding matters. It doesn’t stop with just material things. Branding yourself is important because when it comes to the workplace — whether it’s a job interview, working in a company or even just being amongst people, those who have worked on their own personal branding will stand out from the rest.

Brands across the world spend millions of dollars to strengthen their image, increase their profile and maintain their relevance in the market. Those who have been successful in creating a strong brand garner a good impression and can command a premium. Investing in branding yourself will have the same effect.

Where do you start? Let’s work on the basics. An essential ingredient is good grooming. Nothing can replace a good shower, fresh breath, a decent hairstyle and well-trimmed nails.

Next step, be more than just “basic.” To do that, careful and taste-ful choices on clothing, shoes, and “accessories” are necessary. There is a saying: “Don’t judge a book by its cover.” Sadly, our ultra-speedy brain analyses everything before we can even stop it. The “first impression” just happens because our brain “Don’t know” Choosing the right style need not be expensive, as there are tons of options out there.

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Should you merely dress the part? Or go beyond that? I recall a quote: “Don’t dress for the job you have, dress for the job you want to have.” I personally witnessed an individual who showed up at work and dressed “more” than his part — and it did bring him places. He was dressed impec-cably despite his small role in the com-pany. Add to that the fact that he also had a positive outlook and the gift of gab, he was able to elevate his profile. In time, he was promoted from a small position to the one where he wanted to be. My own observation from the sidelines would point to the “brand-ing” he made for himself, which helped him turbo boost to where he wanted to be.

It is a natural human behaviour to gravitate towards all things beautiful. My own silly theory is that in the real world if a hiring manager needed to make a decision between two equally qualified candidates, he/she will tend to choose the visually appealing one over the other, if no other criteria were to be imposed upon the decision-mak-ing process. Therefore, look your best at all times in all job interviews. If you are unsure of the appropriate look, ask a friend who is in the same industry or do your research online. This highly depends on what type of company you plan to work for and what posi-tion you are aiming for.

There is no harm in looking your best at all times. However, being at your best is not just about appearance. Looking pretty will not bring you far if you just stop there. Another important element in your personal branding is communication.

A well-versed individual can impress people wherever they go. Fluency, dic-tion, pronunciation, vocabulary and body language are things you need to take note of when you are communica-ting. These elements work together to express your confidence and intel-ligence. To improve any element under communication, there are no short-cuts — practise, practise, and practise!

Your brand matters!

AbuFahim is an expatriate who loves the KL lifestyle. A creative person and amateur painter, her inter-ests lie on painting, music and fashion. Marketing is her first love and she spent 13 years with corporate names like Microsoft, Nokia and Nokia. Anabelle hopes to share useful information and experiences that could help others in their corporate journey.

By LIM MAYLEE

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It happens: Practically breaking the laws of physics and time to reach a team deadline can result in frayed tempers and collective migraines. All it can take is a miss read email for a war to erupt; and we all know that whether you’re directly involved in it, or just uncomfortably within range, fireworks in the workplace are never pleasant.

Here are some suggestions on how to defuse the situation so productively you can get back on track.

1. Encourage the two parties to talk through their differences.

Many times, conflicts arise from miscommunication and/or rumours. While it’s impossible to eradicate gossip and hearsay, it is possible to give each party a voice to be heard and talk, without a mediator and the possibility of the message getting lost in translation. Everybody at work is an adult, it should be possible for two colleagues to speak professionally and rationally. Only if they’ve reached an impassable that seems unbreakable, should a wider group step in to help.

2. If the warring parties are your employees, take the initiative to ask each party what the issue is, from their own perspective. Don’t judge and don’t take sides, try not to offer any solu-tions until you’ve heard both sides of the story. One of the most common causes of inter-office conflict is perceived slacking off — you may find that one party believes the other party is bumming around while the former has to shoulder the heavier burden. In this case it would be good to talk to the accuser and explain how the workload is seg-regated, unless percep-tion is indeed reality, then you may need to speak to the overly relaxed party and find out what’s going on. If they are your team mates, it could be best to listen and smooth over misunderstandings, but leave the disciplining to the management.

3. Try to indirectly solve the issue via office standard procedures. For example, if lack and Jil are in conflict due to Jill’s constant lateness, coming up with an incen-tive scheme to get everybody to work on time could help defuse the conflict before it affects everyone in the office. The trick is to focus on the solution as a new idea on its own, rather than as a response to the conflict. If the team’s culture already has such an incentive, even better. Using a previously agreed-upon standard makes it even easier to accept, going forward.

In the midst of tension and gen-eral unpleasantness, it’s good to remember that conflict can also be an opportunity to grow. Sometimes conflict over a certain issue is an indication that more time needs to be spent setting up or fortifying procedures that could smoothen the work process. Prevention, however, can be better than cure so establishing a culture of open, direct communication and cutting down on tale-telling and snitching could also go a long way towards helping promote harmony in all workplaces and around the water cooler!

