ETHICS AT WORK

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A number of years ago, when I was on an amazing hiring streak, I received a resume which was extremely impressive. The candidate was from a top Ivy League school, with a stellar academic achievement coupled with some amazing extra-curricular activities and involvements. I was extremely excited to see this resume amongst the pile of standard, boring resumes that were piling on my desk. In fact, I was so excited that I immediately told my HR leader to set this candidate up for an interview.

The interview was set up and we did some pre-interviews where the candidate was subjected to a number of game-based interview sessions with my team. After that session, the team would normally weed out candidates before I interviewed them. I waited to interview this candidate but for some reason, my team had weeded him out. I was upset and insisted that I interview him. And much to their dismay, I persisted and met the candidate.

For some reason my mind kept telling me this person was a great candidate (based on the resume). And even when interviewing the person, you could see the smarts he had. He answered questions with ease and seemed to be a highly-competent person. But when I started to ask him about his values, his true character started to show. His character and personal values were undeveloped and made me extremely nervous. Here was a brilliant talent, with no values. I was so disappointed after the interview as my mind said hire him but my heart said he would fail miserably. And so I did not hire him (much to the joy of my team who clearly saw his weak character displayed during the game-based interview sessions). In fact, my admin assistant came to me after he left the office and told me she did not like him and would be very upset if I hired him.

Character and values are sometimes relegated to items of low priority in the workplace. But these are actually key issues in the success and failure of any organisation. This week’s issue of the career guide delves into the issues surrounding workplace ethics. In this current era of globalisation, almost all employers are looking for professionals who are equipped with the proper qualifications, talent and skills. In fact, almost all hiring is competency-based (this means that a set of skills and qualifications which you list down in your resume is the key reason you get called for interviews and granted an interview). However, almost all organisations don’t promote people based on skill alone. Most of the time, leaders promote people based on values and character. In reality, we hire for competence but we promote for character.

So, what are your values? Are they aligned to the organisation you work with? We do hope this weekend, after reading our career guide, you will take some time to reflect on your values and personal ethics in the workplace. If they need to be re-evaluated, maybe this weekend will be a great time to do so.

Read on this week and we do hope you enjoy our career guide. We hope our career guide will continue to inspire you to keep learning and growing every day of your life. Learning is painful yet it is essential for our development and ultimately our success. We have filled this issue with ideas and resources to help you grow your career. Keep leveraging our amazing videos and other resources which can be accessed online at www.leaderonomics.com or at our main home site www.leaderonomics.com.

We wish you all the best in your career journey! We hope you have as much fun with this pullout as me and my team at Leaderonomics. We have had fun putting it all together. If you have any feedback on the pullout, feel free to email me and my team from Leaderonomics at myStarjob@leaderonomics.com: We love all feedback (we believe it’s a gift from you to us regardless of the nature of the feedback) so do send us your thoughts, ideas and aspirations for the pullout. Have a super weekend!

Warm regards,

Roshan Thiiran
Editor, myStarjob.com & CEO, Leaderonomics
Daring to Fail: Pursuing My Education Was Probably One of My Biggest Failures and Regrets

By Angie Ng

Roping out of college is certainly a big setback for a young teenager eager to earn his degree and to get inaugurated into the working world, but Sherman Foo did not let his failure of drowning the graduation garb stop him from pursuing his dreams. Although he had enrolled to study graphic design at a local institution after completing his SPM, Foo decided to stop his studies after just seven months due to lack of interest and financial woes after his father fell ill.

When he was 19, his father passed away and being the oldest child, Foo was tasked to take care of his mother and two younger brothers. “Looking back, the abrupt termination of my studies was probably one of my biggest failures and regrets. I had to start from the bottom which was both physically and mentally draining. As a sales assistant, I had to stand a ‘day long’.”

“If I had continued with my studies, I could have been more successful as the degree would have given me a good headstart in my career,” the 34-year-old bachelor shares with Leardenomics. At a critical time during his formative years of 17 to 18 years, he was selling VCDs and illegal software CDs at Imbi Plaza in Kuala Lumpur.

Describing what he now calls his “low period”, Foo says, “It didn’t feel natural as the crowd was rowdy and the pay was miserable. I only had RM1 to spend a day and had to watch every cent including what I ate. That’s when I made a vow to myself that I would work hard to be a huge success so that I would never need to sting on food again.”

“That experience actually came as a blessing in disguise to Foo as it marked the start of his journey of a “thousand steps” (literally). A few months into his job, the Malacca-born lad decided that if he was going to be miserable, “I might as well be miserable in a market like Singapore.” That was when he hopped onto a bus and made his way to work in his first actual job as a retail assistant with an American apparel branding outfit in Takashimaya.

Taking the Plunge

During his first month in Singapore, Foo says he had to sleep in a tiny store room which he rented from an elderly woman. Only after he received his first pay check was he able to afford a decent place to live. He worked there for two years before he received an offer to join a big Italian luxury company.

The feisty teenager realised that without a degree he needed to push himself even harder to make up for his “shortcoming”. What he lacked in education he made up with hard work and an eagerness to learn and read up about subjects that mattered towards self-improvement in books and magazines. Being in the apparel and fashion industry, Foo took pride and interest in all the brands he represented, established good rapport with his clients as well as provided feedback to his principals.

He triumphed against the odds and has charted quite an impressive record in his resume ever since.

From a retail assistant, he was promoted to manager. By the age of 27 in 2006, he was already the regional marketing director for Swiss watch Xiger Dubuis. In 2007, Foo decided to start his own business, a one-man public relations, marketing and branding consultancy company, Meta communique with just $5,100.

