HERE OR ABROAD?
WORKING IN MALAYSIA VS WORKING OVERSEAS. PAGES 6-7

Win free movie tickets to The Internship!
Essential tips for interns and how to win tickets to the premiere of The Internship. Pg 9

BUILDING TRUST
Why in spite of impressive growth, Asian economies still need to learn to trust

HOLLYWOOD FAME
How Malaysian-born Adele Lim broke into the television industry

CAN WE DO IT ALL?
Is multitasking the key to greater productivity and success in work and life?
OIL remains the biggest contributor to Malaysia’s Gross Domestic Product (US$303.8bil in 2012). Most of the oil projects are conducted offshore in Terengganu, Kelantan and Sabah.

As of 2011, Malaysia’s labour force represents 12.9 million workers, slightly less than half of our population of 28.3 million.

Malaysia currently hosts about 47,000 expatriates as of July 2012. According to a survey conducted by HSBC, the country ranks fifth out of 30 countries for the most attractive countries for expatriates. The survey takes into account lifestyle factors such as ease of settling, integration with locals and overall quality of living.

HEALTHY BREAKFASTS

Jackie Newgent, author of 1,000 Low-Calorie Recipes, and Sunny Sea Gold of Health.com, suggests five super foods to add to your breakfast. Try adding ground flaxseed to your oats for omega-3 fats and fibre, or pistachios to your toast to lower cholesterol. Add some luxury to your pancakes by adding berries with vitamin C. What about spreading hummus on toast for fibre and protein, and using turmeric in your omelette for a boost of antioxidants? One additional ingredient can make a big difference to your daily intake.

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Malaysian undergraduates usually complete their bachelor’s degree at the average age of 24 years, due to a later school start in comparison with other countries.

Malaysia has a 40% rate of women participation in the workforce, according to the Grant Thornton International Business Report. This is higher than Japan and South Korea. The same report also notes that Malaysia has one of the lowest percentages of women in senior management at only 7%.

Ask yourself how working abroad or working locally would fit into your long-term plans. Take into consideration things such as job opportunities, relationships and personal goals. If it doesn’t fit into the bigger picture, maybe it’s a sign that you need to let it go.

WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL LONG-TERM GOALS?

WHAT ARE YOUR OBJECTIVES?

ACCLIMATISATION ISSUES

BUSINESS CLIMATE

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS

Different countries have different immigration procedures so do read up on the criteria before starting the application. Some countries have different requirements such as vaccinations or visas so complete your applications methodically to ensure that your opportunity to work overseas doesn’t get dismissed for simple reasons.

CAREER TIPS

TO WORK ABROAD OR NOT?

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You decide to venture out, be sure to acquaint yourself with the cultural and societal expectations of your destination country. Prepare in advance by finding out as much about the country as you can in order to minimise culture shock. Adapting properly to your new environment might bring about detrimental effects on your health, productivity and inner balance.

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Get to know the business climate of the country. What are the business customs there? What are the no-nos? Methods and procedures that work well here may not bring about similar kinds of business results in this new place.

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The Gratitude Challenge

By ROSHAN THIRAN roshan.thiran@gmail.com

A 1986 study of an elderly group of nuns at a Minnesota, United States has astonished the world. The most surprising result of this “Nuns of Mankato Study” by David Snowden, is the discovery that the way we express ourselves in language, even at an early age, can foretell how long we will live and how vulnerable we will be to Alzheimer’s decades down the line.

Snowdon found that the nuns who had expressed the most positive and gratitude-based emotions in their writing as girls lived longest, and that those on the road to Alzheimer’s expressed less gratitude and fewer positive emotions. His conclusion: if you want to live longer, be positive and show gratitude.

Throughout history, gratitude has always been high on the list of virtues. Cicero, the Roman philosopher, ranked gratitude as the chief of all virtues, parent to all others. I concur with Cicero, and apparently science does too.

By Jeffrey Froh, shows that habitually grateful people have more energy, optimism, social connections and happiness. They’re less likely to be depressed, anxious, greedy or become alcoholics.

They earn more money, sleep more soundly, exercise more regularly and have stronger immune systems.

Science can now prove that gratitude improves psychological, emotional and physical well-being. “A lot of these findings are things we learned in kindergarten or our grandmothers told us, but now we have scientific evidence to prove them,” Froh adds. If gratitude does all that, why is there absolutely no focus on it in business or in our lives?

What is Gratitude?

Gratitude means counting your blessings, being thankful, and acknowledging everything that you receive. It is like seeing your life as if every-thing were a miracle, being aware incessantly of how you have been blessed by others. Gratitude shifts your focus from what your life lacks to the richness that is already present.

As simple as it sounds, gratitude is actually a multi-faceted emotion that requires “self-reflection, the ability to attend to and be dependent upon the help of others, and the humility to realise one’s own limitations,” claims Emmons, another gratitude researcher.

Gratitude is not for the “intellectually lethargic.” Emmons postulates that gratitude is discordant with feelings of victimhood or entitlement.

“Far from being a warm, fuzzy sentiment, gratitude is morally and intellectually demanding. It requires conscientiousness, reflection and discipline. It can be hard and painful work.” Emmons, together with psychologist McCollough’s experiments confirm that gratitude results in higher reported levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, optimism, creativity and energy.

Additionally, grateful people are more likely to help others and faster progress towards achieving personal goals. The study revealed that practicing gratitude increases happiness levels by around 25%. If only we could improve happiness levels at the workplace by 25%, we might move our high-performing team capable of achieving great results. Aren’t these the type of people we need in our businesses?

Gratitude Cures Materialism

Froh’s research team found that the more grateful students had more friends with higher GPA’s, while the more materialistic had lower grades; higher levels of envy and less satisfaction with life. “One of the best cures for materialism is to make somebody grateful for what they have,” adds Froh.