Lim MayLee thinks office conflict can make co-workers bond and grow, but only if it’s handled correctly. Looking for a job? Register at mystarjob.com and start applying today!
Internet users in Malaysia view social network sites

14 BILLION TIMES EVERY MONTH

Malaysian Internet users spend almost 20 HOURS PER WEEK ONLINE, compared with 10.6 HOURS WATCHING BROADCAST TV

80% of Malaysian Internet users stream or download videos each month, and 51% have an active YouTube profile

Social networking, at 32.1%, holds the largest share of online minutes for those in Malaysia, followed by

87.9% of Malaysians on the Internet access Facebook

67% of all videos viewed in Malaysia

By DEBBIE POZZOBON
debbie.pozzobon@gmail.com

Growing up, my parents always told me that I had to study hard so that I would be accepted by a reputable university which would enable me to get a good job. When I asked what a good job was, the list was always the same: accountant, doctor, veterinarian, banker, lawyer, teacher, or manager of sorts. The careers that we discussed were usually those that involved working for large corporations. In my parents’ opinion, this was the safest way to ensure financial success. Whilst I may not totally disagree with their opinion, when I raised my own child, I found myself telling him a slightly different story. This was partially due to a change in the global economy, coupled with a shift in focus away from those traditional types of formal employment in favour of jobs that have a more entrepreneurial focus. I believed that the difference between financial independence and financial security was the ability to define your own destiny.

So which alternative is correct?

Well, I am not sure that there is a clear-cut winner in this race. It largely depends on you, your strengths and abilities as well as your preferences. Working for a company provides a sense of security. Most of the strategic decisions are made by a team, and do not rest on the shoulders of a single person. When managing your own business, these decisions become your sole obligation. It may be tough at times, to bear the responsibility for not just yourself, but for all your employees’ welfare as well.

If you are the type of person that like structure, routine and processes, and being part of a team then working for a company is probably for you. You may need to be more patient as things may not happen at your pace, and may need to work within boundaries that don’t always suit you to conform to the company’s culture.

If you, on the other hand, are a risk-taker, want to venture outside the box, are prepared to work harder than you would for someone else, and are willing to fail a few times, then your own business may be a consideration.

There is no right answer to this question, but rather a right fit for you, your personality, and your abilities. Managing your own business is no mean feat and requires much in terms of dedication, hard work and an abundance of pure grit and stamina to face challenges. Whatever your choice, you always reap what you sow. Go for it, make your mark and define your own legacy. Today is when your book begins and the rest is still unwritten!
Situation

Hi Cassandra,

I can understand why you see this as a major crossroads.

If I may, I would like to break down your current situation into two key decision areas that you need to consider:

1. Do I stay on and enjoy what I have now – people and work?
2. Do I move on to the unknown and work towards what I want?

I believe many of us have had the experience of being caught between choosing what we want NOW and what we want to have in the FUTURE. Instant/current gratification is always tempting and VERY desirable. But the truth is, just as in the areas of achieving financial goals, unless we are willing to sacrifice instant gratification, our goals seem to slowly disappear into the future.

Many people I know had to venture into a few different areas/companies before they found one where they could reach their full potential and where they were appreciated. I suppose one of the hardest elements of your decision is leaving great colleagues behind. No one can guarantee that you will find another group as great. However, in the pursuit of your dreams, some sacrifices are inevitable. Times like these force you to make mature decisions. So, what will yours be? Perhaps you may consider the famous idiom: “The world is my oyster”? There is indeed so much to explore out there before you find your precious pearl.

Elisa Dass Avin

Hi Cassandra,

This is a critical point of your career. This will be the first of many crossroads that you will encounter. From my perspective, there are three major options that you can explore.

Your first option is to remain with your current company as you have moved quite rapidly over the last eight years in terms of promotions. Having to invest that much tenure in a single organisation with such accelerated elevations is a testimony of your performance and agility. You may need the comfort and stability in life and work and not accelerate too much. You may also need the opportunity to have other capabilities which may be invaluable as you climb the corporate ladder. From that, you can also ask for extended responsibilities by participating in projects or short-term assignments which may act as stretched targets in the current job which you thrive. Hence, moving may not entail going vertically but horizontally or even taking a step back in order to for you to take a few steps forward. Remember the proverb, “A rolling stone gathers no moss”.

Bani Zainal

The final path you can consider taking is to leave your current company, you may want to move to a new job in another organisation and expand your functional capabilities which may be invaluable as you climb the corporate ladder. Apart from that, you can also ask for extended responsibilities by participating in projects or short-term assignments which may act as stretched targets in the current job which you thrive. Hence, moving may not entail going vertically but horizontally or even taking a step back in order to for you to take a few steps forward. Remember the proverb, “A rolling stone gathers no moss”.

Bani Zainal

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Coming up in next Saturday’s issue . . .

SITTING KILLS

Get insight on the mechanics of number plate making in A Life of a number plate maker

Purpose is core to team building writes Vinesh Naidu in Consulting Corner

Top 10 tackles how to handle those tough and difficult customers

Take charge of your career with the right mindset in Hard Talk

Also next week