In 2010, the company merged with Singapore-based Stridec Creatives to provide consultancy services that included across the board creative design services from advertising, digital and web solutions, videos and print to consultancy on marketing, branding management, IT and mobile application services.

Helmed by Foo as the group CEO, Stridec Creatives has since expanded to Kuala Lumpur, India and also has a representative office in Portland, the United States. “We are expanding our core creative, technology and consulting businesses and will diversify into new businesses as we see fit. We are also venturing into building boutique hotels, retail of clothing and luxury handbags, food and beverages, air freight logistics, software and mobile apps as well as car grooming businesses,” Foo discloses.

He elaborates: “In the not too distant future we hope to be considered for mergers, buy-overs or even public listing, as the wish list for my group is to go more into major businesses like property development, luxury hotels, resorts, shopping malls and other commercial projects. I believe we have something unique to offer as well as an edge in how we run our businesses.”

Role Model

According to Foo, he has always wanted to be an entrepreneur ever since he was a teenager. “I’ve always read about innovation and the importance of leaving a mark in this world. To make one that I could call my own, I came to realise that politics, businesses, products and the accompanying fine print operated just like clockwork. These connecting cog has been the key to creating businesses that were supported by other businesses. From supplying, production, retail and buying over competitors, profits could be ensured either way the market turned. Not only did I connect the dots together, but I discovered my niche as an entrepreneur because it was all so fascinating to me. Just like the board game Monopoly, when you own houses and hotels on each and every square peg, wherever your friends land they will have to pay you something.”

Foo says he is happy with what he is doing and loves going to work every single day. “If you never feel that it is a bane to work, you’re truly blessed and I believe I achieve that on most days,” he enthuses.

On the people who inspire him, Foo says he has high regards for Tan Sri Tony Fernandes for being “a true blue Malaysian who has made quite a mark around the globe from starting out in just a singular business (airlines) to venturing into mobile, hotels, insurance and F1 racing.”

“Sir Richard Branson and Donald Trump are also brilliant self-made billionaires who have made their mark and achieved success their way”, Foo adds. “In his zest to learn, Foo is also an avid reader of books written by Robert Kiyosaki and Warren Buffett.

Foo wants to share his secrets of success and is working on his first book, Money Costs Too Much which he hopes to get published this year. He is also planning a sequel for the book, and to give talks and consultancy advice to “any audience who will have me to share and to enrich them”.

Going forward, Foo plans to retire by the time he turns 40 and on top of his to-do list is to travel around the world. He advises those looking for opportunities to venture into new careers or businesses to: “Just do it. But only after you have done the necessary research and evaluation before taking the plunge.”

He cautions them “not to pay too much heed as to what other people around you say about your plans as not everyone will share your aspirations.”

“First and foremost, do all the due research and you’ll be pleasantly surprised by how things pan out,” he says encouragingly.

Sherman Foo Makes It Big In Singapore

http://thestar.com.my/isnap
Experiential Learning. Are You Practicing This?

“For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them” – Aristotle

The best way to develop a dynamic leader is through lessons learnt from experiences. Experiential learning is borne out of exploring, experiencing, creating, discovering, relating to and interacting with the world around us.

We at Leaderonomics believe that leaders can be developed. An established team of strong leaders is the foundation needed for any organisation to soar.

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Leaders can bring success to an organisation. When opportunity comes, are your people prepared to take on leadership roles to take your organisation to the next level?

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www.leaderonomics.com
**WHAT GREAT LEADERS DO BEST**

**PLAY TO WIN**

**S**urvival mode involves only a limited amount of energy and opportunistic thinking – and it is up to leaders to inspire others by extending, frustrated people and help them see the opportunities that come with any crisis.

In order to lead the switch from the prevailing negative mindset to the idea that we are poised for a recovery, leaders need to “lead at the edge” – or, in other words, lead the way to a positive mindset and a state of inspired energy.

This all sounds great on paper but when the harsh reality consists of a daily diet of laying off people and cutting costs, moving into a state of “inspired energy” presents a challenge for any leader – particularly one surrounded by people laced with pain and anticipated loss. How does one person inspire others in such an environment?

**PLAYING TO WIN**

Moving forward requires a mindset change and that means taking control by strengthening one’s resolve to “play to win.” The first step is for leaders to actively understand the pain that they and their people are going through. With this empathic state, leaders can then direct employees to look towards the benefits and opportunities often buried within a crisis. Playing to win requires good risk assessment, a clear game plan and most importantly, the ability to inspire people through knowledge and new ideas to join the ride.

Leaders who can genuinely help people to see that “a change has a benefit” can turn “being a hostage” and being helpless into an active engagement. This is what it means to “play to win.” The opposite is focusing on fear and avoidance of pain which is then in fact “playing not to lose.”

**WHAT MAKES A GREAT LEADER?**

Any leader who has not worked on his or her self will have difficulties leading properly. Great leaders start with themselves – understanding their own foundations and being aware of their secure bases (the people, places, events, beliefs, and other experiences that have shaped them).

Only from this point can one become focused on external goals and then aspire to take the fear out of others. Great leaders are secure-bases to others with an ingrained sense of confidence in themselves. They are not overwhelmed by fear and do not fall prey to helplessness that could only be destructive to themselves and those around them.

Great leaders are rarely taken hostage and are not afraid of argumentation or people pushing back. Secure-base leaders are not afraid to make decisions based on the input of others, including their adversaries. Accepting valuing and seeing the potential in individuals is intrinsic to them. Great leaders do not use threats, nor communicate with an over-emphasis on danger. Great leaders understand the importance of risk assessment – and possess the ability to take calculated risks. They also have two fundamental characteristics:

1. **POWER AND ABILITY**

   Leaders use their power and ability positively to impact both themselves and others. Part of this implies following the Lincoln philosophy of “teams of rivals”, or, in other words, engaging potential enemies and winning them over as allies so that they bring in people with different ideas who will challenge the status quo. This approach ensures the most vibrant potential for innovation and new ideas.