Founder of Berkshire Hathaway, Warren Buffett, one of the richest men on earth, ascribes part of his success to his grateful nature. He has frequently expressed his gratitude for having been born at the right time and place and for the wealth that he has been able to create. Even though he is rich, he shows his gratitude by giving back his accumulated wealth to society.

Gratitude Brings Happiness

Being grateful also forces people to overcome what psychologists call the “negativity bias”—the predisposition to dwell on difficulties, frustrations and inequalities rather than positive blessings.

Last year, I interviewed Marshall Goldsmith, a top business coach for TheLeadersonomics Show. Throughout the interview, Goldsmith kept repeating his gratitude of how good things happened to him “by accident.”

The Law of Attraction states that if you are in a negative frame, you tend to attract negativity. So if you are in a traffic jam and you become negative, the traffic jam becomes worse. However, even if you are in a bad situation and you are positive, generally more optimistic things tend to “accidently” happen, as Marshall clariﬁes.

Gratitude As A Business Strategy

Business leaders may understand the importance of gratitude but how being grateful add to their numbers?

We have already seen how gratitude drives employee productivity, increases workplace happiness and energy-levels. And now we are finding that gratitude also helps expand “wallet-share.”

Numerous businesses have grown by showing gratitude to their customers. Instead of going after new customers and increasing market-share, businesses that have gone back to old clients and thanked them, and developed deep relationships, saw huge increase in profitability by expanding their current client’s “wallet-share.”

Expanding your “wallet-share” is getting your customers to buy more of your products and to buy other products that you offer which they may not have done at this point in time.

Gratitude does not mean sending your clients a letter with a sales hook like, “We love being a special customer, we’re giving you 20% of all our XXX orange shirts from now until we make our sales quota.” People see through those insincere gratitude letters.

A business may show its appreciation by offering chocolates with the bill, or other simple thank you gestures, but it needs to come across as genuine or it is better not to show gratitude at all. People see through fake motivations. Gratitude is a pre-cursor to trust and trust is a powerful driver for loyalty.

“Gratitude motivates positive reciprocal behaviour,” says professor Raggio. If a customer believes that a business has his/her best interests at heart, that customer is more inclined to develop a long-term relationship with the business.

And don’t just show your gratitude once a year during festivals or at annual customer appreciation dinners. Instead, build it into your daily and weekly customer plans and policies.

Customers are more likely to come back, give referrals, write positive reviews online, or perhaps be willing to pay more later on. Author John Kraków started writing appreciation notes to his staff and clients and quickly saw a link between his thank-you notes and his business thriving again. I personally write hand-written thank you notes and many have kept those notes for years, using them to gain inspiration. It’s when you feel terrible, that it is the best time to write a 10 thank-you notes.

When employees notice that you thank them for their efforts, they will naturally work even harder to please you in the future.

Recognising the work of an employee improves his/her performance. And a sincere compliment will always improve your workplace connections and satisfaction.

Dale Carnegie believed that the desire to be appreciated is “a growing and unfulfilling human hungers.” Think about your many contributions to the people around you. Do you get thanked enough? Does the gratitude-to-criticism ratio you experience feel right to you?

You can change the ratio by acknowledging those who help you daily, from the barista who made your coffee to your employee that got you the report on time.

Being Grateful

Gratitude can change people’s lives but it takes mental toughness and discipline. Here is my top 10 gratitude checklist for you to become a more grateful person.

1. Set up a gratitude board in your office and home and watch gratitude flow in both. Keep a gratitude journal. Count your daily blessings and jot down at least three good things that happened to you at the end of each day. You will be surprised how blessed you are even after a week.

2. Mind your language. Don’t use negative words, even when talking to yourself.

3. Pass deliberately throughout the day. Stop what you are doing and look for things to be grateful for. You will start seeing blessings everywhere.

4. Write a gratitude letter to people who have exerted positive influence in your life.

5. Have a monthly “gratitude visit” to someone you have been grateful for in the past and personally thank them.

Make a vow to practice gratitude. Psychologists believe that “swearing a vow to perform a behaviour actually increases the likelihood that the action will be executed.”

Don’t count sheep, but instead count your blessings as you fall asleep – review events and people you are grateful for during the day as you fall asleep on your bed.

9. Write a note of gratitude to your customers. Do any put anything else on the agenda other than expressing your thanks and appreciation?

10. Put gratitude on your calendar – schedule time to send thank you notes to clients, employees and to say thank you to your family and friends.

Final Thoughts

In spite of knowing gratitude is good, everyone, from business leaders to students, suffers from Gratitude Deficit Disorder. We are all hungry for genuine appreciation.

We want to know that we matter, that our efforts are making the world a better place. Mother Teresa once said that “there is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread.” She was right.

And your customers, suppliers, employees, co-workers, friends and family, need gratitude. Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.

So, instead of being a world-class complainer, why not challenge yourself to start off Monday by showing your gratitude to your employees, customers, friends and family. You may just end up living as long as those nuns of Mankato.

Roshan Thiran is CEO of Leadersonomics, a social enterprise passionate about transforming the nation through leadership development. Leadersonomics has developed an extensive leadership curriculum for kids all the way to executive leadership development for senior leaders in organisations. For more information on Leadersonomics, email people@leadersonomics.com or visit www.leadersonomics.com

“Most people return small favours, acknowledge medium ones and repay greater ones with ingratitude.” — Benjamin Franklin
IN ASIA WE TRUST

By NUR HAMURCU
mystartjob.com, saturday 31 August 2013

RECENTLY, I went to the main office of a local telecommunications company (let’s call it Telco X) to change my company’s mobile phone service provider. To my disappointment, this was how things transpired. I stepped up to the service desk of Telco X and said: “Hi, I represent my company, and we’d like to start using your telco service for all our company mobiles because we’re really not satisfied with our current service provider.”

The young receptionist’s response was: “Please take a seat.” After about 35 minutes, she returned with another colleague with a huge pile of forms to obtain our company details.

I found this interaction very disappointing, because the customer service was bad — making a potential business client wait for service. To add salt to wound, the business service provider didn’t trust me enough to have a direct conversation about what exactly it was that I wanted.

Instead, Telco X was more interested in getting my company details to see if we could actually maintain the business with the provider.

This is a classic case of procedures over people. Stephen Covey, in his book Speed of Trust, calls it the Trust Tax.

Trust Tax is a tax that an organisation is subjected to, which results from low trust interactions with employees and customers.

It leads to snail speed processes and higher costs originating from multiple fail-safe mechanisms.

When I deal with my clients, I am usually more trusting and have faith that they’ll follow through with our agreements. I find that they respond well to it. It eases my workload and it achieves more personal connection with my client, which makes them feel comfortable to work with me.

At a macro level, Asia is up and rising in a variety of fields with companies and businesses that are fueling the world economy. However, one wonders if the economic success in Asia is built on trust.

As part of my job, I get to work and travel a lot around the region and get the chance to speak to many opinion leaders both in society and business.

Personally, I believe self-trust is a very interesting concept for Asia. Asia is big and diverse, but when one frequently flies throughout the region for a couple of years, one gets a good impression of the heart of this beautiful part of the world. I’m going to narrow it down by talking about trust in the service industry, specifically from three interesting viewpoints: market trust, organisational trust and relationship trust.

MARKET TRUST

“Growth is the one word the entire services sector (especially financial services) in Asia is hung up on. In emerging countries like Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, customer growth is simply amazing. So even an increase of 1.1 million customers does not seem like a big deal.”

A good example of this is Islamic banking, an integrity-based method of banking, which currently grows at an average of 20% each year. Sometimes impressive cases even show profit increments of 45%.

These profits are the increase of middle-class households rapidly. With money going around, these people are getting all their needs fulfilled — buying products, cars, real estate and such, and making the lives of bankers a bliss. The economy is growing. However, it’s not because of high trust. The trust is, in fact, low.

As you can clearly see, the reputation of financial services firms are not getting any better. While processes, procedures and profits are on the rise, employee value, on the other hand, is dropping.

Let’s take a large start-up for example. An entrepreneur has trouble making ends meet, and experiences cash flow problems when he has to pay his employees at the end of the month. So he goes to the bank to ask for a bridging loan.

The bank says it can only help him if he can show that he has been profitable for five years in a row. The entrepreneur is puzzled, because firstly, his start-up company hasn’t even been around for that long, and secondly, if he had been profitable for five years in a row, he wouldn’t need a loan. Mr Entrepreneur is asked to leave, as the banker is just following procedures.

This story is exemplary for the entire service sector and the way customers are seen.

With no customer loyalty, there are no brand ambassadors and therefore, banks won’t have a strong, sustainable reputation.

They have a responsibility to help people and society, which is what they should be doing during this period of economic growth to reap stability and sustainable growth.

ORGANISATIONAL TRUST

Organisational trust is low. Even in Singapore, a country which is among the richest in the world, companies are hierarchical and top-down-oriented.

These organisations are based on low trust. Organisational trust in Asia is in fact among the lowest in the world.

Employees leave the company frequently because empowerment, accountability, engagement and loyalty are at a low, but employers don’t notice because that’s how things are. Besides, business is going great for them.

In China alone, seven million university graduates enter the labour market each year, so finding replacement manpower is quite easy for employers.

This mentality, however, causes great loss in terms of money, energy and resources in hiring and retaining the right talent.

Unfortunately, organisations just don’t realise this.

RELATIONSHIP TRUST

Relationship trust is a new concept that has the potential to be converted into an opportunity for improvement. When trust is low, the potential for a connection is high. In Asia, family ties are a big priority. The trust between family members really depends on how close the family members are.

The weaker the relationship and connection, the more fragile the level of trust becomes. Too often, people tend to place their family members above themselves.

Knowing yourself — what you want and what you are capable of — is a new, and foreign topic in Asia, as people often don’t talk about themselves or their personal vision.

In Asia, self trust is a very interesting concept because it’s exactly what people need in order to gain trust.

In Western countries, people focus on individual freedom as their highest achievement, while in Asia it seems to focus on harmony. They view self-reflection as egocentric.

However, connections can only grow when trust in yourself grows. Knowing yourself makes you a better team player and enables you to give more to other people.

Once people can do that, then relationships, organisational, market, and societal trust will also grow.

Once we achieve a high-trust society, the economy will be able to grow even faster and sustainably.

The current reality of the Asian economy is that growth numbers are high, even with low trust. Just imagine the possibilities, if we, as responsible organisations, trusted each other a bit more.

Organisations hardly realise that although they have profitable policies, a lot of value is seeping away, simply because of the lack of trust in customers and employees.

Only when they decide to focus on sustainable value creation — beginning with self-trust, can they build a brighter future for their employees, customers and society.
MAKING WAVES IN HOLLYWOOD

By LILY CHEAH
lily.cheah@leaderonomics.com

MALAYSIAN-born Adele Lim is living the television writer’s dream. Based in Los Angeles, which according to Lim is “where all TV writers are”, she is the current executive producer and co-showrunner of the new drama series Star-Crossed, with an impressive portfolio to boot. Amongst the television shows she has written and produced for, are One Tree Hill, Private Practice, Las Vegas and Life on Mars.

In spite of her stellar achievements, Lim is unpretentious as she recounts her journey to Hollywood. “Life on Mars. It's the writer’s job to project the integrity of work and actors,” she explains. “You have to have the humility to acknowledge it’s not perfect, and doesn’t work for them. You have to have the self-confidence to be able to pitch your ideas, so you can’t be shy about pitching ideas. Even if you think they’re bad, they might actually inspire another writer to create a brilliant, perfect idea for that script,” she justifies.

THE CHALLENGE comes when actors want to deviate from what is written. At this point, writers must know their material to provide a good explanation to actors why the scenes are written in that way. “If it’s a big name A-list person who is used to having things their way, then it may be a problem on set,” Lim explains. “You have to have a very good reason for every decision you make for a character. You can’t just say that you want them to say something ‘because it seemed like a fun idea to do’.”