2. **INFLUENCE**

   Ironically, by the time leaders have achieved complete formal authority, the successful ones are those who then use informal authority – influence – to make things happen rather than by exerting their hierarchical power. They are able to influence others through powerful dialogue, seeking a greater truth by thinking together.

**RECLAIMING YOUR POWER**

There are many great stories of teams and individuals who have made something good out of the worst possible crises. A crisis – with its ability to raise questions about what really is important and where an individual or an organisation is really going – can sometimes be the straw that breaks the camel’s back. A crisis can also be the cloud with the silver lining. In order to handle crises and their intrinsic questions, leaders must be able to reclaim their own power and enable those around them to do the same.

Taking back the power can take many forms. It could entail organisations going back to their core values or products or ways of doing things that suited them better, or, contrarily, innovate and move in a completely different direction. It could mean figuring out what new talents will be needed in the future.

It may involve developing emotional intelligence as a leader, being better at business processes, expanding knowledge in business areas, or going into new professional arenas. In a retrenchment situation, taking back the power might mean contacting people in your social network or exploring entrepreneurship possibilities.

Trusted friends can play a key support role in a transition.

Anybody who has suffered a major loss – whether it is a personal or professional one – knows that people, supported by others, can have an extraordinary resilience to bounce back from even the most unthinkable crises. It simply requires the emotional and technical skills to do so. The current world financial crisis is no different. Great leaders all suffer great losses but have learnt this extraordinary resilience to bounce back from all kinds of adversity.

**Professor George Kohlrieser is programme director of the High Performance Leadership programme at IMD. He also teaches on the following programmes: Advanced high performance leadership, Breakthrough programme for senior executives, International seminar for top executives, Leading the family business, Orchestrating winning performance. If you would like to find out how George can help your organisation, email people@leaderonomics.com**
8. Do more than what your job requires. For example, if you work in customer service and someone needs help, go beyond offering "standard help." Go beyond your duties to ensure that the customer is satisfied. Customers like to commend companies on great service and your manager will be hearing about the excellent job you are doing.

9. Be a leader in meetings. In every meeting, there are leaders and followers. Leaders always make high level contributions. Management always takes notice of the contributors as they tend to provide suggestions that can take the company to greater heights.

10. Let the ideas and suggestions flow. Start with your own job and you can suggest ways to do it more efficiently. Even if your manager balks at it, keep making suggestions wherever you can. It shows initiative.

1. Never bad-mouth the company you work with. This may not only result in your downfall as news spread fast, but will generally demotivate you as a person. Thoughts transform into actions and if you have negative thoughts about your company, there's very little good that can come out of the situation. Instead, be inspirational and optimistic.

2. Be a team leader. This is an opportunity to stand out and impress your bosses with your leadership skills and ideas. Being a leader gives you the opportunity to transform your ideas into reality and get noticed as a person who can get things done well.

3. Dress the part. This is probably the easiest way to get noticed in the workplace. When you dress the part, you feel it. The confidence you project will make you a natural leader.

4. Be an initiator. Take the initiative to help out with the cleaning up after the office party or help plan the annual day out. Your initiative is always appreciated within the company and it will reflect your positive attitude.

5. Play a role in committees. Join a safety committee or a club in your company where you can contribute significantly. These can be special interests or skills that are not prominent in your day job. Being an outstanding employee includes having a variety of skills that will make you indispensable to the organisation.

6. Be proactive! It is always better to factor in problems that may arise with future plans. Think of suggestions to solve these problems so that in the eventuality they arise, you will be able to wow everyone with your foresight and provide a solution to the problem.

7. Be the "go to" person. Being helpful goes a long way especially in building rapport with your colleagues and manager. You may also gain new skills along the way in areas outside your job.

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"Nothing great in this world has been accomplished without passion. I believe I can achieve great things as I work among a talented and passionate group of colleagues."
- Joshua See

"Sunway is one big, happy family that works as a team towards achieving one vision."
- Roselin Binti Rosli

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  - Senior Managers / Managers / Assistant Managers / Senior Executives / Administrators
- **Technical (Design)**
  - Technical Coordinators / Coordinators / Building Information Modelling Construction Managers
- **Environmental, Safety & Health**
  - Senior Executives / Executives / Coordinators
- **Finance**
  - Finance Managers / Assistant Accountants
- **Facility Management**
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HOW CAN EMPLOYERS DEVELOP BETTER WORK ETIQUETTE IN THE OFFICE?

PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

Leaders should practise work ethics themselves before asking their employees to follow suit. If it first and your workers will definitely follow.

ACKNOWLEDGE AND REWARD

Those who practice good work ethics and values should be rewarded. This will not only encourage the rest of the organisation of the importance you place on ethics and etiquette.

REIGNARD, WHO GO AGAINST WORK ETHICS

While unethical people ignore work ethics, that person should be reprimanded, no matter how high a status he holds, a leader with principle and sends out a strong message that no one should be above the law, no matter how high a status he holds.

A POSITIVE PUBLIC IMAGE

An organisation that has everyone following work ethics does not need to worry about employees stealing its company assets, fabricating documents, taking fake leave, sabotaging the work of other employees or taking the personal belongings of the employees’ colleagues, treating them badly and withholding when necessary is important in maintaining the organisation’s mission.

A PUBLIC POSTIVE IMAGE

A workplace that promotes work ethics and morals is a site of interest to the public. High ethical standards in your company will ensure your organisation is genuine. This will attract more stakeholders to your organisation.

WORKPLACE ETHICS: ENHANCING TEAMWORK

Ethics foster an environment built on trust, respect and commitment. Employees are able to work together for the common good.

WORKPLACE ETHICS: PROVIDES EMOTIONAL SECURITY

Employees go to work happily knowing that they have their employer’s back and appreciated by their superiors. They won’t be bemoaned on by their workers and can work together harmoniously in a positive and honest atmosphere.

WORKPLACE ETHICS: PROTECTS COMPANY PROPERTY

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MANY companies understand that good practices in the office promote exemplary behaviour and in turn project a positive and attractive image of the company. However, even as more companies recognise the importance of implementing and practising good work ethics, their effectiveness varies perhaps more than merely having these ethics in writing or repeated to employees. A study conducted among 250 employees in the United States cited the following as the most common forms of misconduct:

- Lying to supervisors
- Unfair treatment of employees
- Improper/personal use of company resources
- Conflict of interest
- Lying on reports, and
- Sexual harassment

The same study showed that 65% of employees who noticed or were aware of misconduct in the workplace did not report them. Assuming good ethics policies have been implemented or that an employee knows of their existence, the question arises as to why results aren't satisfactory.

Among reasons cited, some were of practical importance: for some there were not enough facts or evidence to bring a complaint forward while others felt that it was not their business or responsibility to report such misconducts. Also, the employees:

- Didn’t feel the organisation would respond
- Didn’t know of an anonymous/confidential way to report it
- Feared retaliation from management, and
- Feared being considered a troublemaker

ELIMINATING LABELS

Similarly, the National Business Ethics Survey uncovered that many employees were cynical about management actually doing anything about their complaints or feared retaliation from peers for “snitching” or repercussions from management for being “trouble-makers”.

Although it may be difficult and almost impossible to eliminate, employers must take steps to address and stop retaliation at both peer and management levels.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

It is said that good ethics must be practised and displayed by the higher management. Research shows that employees have a 49% positive view on the integrity of senior management, statistically similar to a few years ago. This means that employees’ views on management have not changed much over the years.

Perhaps the solution lies in the fact that the management is more positive about workplace ethics than the typical employee. Thus, it is important that besides “walking the talk”, seniors must also involve lower management in ethical discussions.

This is important because a negative situation should not be allowed to fester as this will undermine the company. Should the problem be left unresolved, employees will see no value in action and may turn to external means or third parties for a solution. In addition, workers want to be associated with companies they trust, and therefore reported misconduct must be investigated and acted upon.

Furthermore, a good reputation is an immeasurable asset that employers will naturally want to protect.

Gretchen Winter, vice-president of business practices at Baxter International notes that a strong reputation is, in many ways, a natural outcome of a strong commitment to ethics at all organisational levels. Management generally recognises that the employees can either enhance or diminish that reputation through their daily decisions and interactions. They may not fully appreciate how an ethics programme can provide employees the tools to enhance that reputation.

BUILDING TRUST

Perhaps one of the most important values is the trust that must exist between employees and the management. As mentioned, a company must ensure that an investigation is carried out after a report is made. Another method is to implement an ethics programme to provide employers with the tools and knowledge they need in making ethical decisions. The idea behind this is to allow both sides to acknowledge that there may be an ethical dilemma and that there are resources to overcome it.

Winter points out that employers have a choice; “They can either have employees come to them with every ethical decision, or they can give employees a framework to make many of these decisions themselves.” Executives who can trust their employees to do the latter will have more time and energy for other work.

“Ethics programmes cannot prevent all misconduct from occurring,” says Ken Johnson, an ethics consultant and colleague at the Ethics Resource Centre. “Even in the best-run organisations, there are always a few employees who wilfully break the rules.” In such cases, there is no substitute for clear procedures and sanctions. But the real function of an ethics programme “is to allow basically good people to do the right thing and succeed.” According to Johnson, this is the essence of a healthy work environment. People need to be sensitive to ethical issues on the job, but they also must trust their organisations enough to raise them.

ETICAL QUESTIONS

In 2010, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission received 7,224 cases of allegations of corrupt practices involving millions of ringgit in cash. Despite measures taken to curb corruption, Malaysia's corruption index rating seems to be no where near improving.

Research has also shown that other than corruption, bribery remained a major concern in the area of misconduct in the office. In the same year, a total of 510 people from various sectors were arrested for corruption. Published figures of forms of misconduct were tax fraud, deceptive advertising, production of unsafe products and copyright issues.

These are, admittedly, major forms of misconduct. Having said that, one would perhaps agree that in lesser terms, the most common form of negative behaviour is bad time-keeping and lack of respect for others.

Aside from the consequences of such unethical behaviour, management must ensure that an investigation is conducted. This includes an ethics programme can provide employees the tools and knowledge they need in making ethical decisions. The idea behind this is to allow both sides to acknowledge that there may be an ethical dilemma and that there are resources to overcome it.

Winter points out that employers have a choice; “They can either have employees come to them with every ethical decision, or they can give employees a framework to make many of these decisions themselves.” Executives who can trust their employees to do the latter will have more time and energy for other work.

In 2010, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission received 7,224 cases of allegations of corrupt practices involving millions of ringgit in cash. Despite measures taken to curb corruption, Malaysia's corruption index rating seems to be no where near improving.

Research has also shown that other than corruption, bribery remained a major concern in the area of misconduct in the office. In the same year, a total of 510 people from various sectors were arrested for corruption. Published figures of forms of misconduct were tax fraud, deceptive advertising, production of unsafe products and copyright issues.