“Actors take their jobs seriously. They want to know why they’re doing the things they’re doing, so you have to provide a clear explanation,” she justifies. "In a writer’s group, you need a free flow of ideas. So you can’t be shy about pitching ideas. Even if you think they’re bad, they might actually inspire another writer to create a brilliant, perfect idea for that script.”

THE PERKS

However, Lim still gets a thrill out of seeing her scripts take life. “The great thing about being a TV writer is the speed at which things become reality. You come up with nonsense, like gangsters in front of a noodle shop. The next day, they’re casting gangsters and building a noodle shop. You put it on paper and then you have hundreds of people making it a reality!” she exclaims with delight.

Lim, who has found her niche in non-procedural, character-driven drama, cites Las Vegas as one of the most enjoyable shows she has been a part of. “You have a lot of actors and performers who wanted to be a part of it,” Lim explains. In a two-month period on Las Vegas, she was able to work with the likes of Snoop Dogg, the Black Eyed Peas and Jean Claude Van Damme. “I remember thinking ‘Wow, this is great. I get paid to do this!’ But at the end of the day, it’s still serious work,” she says.

LIMITLESS OPPORTUNITIES

Lim’s advice to aspiring writers is to work on writing. “If you want to be a writer, you should write!” Lim exclaims. “Buy books about screen writing, watch TV shows that inspire you, see how they are written.”

According to Lim, most television writers are based in Los Angeles, so that is the best place to learn about the industry. “Get to LA, try to get a job as an intern, a personal assistant or a writer’s assistant,” she advises. She suggests getting representation (managers to help you get a job) or a writer’s assistant for a writer’s assistant role for a television show, and get the job. “It was Xena Warrior Princess,” she shares.

LEARNING THE ART OF TELEVISION WRITING

In her role as a writer’s assistant, Lim learned valuable lessons about writing as part of a writers’ group. “In a writer’s group, you need a free flow of ideas, so you can’t be shy about pitching ideas. Even if you think they’re bad, they might actually inspire another writer to create a brilliant, perfect idea for that script,” she says. Being resilient and open to criticism are equally important. “Be very thick-skinned,” Lim explains, “Trust your instincts and go for it. Have enough self-confidence to be able to pitch your ideas and tell people why they are great ideas for the show.”

“Actors take their jobs seriously. They want to know why they’re doing the things they’re doing, so you have to provide a clear explanation,” she justifies. "In a writer’s group, you need a free flow of ideas. So you can’t be shy about pitching ideas. Even if you think they’re bad, they might actually inspire another writer to create a brilliant, perfect idea for that script.”
I think it’s a tough choice deciding whether you should start or continue building your career in Malaysia or relocate and do so in another country. There are many reasons for considering Malaysia an attractive option, including a growing economy, a diverse range of industry opportunities, and a supportive work environment. However, the same group of variables also make relocating to another country an attractive option. It is important to weigh these factors and make an informed decision based on your personal and professional goals.

**Malaysian Economy and the Job Market**

The Malaysian economy is on the rise, with a strong performance in recent years. The government has implemented various policies to attract foreign investment and stimulate domestic growth. As a result, the job market in Malaysia has improved significantly, with a wide range of opportunities available across various industries.

**Daksh Devinder Kumar, Senior Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer**

I started my career as a financial analyst at ANZ Securities, California, in 1984. I then moved to Malaysia to work in a company that has since become a major force in the region. In 1997, I took on some corporate roles and, as part of career progression, was moved to the corporate headquarters, where I was in charge of the Malaysian GNI and assumed several corporate roles, including being appointed chairman of the corporate office in January 2013.

**Making The Choice**

Choosing whether to stay in Malaysia or go abroad is a very personal decision and depends on various factors, including personal and professional goals, lifestyle preferences, and career aspirations. However, it is important to consider the opportunities and challenges associated with each option.

**Do you feel that Malaysia can offer similar career opportunities in your field as other countries?**

For me, Malaysia has the type of companies that are themselves global. We have moved from a domestic player to a global player. We have also been able to contribute RM121.5 billion in GNI and add over 10.2 million jobs to the national gross domestic product by 2015. Furthermore, I am very encouraged by what the Malaysian government is doing to attract global companies to Malaysia. I believe that Malaysia is a global player and the global business environment is a very good place to work. Malaysia is a very attractive place to live and work, and I would definitely recommend moving to Malaysia if you are considering an international career.

**Will you stay in Malaysia or go abroad?**

It is a tough choice deciding whether you should start or continue building your career in Malaysia or relocate and do so in another country. There are many reasons for considering Malaysia an attractive option, including a growing economy, a diverse range of industry opportunities, and a supportive work environment. However, the same group of variables also make relocating to another country an attractive option. It is important to weigh these factors and make an informed decision based on your personal and professional goals.
**Finding Her Voice**

Yeong Moh out to make a difference in the community

By ERIC QUAH

Yeong Moh decided to dedicate some time working for a charitable organisation, she did not realise she would eventually quit her website designing job to be a full-time staff at United Voice, a self-advocacy society for those with learning disabilities.

A Bachelor of Arts graduate of Multimedia Design, Curtin University in Australia, Yeong started off as a web designer in an agency. It soon came as no surprise that the hours were long, spent staring at the computer screen. Although she has a passion for design and technology, she decided early on that she would not spend the rest of her life in an agency. As much as she liked web designing, the long hours left much to be desired, she admits.

One day while staring at the screen of the computer the realisation dawned upon her – “I said to myself, ‘I don’t want to spend the rest of my life this way’.” She shares. It was a realisation that she had been feeling dissatisfied; that her life lacked fullness and meaning.

**TRUE CALLING**

She then was inspired by her church members to help out at charitable organisations. And it was there that she discovered her true calling. Yeong first stepped through the doors of United Voice as a volunteer in 2006, desiring to work within the IT management within the centre. Eventually she got more and more involved in the administration. Today, she is the lead coordinator for United Voice overlooking the operations within the organisation.

More than just IT and administration, she now provides computer lessons and training to members in the centre, as well as conducting awareness talks in schools and companies.

United Voice stresses the importance of being self-sufficient and sustainable. Yeong explains the need to educate members and the public about self-advocacy as this will lead them to be more independent. “Besides it is better than asking for donations,” she adds.

“Still love designing!” she exclaims. Her love for art and design is evident as she shows the United Voice art gallery to myStarjob.com.

**VARIED JOB SCOPE**

A typical day for Yeong will be to check emails in the morning. Then works on presentations and materials for training, updates the United Voice Facebook page and checks in with her colleagues on updates or issues. Her other duties include attending to enquiries about the centre and activities for those interested in being members. Occasionally she would also have to write proposals for funding or planning events. The amicable Yeong also attends to visitors.

**DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS**

In Yeong’s view there are distinct differences when working for an NGO compared with the corporate sector – the two are essentially different environments.

“When I was working for a company it was more about the salary and work experience I was getting for myself,” Yeong explains.

Working for an NGO allows her to interact with the community and society as a whole. “Someone said before that if you find a job that becomes a passion, it won’t feel like work. It is easier to achieve a work life balance here. NGO working hours are pretty much a fixed nine-to-five affair but what you pack into those few hours is what matters,” she says.

Coming into an NGO environment also means the chance to pick up new skills. “Up to today, I am still learning – but then, no one is too old to learn.”

While Yeong feels she has made a wise choice in switching careers from web designing to coordinating charitable organisations, she still cherishes the challenges she faced when she started out in designing.

“I still love designing!” she exclaims. Her love for art and design is evident as she shows the United Voice art gallery to myStarjob.com.

**JOBS SATISFACTION GUARANTEED**

Like all jobs, working with NGOs has its ups and downs. The only icing on the cake you probably would not find in other sectors is the inspiration from your “customers” – in this case, the members themselves.

Yeong says they have always been the ones who make the strongest impact on her. She explains it makes a big difference to witness new members with low confidence eventually standing up and express themselves in public. To her, that is a very powerful motivation.

Besides that, coming in contact with other NGO leaders who continue to make a difference every day for the past 10 years further convinces her that, she too, can make a difference.

She looks up to two role models whom she seeks for advice and inspiration: her fellow church member who is herself a social worker and the previous coordinator for United Voice.

Yeong remembers the first time she worked on the self-advocacy workshops with her own members and the facilitators.

It was a small event, but working with the members was an eye-opener. Witnessing the capabilities of these members in conducting the workshop for others with the disability made a lasting impact on her.

Today, even though they are the leading NGO for advocacy on learning disabilities, Yeong notices that her organisation still faces the problem of awareness in Malaysia. She hopes to hold more talks and conduct awareness programmes in the public and private sectors.

United Voice is situated at Petaling Jaya. Find out how you can help the organisation by visiting www.dogood-volunteer.com
TO THE Premier of mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

The Internship

The sooner you realise there is enough and if you're late you might as well stay home.

If you see something that needs to be done, do it.

Good recommendation letters or references tell your future employers how well you communicate and work with others.

Employers also look out for employees who do their work outside. This is the time you will have the chance to work on real, corporate projects.

By CHRISTINA MONTY
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

You must learn how to be a crochet. If a colleague spreads your erroneous work through an email blast, it can cost you a lot and waste time to correct the mistake. If you are late, it is important to be on time or you will be seen as unreliable.

Don't be afraid to share your ideas, even if you think they are not innovative. Everyone has to start off from somewhere.

Establish your presence in the field that you eventually want to work in. This is the time you will have the chance to establish yourself and get them to sign you up for next semester.

Here is a non-exhaustive checklist to being the super-intern:

1. **BE ORGANISED AND PUNCTUAL**

   Good housekeeping leaves a good impression on supervisors who are grading you. So keep your desk organised and your schedule even more so. Punctuality is valued by many organisations worldwide. So even if you have trouble keeping up with everything at work, do your best to stay punctual. Arrive at work on time and submit work on time.

2. **BE WILLING TO TAKE ON ALL SORTS OF TASKS**

   Take on all tasks no matter how menial they are. Everyone has to start off from somewhere. Express interest in tasks that you would like. If you want to be involved in something like creative brainstorming or take on the cosmetic company account, let your supervisors know!

   But do not take it to heart if they reject you. It is good to voice out your interests tactfully. But if they instruct you to be the coffee runner, it is not a good choice to turn them down. While you are an intern, being humble takes you to places.

3. **BE HIGHLY RESPONSIVE TO SITUATIONS**

   High chances are that you will have little to no control over the environment you will be posted to. There is no way to tell whether your boss will be the type who feeds you with a lot of information and jobs, or the silent type who just wants you out of his/her hair.

   If you have completed a task, let your supervisor know that you are available to take on more tasks. If they are too busy to hand you one, knowing your surroundings will help you know where you can help out. In your free time, try searching for simple things that can enhance your work or company systems.

To write your own and get them to sign it. And achieving this boils down to maintaining good relationships with your colleagues.

Be yourself. Others will respect you for that. Sometimes there is no pleasing others. If you have a bright and cheery disposition, you can be deemed as annoying.

However, if you are a quiet and contemplative person, you may be judged as a cold snob. At the bottom most rung of the corporate ladder, it is important to be nice to everyone. But it is also important to be yourself.

So long as you maintain true to yourself while executing your assignments well and respecting others around you, you will earn your dues.

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**Tip:** Article courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox and their latest movie, The Internship. Billy (Vince Vaughn) and Nick (Owen Wilson) are salesmen whose careers have been torpedoed by the digital world. Trying to prove they are not obsolete, they defy the odds by talking their way into a coveted internship at Google, along with a battalion of brilliant college students. But, gaining entrance to this utopia is only half the battle. Surrounded by wisi kids half their age the two masters of persuasion use their life experiences and swagger to lead their team of interns to greatness.