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By LIM MAY LEE

DONT’ KNOW WHERE MY DAY HAS GONE!

This is a common phrase, heard in workplaces worldwide when it hits 5.30pm. Many of our results you have isn’t seem to amount to much. Don’t worry, you’re not alone. And let’s just keep this to ourselves, but even bosses have some trouble optimising their time! A study conducted by consulting firm McKinsey and Co in November 2012 showed that out of almost 1,500 employees, only 5% rated themselves “very satisfied” with the way they spent their time. A whopping one-third rated themselves “very dissatisfied” with their time management skills; that means that one out of three employees are spending their time on the wrong things for the wrong time every day.

Here are four key categories of people with poor time management habits, and how they spend their time, as researched by McKinsey.

ONLINE JUNKIE

Online junkies spend 36% more time dealing with emails and other online activities than those who are highly satisfied with the way they spend their time, according to the study. His emphasis on asynchronous communication means that they spend 50% and 21% less time than the highly satisfied in face-to-face communication and communicating with their direct reports respectively. This type of frustration is found across a wide variety of fields, and is frequently seen intensely tapping away at keyboards and smartphones.

SCHMOOZER

Schmoozers spend most of their time meeting up with clients and/or shareholders. They are extroverted and dynamic, and love building and establishing relationships with other people. The problem is, they spend so much time at meetings that they have no time left to set directions or strategies (25% less than the average highly satisfied individual) or reply emails (36% less). A lack of communication with the team can lead to disaster, unless the Schmoozer is surrounded by an exceptionally independent executive team.

CHEELEADER

Cheerleaders, like Schmoozers, spend most of their time meeting with people. However, while Schmoozers meet mostly with people outside their team, Cheerleaders spend 55% of their time in face-to-face interaction with their team. Their go-to method when faced with problems is to spend time with their team, problem-solving and motivating their members. This is wonderful for team morale, however, this may not be the most efficient management method. They also spend most of their time looking inward and neglecting shareholders and clients (65% less time spend on meeting with external stakeholders, clients and customers, as compared to the highly satisfied individuals.) Cheerleaders are usually C-executives.

FIREFIGHTER

Firefighters, as their name suggests, are generally tied up putting out emergency “fires” or problems. They may want more time to work on strategic issues as they generally spend 25% less time strategising compared to those who are satisfied with their time management, but they spend 61% of their time managing short-term or unexpected issues, dealing with emails and communicating with people face-to-face instead. With a huge chunk of that percentage going to putting out fires (a whopping 67% more than a satisfied time-manager) it isn’t surprising that they are frustrated.

In contrast, executives who are satisfied with the way they budget their time spend 35% of their time managing operational decisions and setting organisational direction, 18% managing and motivating people, and 16% “firefighting.” If you fall into one of the four dissatisfied categories, don’t despair. We’ll take a look at solutions you can implement in your own workplace!

TIME ALLOTMENTS

Time feels very relative – as Einstein put it, sitting for two hours with a girl may feel like two minutes, whereas two minutes on a burning surf can feel like two hours – but it’s not. We can end up spending too much time online, replying a mountain of emails or getting distracted on the social media site you are supposed to be monitoring (ahem, Online Junkie.) Therefore, it is important to allocate to tasks, and not just work as long as you see fit. Try to spend at least 15 uninterrupted minutes a day mapping out a time frame for each task you’re planning to do.

GROW YOUR CAREER AT PAYPAL

By EVA CHRISTODOULO

ONLINE shipping, secure payments – these are some thoughts that may come to mind when people hear about PayPal. But what about a fulfilling career? PayPal’s global operations, PayPal Malaysia, to better attract talented and passionate people, who are committed to delivering positive customer experiences and doing their part to make their workplace a vibrant one.

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

So who would make an ideal PayPal employee? “We’re looking for Internet-savvy fresh graduates with analytical skills. At PayPal, we value innovation, creativity and thinking outside the box. It is also important to be able to communicate effectively, which is a requirement when speaking with customers. Candidates should also include their extra-curricular activities in their resumes,” says Tham. He goes on to stress that PayPal provides an ideal pro-business environment. There is a young and energetic talent pool available in Malaysia that is inter-net savvy as well as multilingual. Being multi-lingual is a much-needed skill for a global company and that’s where Malaysians have an advantage.

PAYPAL offers fresh graduates the opportunity to work with an international company that provides extensive training to expand their skill sets and an environment that offers plenty of opportunities to grow. “For team leaders and managers, there is a career option that offers good advancement opportunities, recognition of individual merits and strengths, a positive working culture and a great team of people to work with – empowerment and teamwork is key!”

ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

PayPal has a rich history steeped in strong values and commitment to the community whether it is to its business, its employees or social responsibilities. And as these aspects of its culture, in turn, have helped the organisation attract talented and passionate people, who are committed to delivering positive customer experiences and doing their part to make their workplace a vibrant one.

HOW TO MANAGE TIME EFFECTIVELY

1. Executive, customersolutions (including night shift workers and Thai speakers)
2. Executive, compliance (night shift)
3. Executive, compliance
4. Executive, protection services

Today, PayPal fosters an entrepreneurial spirit that empowers people and businesses around the world to grow and excel, and have fun doing it. And they are committed to surpassing the needs, and the expectations, of their account holders – all 123 million of them.

At PayPal, teammates enjoy attractive compensation as well as employee medical benefits, and take part in a monthly recognition programme put in place to recognise exceptional performance and acknowledging performances on the job. In addition, as a company committed to multiculturalism and creating a positive workplace, it hosts various festive celebrations for teammates to participate in together.

If you think you have what PayPal is looking for and a career in this growth-company pays strong right up your alley, submit your application online today!

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Interested candidates may send their applications to sussailam@paypal.com

By LI MY LE

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THE NO.1 FAILURE OF MANAGERS

BY JOSEPH TAN
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

OST people aspire to become managers. It has the connotation – “Yes, I have arrived!” Sure, the benefits and perks are enticing but are these the only measurement of true managerial success?

In this special Character-Wise Report, you will discover the No.1 failure of managers. It is this failure which demoralizes employees, lowers productivity and increases turnover. It does not matter whether you are a seasoned, new or aspiring manager; this failure does not discriminate and hits everyone with equal force if you do not recognize it and become a bottom-line KNOWLEDGEABLE LEADER.

The agenda of a manager is to meet bottom-line results. Just make sure that the numbers look good and the team will be fine. If only life is that simple.

HERE’S THE COMMON THOUGHT SEQUENCE OF “BOTTOM-LINE” MANAGERS:
1. I am a manager now.
2. I have numbers to meet.
3. There is more pressure to deliver the numbers.
4. Thankfully, I can pass the pressure on to my team.
5. I push them to meet the numbers.
6. They meet their numbers.
7. I am happy.
8. They are happy.

Pushing numbers down the chain of command is the obvious task – I call this the managerial task of being a Transmitter. Technically, a Transmitter does not provide much value-add because its job is just to transmit – a copper wire transmits power; it does not utilise the electricity to make intelligent decisions. It just transmits – period.

Similarly, managers make the mistake of just passing on the “electricity”. It usually sounds like this: “Sorry guys, the big boss just increased the sales target by 50% this year. I have no choice but to pass this target on to you. Make sure you work hard this year because if you don’t meet your numbers, I don’t meet mine. I don’t have a choice – the pressure that I receive, I now pass it on to you – I am counting on you – Don’t let me down!”

Here’s the million-dollar question: Did the manager add any value to the process?

FOR THE.hamcrest is the No.1 failure of managers. It is this failure which demoralizes employees, lowers productivity and increases turnover. It is a failure which demoralizes employees, lowers productivity and increases turnover. It is this failure which demoralizes employees, lowers productivity and increases turnover. It is this failure which demoralizes employees, lowers productivity and increases turnover.

HERE’S THE ONE FAILURE:

When under pressure, the manager chooses to be a Transmitter rather than a Transformer.

HOW TO BECOME A TRANSFORMER

A Transformer is a manager who is committed to achieve his goals not based on self-efforts but through the contribution of others. Empowering and and coaching them to do so. In other words, the successful manager is one who sees the person first before the project, the team before the task and the responsibility before the results.

A TRANSFORMER IS EASY TO SPOT – HE IS USUALLY CAUGHT DOING THE FOLLOWING:

- He spends time explaining the “why” of the project (not just downloading the “what”).
- He delegates with purpose and care (matching individual skills and talents).
- He is comfortable working with people who are smarter than himself.
- He engages his team regularly in personal conversations.
- He activates necessary resources and connections to make things happen.
- He listens to feedback (especially negative ones).
- He is generous with compliments and gives credit where credit is due.
- He coaches those who are not performing.
- He takes responsibility to protect rather than to blame.

Instead of being a “wire” that just passes on the pressure, the Transformer can be likened to a “computer” who processes and distributes the electricity so that it produces intelligent output. In other words, a computer adds value to the network.

Similarly, as a manager, when you are tempted to just transmit the pressure – choose the more effective way of transforming your people. Commanding others to execute based on your managerial position works but it can never gain their loyalty and commitment.

The most desirable trait in a leader is humility.

Transforming a person’s behaviour and attitude is an issue of the heart. The one failure of the manager is in not reaching out to the heart of his/her employees and often stems from the undesirable trait of pride. It is very tempting for an unsecure manager to rely on his position to push demands and expectations. Yet, it is only by the path of humility that a person’s heart can be touched and inspired.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

Transform the productivity of your team by first being a Transformer who coaches and empowers others in a spirit of humility.

If you are now a Transmitter, apply the following three steps to become an inspiring Transformer:

1. Focus on your role as a coach (not a task master!)
2. Focus on your role as a conversationalist (not just telling people what to do!)
3. Focus on your role as a caring person (not a number-only person!)

The No.1 failure of managers is also the No.1 opportunity for personal change.

Are you humble enough to rise to the challenge?

THE BRAIN BULLETIN

BY TERRY SMALL
terry@mystarjob.com

WHEN your brain works right, your life works right! Everyone needs a little help.

People often get stuck in learning. How would you like to double your brain capacity for learning anytime you want? You can. Cross lateral movements wake up your brain!

In the last Brain Bulletin you were reminded that you have two brains and that they “take turns resting and working.” This is called the left/right dominant cycle of the brain.

Your brain is most effective when it is using both sides of the organ. More brain equals more learning! Cross laterals help. The right side of the brain controls the left side of the body and vice versa. When you move an arm or leg across the center medidian of your body you force the left and the right cortex to interact vigorously with each other across the corpus callosum. This leads to better thinking and learning for a period of about 20 minutes at which time you can do more cross laterals.

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TROUBLE IN US EMPIRE

By KOH EARN SOO & TEAM

CENTURY is about events. A decade is about people,” so puts George Friedman, the New York Times bestselling author of his latest book, The Next Decade. Having explored in his previous book, The Next 100 Years - the impersonal forces that shape history in the long run, Friedman now addresses short-term realities to be faced by leaders, as well as nations. A political expert, Friedman also describes some of the fascinating geopolitical scenarios likely to take place in the next decade.