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**WIN TICKETS TO THE PREMIERE OF THE INTERNSHIP!**

Do you want to be one of the first people in Malaysia to catch The Internship in cinemas?

We are giving away FREE tickets to the premiere of The Internship happening on Tuesday, 9 Sept at 8pm at TGV Sunway Pyramid, Bandar Sunway, U1V 1st Avenue Penang and TGV Bukit Indah Johor Baru!

Want two free tickets to one of the premiere locations? Just write to us at mystarjob@leaderonomics.com with answers to the following questions.

**Terms and Conditions**

1. Each email application is entitled to one voucher only. Each voucher is redeemable for two (2) cinema tickets to The Internship at the specified location.
2. Vouchers and tickets will be given out on a first come first serve basis.
3. Special thanks to 20th Century Fox and TGV.

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**DON’T BE AFRAID TO SHARE YOUR IDEAS**

Just because you are an intern doesn’t mean your ideas aren’t as good as everyone else’s. At my first internship I was literally mute. I had so many ideas for art projects, but I couldn’t muster up the confidence to say anything as an intern. No one remembered me and I doubt I could get a letter of recommendation from them if I stood on my head and did cartwheels in the office lobby.

**TIPS TO THE INTERNSHIP**

1. **What are the names of the two main actors starring in The Internship?**

2. **What do you like most about the mystarjob.com Career Guide?**

3. **What else would you like to see in the mystarjob.com Career Guide?**

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**WINNERS:**

The winners will be announced on Facebook. Winners will receive an electronic voucher to take along to the cinema to claim their tickets.

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**BE YOURSELF**

You may find yourself eager to please at this time. But it is important to be yourself. Others will respect you for that. Sometimes there is no pleasing others. If you have a bright and cheery disposition, you can be deemed as annoying.

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**THE INTERN’S SURVIVAL GUIDE**

By CLARISS OOI | mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

**Get the Star Mobile App from The App Store or Google Play**

For the team all the way!
THE ART OF MULTITASKING OR NOT?

By ZaID MOHAMAD
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

In this Information Age, the term “multitasking” has become a household term. Computers are really good at multitasking. With the advent of technology, tiny processors are able to do multiple tasks at any given time.

As a result, humans are also encouraged to multitask, both at work and at home.

Yes, there have been many claims that women are much better “multitaskers” than men. I wouldn’t want to argue with that. However, let’s stop for a minute and take a few steps back.

Are humans supposed to be multitasking in the first place? Or are we better off focusing on one task at a time? Let’s examine this together.

Let’s recall the last time when you were swarmed with a hundred tasks to be completed within a short time. I recently went through this. Just before the long holiday season, I had to settle a number of pending items.

I had to multitask, but in the end, I couldn’t actually focus and actually failed on some of the tasks. I even lost my car keys when rushing to an appointment.

Can we multitask?

Have you tried to have a decent conversation on the phone while trying to draft an important email? Or tried to listen to important news on the television while talking to your children? Would you succeed in getting both done without any errors in between? Not likely, for most people.

In fact, research has been conducted to understand why this happens. Studies have shown that even when very simple tasks are involved, people find it difficult to perform them at the same time. This is especially so when the tasks involve decision-making.

There were also other studies done to determine the effects of multitasking on children. Children today are surrounded with technology. They tend to surf the internet, listen to music, use Facebook and text message, sometimes all at the same time!

In an article published in 2012 in Computers & Education, Reynol Junco and Shelia Cotton found that students who multitask will have more problems with their academic performance. In particular, they found that using Facebook and text messaging while studying have the most negative effect on the students’ grades.

Single task or multitask?

It’s not likely that we can focus on doing two things at once. Our brain is not like a computer chip. However, given our busy schedule, we are sometimes forced to do many things at one time. How many times have we “talked” to our children while watching television?

What about the time when we “ listened” to our spouse while browsing Twitter, Facebook or checking emails? How would we feel if our boss was narrating important information to him/her?

We need to be aware that it’s always better to do a single task at a time, especially when it comes to relationships. It’s not worth trying to get more things done at the risk of alienating our loved ones.

It’s much better to stop whatever we are doing when our children come running to us. Give them the utmost attention and forget about everything else. Similarly, turn off the television and other gadgets when having a family dinner. Give it a try and you’ll be surprised at how effective this action is.

Recently, I saw a very interesting print on a T-shirt. It was a picture depicting the theory of human evolution. It showed an ape transforming into a modern human. But it didn’t stop there. The human was shown to transform into robots!

I thought it was funny. I know several people who already are fast turning into “robots”.

Just visit any service counters either by private or government organisations, and you may find some workers there performing their tasks robotically. They don’t smile nor offer any empathy towards your problem.

I hope we are not turning into a robotic society where there is no emotion, feeling and soul in our lives. That would be a tragedy. But if we continue to let our “business” to take over, that day may come sooner than we think.

Focus or fail?

So, let’s start focusing on things that really matter in life. Spend time with family before they leave us. Treat spouses with utmost respect.

The list is long, but only we can put our family at the top of the priority list. I lost my car keys because I failed to focus on one task at a time in my quest to multitask. Looking back, I wish I had taken the time and not rushed to get things done.

It could have been a worse tragedy. Fortunately, it also reminded me of a valuable life lesson; that it’s always better to focus on one thing at a time. With that, let’s pledge to focus on our family, one child at a time!

Zaid Mohamad is a father of four, former senior leader in a well-known MNC, and now a certified parental coach and bestselling author of two books, Smart Parents, Brighter Kids and Smart Parents, Kicker Kids. For details of his work, please visit www.SmartParents.com.my.

By Terry Small
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

I love walnuts. In fact, walnuts are my favourite brain food.