The book begins with the United States, for the same reasons that a study if a decade had been conducted in 1930, it would have begun with Britain. Just as Britain was in the years leading up to the First World War, America is currently the pivot of global power.

Not at all a panegyric to salute American power, this book exposes its weaknesses. The discussion on these problems is important because if not handled wisely, they would become malaises lasting long into the century.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States became the sole global power. In the decade after the collapse, the United States was engrossed in wealth building, consumption and speculation, Baghdad and Iran were not issues but mere nuisances, as was the rise of China.

Sept 11, however, crashed that tranquility, making the United States as well as every other state in the world realize just how dangerous it was to imagine that China has more hidden agendas than we thought.

Angered by the tragedy, the United States became obsessed with terrorism and lost sight of the long-term strategy that served it well for most of the last century. To maintain its power, the United States must stop believing in its own rhetoric and stop over-exerting its ability to project power in every part of the world.

In the decade that decade of the American policy in the decade to come is to return to the balanced, global strategy that made America an imperial power. The United States, with its institution and its discipline, because as Rome and Britain successful. Simply put, America must rule not by direct military intervention but by manipulation. It must reset regional players and make them watchdogs against one another. By using opposing forces to cancel each other out, the United States maintains the balance of power and prevents the emergence of regional hegemonies that can, in the long run, grow into something more threatening.

But the question remains how these geopolitical and strategic realities shape the rest of the century, Eurasia, broadly understood, is beingollowed. China is far weaker than it appears; it is threatened by internal instability and too engrossed in economic development. The Europeans are divided by old national patterns that prevent them from moving in uniform and they are finding to the American policy in the former Soviet Union, but its underlying weakness will reassert itself over the next generation.

So, imagine an unstable and fragment- ed world in which the United States hopes to prevent the emergence of new hegemonies - Japan to the east, Turkey to the south and Poland to the west. The United States will have to tighten relationships with these three nations before Russia's reemergence by the middle of this century. Nevertheless, the geopolitical order will shift again in due course, and the American epoch will end. Perhaps even sooner, the power of the United States will wane completely into history books. But not yet, at least not in this century.

THE US ECONOMY, WHEN IT IS DOING WELL, DRIVES THE WORLD'S ECONOMY. BUT WHEN IT PALES, IT BRINGS DOMINO EFFECTS, DEPRESSING STOCK MARKETS AROUND THE WORLD AND STALLING WORLDWIDE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.

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THE UNINTENDED EMPIRE

The American economy is like a whirlpool, drawing everything into its vortex with imperceptible eddies that can either devastate or enrich many nations. The US economy, when it is doing well, drives the world’s economy. But when it pales, it brings domino effects, depressing stock markets around the world and stalling worldwide economic activities.

There is no single country in the world that affects the world as deeply and extensively as the United States. While there are bilateral economic relations and multilateral ones that do not necessarily include the United States, there are none that are unaffected by the country. Everyone watches and waits to see what the United States will do, everyone tries to shape American behaviours in order to get some advantages or to avoid disadvantages. The US economy, when it is doing well, drives the world’s economy. But when it pales, it brings domino effects, depressing stock markets around the world and stalling worldwide economic activities.

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AMERICA MUST RULE NOT BY DIRECT MILITARY INTERVENTION BUT SUBTLE MANIPULATION.
Simply submit your resume and you’ll be in the running to win a brand new Proton Inspira. Hurry! Contest ends 16 March 2013.

THE FINAL CAR GIVEAWAY.

Millennials, also known as Generation Y, were born between 1980 and 2000. Due to their proficiency with technology they are also known as digital natives.

Millennials are generally confident and embrace cultural diversity.

Almost 60% of employed Millennials say they have switched careers at least once.

A total of 36% of Millennials depend on financial support from families, including 14% of full-time working young adults.

On average, investment banking analysts clock in 80 hours of work per week. Assuming they get eight hours of sleep each night, they are left with just five hours each day – even on weekends – to do anything else at all.

In the United States, Generation Y is more ethnically and racially diverse than the older generation, with people of colour making up about 40% of the population.

Sources:

DO WHAT YOU LOVE

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PREVIOUS WINNER

Pilots, air traffic controllers and coroners appear among the top 10 highest-paying jobs in the UK.

PAN BEE SIM, the proud owner of a new Proton Persona.

Contest rules and regulations apply.
Dear Joanne,

You mentioned being able to get interviews but I feel it is difficult to gain entry into accounting firms. Whilst this is the case for the Big Four, you should not limit your career aspirations to these firms. There are many other organisations that invest in young professionals, whether you still pursue the professional firm path (beyond the Big Four, there are internships from Malaysia like BDQ, SI Grant Thornton, Crowe Horwath) or pursue finance department/management trainee pathways at corporations (whether in internationally growing leading Malaysian organisations like Petronas or Sime Darby or even multinationals based in Malaysia).

With an accounting background, I would also recommend you explore starting your career in shared services, given Malaysia is recognised as a leading destination in Shared Services outsourcing (particularly in finance) and there are many companies that continue to set up and grow their Shared Services operations here (myStarjob.com had a feature on Shared Services in November 2013),

The challenge still remains to secure that job and convince your future employers that you are the right candidate for the job. You mentioned being able to get interviews, but not progressing. There are many young bright talents in Malaysia who invest a good amount of time studying, preparing and doing trial papers for examinations but don’t do the same for interviews. One should view interviews much like exams, you need to study for it (beyond the technical aspects, you should do research on the company you’re applying to) and do mock interviews (nothing beats practice!). The reason for practice is that many candidates just prepare a CV and then photocopy it and apply to many companies. In one’s CV and in interviews, one differentiation strategy is to demonstrate that you understand what the company is about and show that you want to specifically work there. This for example, includes having a reasonable understanding about what is publicly available on the company and then, when asked if you have any questions, ask something that reflects an interest in what the company does which is not on its website. Talking about preparing for an interview, there are often a few standard questions that interviewers ask and that includes at the end, where the interviewer asks you, whether you have any questions. Like exams, one should prepare a confident answer for standard questions. As an interviewer myself, I find it surprising when there is long pause when I ask a standard question like “why do you want to work here?”. One should pause and think through an answer for more tricky questions but be prepared for more standard questions. Lastly, like doing trial exams, perhaps you need to practise at interviews, even if it is with a friend, ideally, ask someone older who does some recruitment to get feedback on where you need to improve. Lastly, it helps if you are able to convey to your interviewers, especially when going into your first job that you are keen to learn and work hard. Beyond just saying it, what are you doing now to improve yourself during this job search period?

All the best. As you rightly point out, it is a very competitive job market. However, your qualifications are in demand and there is a wide range of potential employers in need of your qualifications. Believe that there are companies out there well-suited for you. Nevertheless, it is up to you to do what it takes to get that job!

Best regards,

Joan Daren
de@leaderonomics.com

We have four experts on career management, HR and office issues who will address your questions weekly. We refer to them as Careermoners – experts in career matters who will help you in your career journey. If you have any burning question to ask, send it to thecareermoners@leaderonomics.com and we will get the panel to answer your questions.

This week, Joan Daren, CEO of TalentCorp, and Elisa Dass Avin, senior talent assessment consultant at Leaderonomics, answer Joanne’s question.

Job Wanted

DEAR SIR,

I would like to seek for your advice on starting a career after graduating from university. I have a degree in applied accounting and am waiting for my last optional professional qualification results. Currently, I am looking for a job, but I feel it is difficult to gain entry into accounting firms. How do I differentiate myself from the rest? Every time I take my professional papers, I see the familiar faces – people who are unable to get through the exams. No doubt, getting a professional qualification is difficult, but my point is that these “underdogs” will continue failing to gain entry into the Big Four. I have applied for countless jobs, ranging from internships to full-time positions. I have attended a few interviews but did not get any replies from the companies. Sometimes, I find it difficult to prove myself over and over again at interviews. Pressure tends to build up as I have an obligation not to disappoint my parents.

After every interview, I kept telling myself to stop harbouring hopes as I may end up disappointed. People advised me not to give up, but I am starting to lose hope. Thank you for your time.

Best regards,

Joanne

Hi Joanne,

This may be cliché, but very true nonetheless. “– Don’t Give Up!” And I say this not because it’s the right thing to do, but because if you are losing hope, it shows in interviews! From the way you carry yourself to the way you answer. If you come across as someone who has little drive and hope, interviewers won’t be very impressed nor interested to hire you. Despite how you feel about the situation right now, let’s look at some positives and some truths in this situation.

The Positives

1) Your Mindset

Your question of “How do I differentiate myself from the rest?” serves to be a powerful one and I personally think that you should never stop asking this question throughout your career. To answer this question, I suggest you list down your strengths and past achievements that you can highlight in the interview. Think of your greatest achievement and practice how to tell that story about what you did, challenges you faced, how you overcame them and how you contributed to the success of that project. Once you secure the job at a company, then some great tips are already outlined in the article Ensuring the perfect start to your career, written by Roshan Thiran (CEO of Leaderonomics), available on myStarjob.com.

2) Your Qualification

In your choice of career, professional qualifications are truly important and that will also give you an edge over your peers upon completion. Not only that, the fact that you have landed yourself a few interviews proved that there is something in your resume that has attracted the employers to call you. We will explore this in a bit.

3) Your Tenacity

From your question, you seem to be someone who perseveres and ensures that you keep to your end of the bargain, such as making your parents proud.

The Truth

1) Very few people get hired during their first interview. Even the genius Thomas Edison tried thousands of times before he was successful in his mission. So, we are no different.

2) The first real impression is before the interview! The first impression an interviewer gets of you is not from the way you dress but from your RESUME! Your resume should be two to three pages long, highlighting your main achievements. Information such as hobbies, address, age can be excluded if there is insufficient space. Don’t forget to write a cover letter! If possible, let someone experienced review your resume and be open to feedback for improvement.

The final impression is at the interview! If you have created a good first impression on your resume that gained you that interview, now it’s time to put on your best show when you meet the interviewees. From the way you see it, you may not be getting a positive response after the interview for two reasons: 1) You’re not fit for the role. 2) The interviewers were not impressed during the interview. For the first reason, there’s not much you can do about it if you are not the right fit. You can, however, ask them to list down the skills and qualifications required of the right candidate to do the job. The second reason can be easily resolved. There are plenty of tips online on how to do well in an interview. You need to know how you usually are in an interview and identify the areas for improvement. Once again, find someone experienced to walk you through this. Enact your interview with this mentor and be open to his feedback. Some evergreen interview tips include dressing professionally, being at least 15 minutes early for your interview, researching on the company, speaking confidently and being ready to highlight your achievements and strengths (even when not asked).

Above all, you need to remain confident about yourself. Be patient. Don’t stop sending out resumes and constantly improve yourself, especially at the interviews and in your job later. Hope this helps! All the best!

Regards,

Elisa Dass Avin
Coming up in next Saturday’s issue . . .

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Also next week

Listen to your gut when making decisions, writes Roshan Thiran

How To discusses how to fail your way to a successful career

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