Your brain accounts for 2% of your body weight but burns over 20% of your energy reserves. That means your brain is a big deal... it’s working pretty hard. To get the most from your brain you need to feed it often with slow-release, high quality nutrition.

It doesn’t get much better for your brain than raw, unsalted walnuts! The Romans and the ancient Chinese thought that since walnuts look like the brain, they must be good for the brain.

Recent science proves them right!

Nutritional magic for your brain

Here’s what you get:

- Walnuts develop three dozen neurotransmitters for your brain.
- Walnuts are packed with vitamin E.
- They contain the all-important for your brain fatty acid omega-3.
- Walnuts can improve brain function and memory.
- They can even lift your mood.
- They improve artery function after a high-in-fat meal.
- Walnuts promote heart health, and what’s good for your heart is good for your brain.
- They can help prevent cognitive decline in your age.
- Walnuts can help your brain get a good, natural night’s sleep.
- Some studies seem to indicate that walnuts even play a role in reducing cancer.

This may be the “clinchers”:

Eating walnuts lowers the risk of weight gain. This seems counter-intuitive. But a 28-month study in Spain found that people who ate nuts at least twice a week were 31% less likely to gain weight than people who did not. Study authors concluded, “Frequent nut consumption was associated with a reduced risk of weight gain (five kgs or more). These results support the recommendation of nut consumption as an important component of a cardio-protective diet and also allays fear of possible weight gain.”

Eating just four walnuts a day can help. I carry them with me to snack on. I sprinkle them on oatmeal. We put them in our salads. Walnuts are a key part of my No.1 recommended breakfast for your brain.

Congratulations on learning something about your brain today.

Always remember: “You are a genius!” Enjoy your brain.

Terry Small is a brain expert who resides in Canada and believes that anyone can learn how to learn easier, better, faster, and that learning to learn is the most important skill a person can acquire. To interact with Small, email mystarjob@leaderonomics.com.

By TERRY SMALL
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

Your brain accounts for 2% of your body weight but burns over 20% of your energy reserves. That means your brain is a big deal... it’s working pretty hard. To get the most from your brain you need to feed it often with slow-release, high quality nutrition. It doesn’t get much better for your brain than raw, unsalted walnuts! The Romans and the ancient Chinese thought that since walnuts look like the brain, they must be good for the brain. Recent science proves them right!
THE ART OF SELF-ASSESSMENT

YOUR SKILLS & ACHIEVEMENTS

It's important to be aware of your past achievements and the kind of skills you currently possess.

STEP 1: Think of the things you are proud of.

STEP 2: Identify what you did in each situation that helped you achieve your success.

STEP 3: Differentiate your skills into two types:

- Hard skills – These are easily measured and can be learned at school. They include technical skills, languages and other measurable techniques.
- Soft skills – These are less tangible, such as communication and interpersonal skills that will come in handy in work situations.

YOUR VALUES

Values help us determine what is right, wrong, good or bad. Behaving in ways that are against your values can cause frustration.

STEP 1: Ask yourself what values are important to you, such as honesty, diligence, flexibility and loyalty.

STEP 2: Identify the values that are most important and least important to you in the work context.

STEP 3: Be aware of the values that are important and seek environments that are compatible with them. For instance, if flexibility is important to you, seek a work environment that encourages creativity.

The Art of STRAIGHT AS IS FOR EVERYONE!

BY TARCAYANI PREBAGARAN
myStarJob.com, Saturday 31 August 2013

WOULD you believe me if I told you that you are capable of getting string of As simply by doing exercises, analysing the wrong questions and getting the right method of learning. Each one of us is gifted with great potential just waiting to be unleashed.

With the right tools and techniques you can accomplish your academic targets. Here are some effective techniques on how you can improve your grades significantly.

ELIMINATE PROcrastination

With this I don’t mean the usual procrastination of delaying finishing your homework till the last minute or not even watching your favourite television show or to aimlessly browse the Internet.

The serious form of procrastination happens when you delay clarifying your doubts over a certain topic for a long time.

Especially in subjects like Maths and Chemistry, every chapter is inter-related and you need to understand the basic concepts to comprehend the whole picture.

The next time you have the slightest doubt, rush to your teachers or friends and seek help.

The earlier you find a solution to your problem, the lower the chances of you missing out on the bigger picture.

PRACTICE, PRACTISE, PRACTICE

Vince Lombardi once said: “Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect.”

When trying to further understand your subjects, be sure to apply the concepts you have learned. There are ample exercise books and past year papers for you to work on. Saying that, perfect practice does not mean doing exercises blindly.

When you have finished a set of exercises, analyse the wrong questions so next time, you will not make the same mistakes.

The best way to learn is certainly from making mistakes but make sure you keep them safely within your practice sessions and not during an important exam!

Dramatic Distractions

In this age of constant distractions with Facebook notifications or Whatsapp messages popping up on your smartphone screen every five minutes, giving your revision full attention can be a major challenge.

When you are studying, disengage yourself completely from your social media and lend your entire focus to what you are revising.

The number of hours you revise matters less than the quality of your revision. One full hour of well-focused revision is more likely to bring you better results than three hours of revision with your phone and laptop beside you.

Use resources to your advantage

All of us have different methods of learning. It is worthwhile to gauge your learning style. There are many resources out there that can assist your learning.

Use the Internet to your advantage, for example, a visual learner would likely benefit from learning more about a topic by watching a YouTube video on it. There are many educational videos out there.

There is more to the Internet than Twitter and Facebook. There are numerous sites that can guide your learning such as Khan Academy that offers various videos.

There are even Malaysian resources you can use, such as edu.joshuatly.com and benybergsey.com for SPM students.

Besides those, we have dedicated teachers from all over Malaysia that share their tips and tricks on blogs like cikguv, jay.blogspot.com and cikguahmadblogspot.com. There are many more resources on the Internet that you can use to guide your learning. You just have to find them.

There are just several techniques that may assist you in your pursuit towards academic excellence. Remember, dreams don’t work unless you do. With that, good luck and all the best.

Starting Young

Happy Merdeka Day! Here are 7ways to show national pride at work

7 Fly Flags with Pride! It’s that time of the year to fly our national flag with pride. Malaysian flags can be purchased for a small sum so it doesn’t cost much to display the Jalur Gemilang in your office. Change your laptop wallpaper to a Malaysian flag or stick them on your cubicle walls.

6 Take Malaysia International! Participate in conventions, conferences or seminars that have international involvement. Not only is it a good chance for Malaysia to receive representation at a global level, it also challenges local talent to put their skills and knowledge to the test.

5 Tour Malaysia! It’s said how some of us have visited more countries overseas than we have of the numerous towns and islands in Malaysia. Have company retreats at homestay programmes in different parts of east and Peninsular Malaysia for a truly enriching vacation that won’t break the budget.

4 Support Local Sports and the Arts! We know more about overseas talents and sporting events than we do our own. Why not channel some of that passion towards local acts? Malaysia has plenty of sporting, artistic and intellectual talent that it’s only deserving that they receive some support from their countrymen. In fact, you could even hire some of them to perform at your company annual dinners or event launches.

3 Get to know your neighbours Harmonious living begins with society and the best way to share the multihabith spirit is to practise community living right in your own office. Get to know your colleagues from various backgrounds and learn how to create an understanding culture. Also, remember to invite them over during festive seasons.

2 Vote! There is no better way to prove your love for a country than by voting. It’s a crucial process in determining the country’s future and it’s also your right as a citizen. Register at any post office and make sure you and all your colleagues show up on polling day to cast your vote.

1 Identify Malaysia’s Strengths While it’s important to be honest, it’s also important to not be constantly negative. Whenever conversations in the office turn to national topics and events, objectively contribute, but resist cynicism. Keeping in mind the strengths and advantages of Malaysia will help in this regard!
DEAR CAREERNOMERS,

I have been working in a human resource (HR) department for almost 15 years, and I have been involved in various HR spectrums.

I am 37 and a non-executive although I just attained my degree. I have been rated highly in my job performance, but I am in the dark as to why I have not been promoted even though I am now a degree holder.

Colleagues with my length of service who started as clerks have become managers, and even newbies with five to 10 years in the company have been promoted to higher ranks.

Whilst I am still at a non-executive level, at every appraisal, I discuss with my immediate supervisor about how to get promoted, as I want to do more of a supervisory and managerial role.

However, according to my supervisor, there will still be ups and downs. The grass is not always greener on the other side, and to be honest, most of the time it is not.

Hence, you must weigh your current standing against the potential benefits and challenges you will face should you switch to a different field of work.

All the best,
BANI ZAINAL

DEAR SYASYA,

Your question is representative of quite a number of your contemporaries in the job market now as they seek career advancement opportunities.

Unlike in the 80s and 90s, where lifelong employment was the accepted and practised culture, the employees today expects more from their employers regarding their career development.

In your case, there may be a number of reasons as to why the opportunity has not risen for you to advance your career, either through promotion or job rotation.

What is good is that you have stayed on the current job long enough to gain ample knowledge and experience which will help if a suitable position comes your way.

Based on what you have described, you have brought your desire to take on a bigger role to the attention of your immediate supervisor on a number of occasions.

The reason why this may not have materialised could be because the right opportunity based on your skillset and experience has not become available.

As I have limited information about the function you are currently doing, I have to assume that you have been assigned or trained in a certain function in human resources, e.g. recruitment, payroll, shared services, benefits, administration, training and development, etc. Hence, a suitable function which needs or complements your experience and know-how may not have emerged.

I suggest you take the initiative to talk to your immediate supervisor again to discuss and seek advice as to what would be a suitable role for you based on his/her assessment.

Ask whether there is any plan to move you to a different role or promote you to a higher position so that you can prepare yourself accordingly.

You should also take the opportunity to seek feedback on the areas where you need improvement to stand you a better chance of advancing your career.

On changing your career, you must make a call as to what drives and motivates you at this juncture. You must decide after thinking through whether it is a financial pursuit or a non-financial one which needs or complements your skills and experience.

When given this opportunity, go all out to learn as much as you can.

You currently have a wide spectrum of opportunities elsewhere.

If your intentions are to continue in the HR line, then I suggest you choose an area you would like to specialise in. You currently have a wide spectrum of knowledge in HR, and this will serve as a very solid foundation as you move on in your career.

Beyond the width of knowledge you have, it is now time to go in depth into one or two areas of your choice.

For example, if you would like to eventually focus on learning and development, perhaps it would be good for you to speak to your manager to refocus your role to assist fully in that area to gain more indepth experience. When given this opportunity, go all out to learn as much as you can.

After you have progressed substantially in this area of specialisation, ask your boss again for an upgrade in your role.

Hi Syasya,

It is encouraging to see your perseverance to grow by pursuing a degree, speaking to your superiors and looking for another job. As you are doing the necessary to move forward, I would like to challenge you to think about one more thing — if you have not already done so. What are you aiming for in the long run? You can better plan what to do now and in the near future.

From your letter, I gather that you are currently in HR and would like to progress in this role. At the same time, you are considering teaching. If you can identify what you want to see yourself doing before you retire, that will definitely help you plan backwards.

For example, if you eventually want to lecture in HR, then the right thing to do is to stay on in the HR industry and plan for your postgraduate degree in HR.

However, if your plan is to teach school children, then taking on a teaching diploma part-time may not be a bad idea.

If your intentions are to continue in the HR line, then I suggest you choose an area you would like to specialise in. You currently have a wide spectrum of knowledge in HR, and this will serve as a very solid foundation as you move on in your career.

Beyond the width of knowledge you have, it is now time to go in depth into one or two areas of your choice.

For example, if you would like to eventually focus on learning and development, perhaps it would be good for you to speak to your manager to refocus your role to assist fully in that area to gain more indepth experience. When given this opportunity, go all out to learn as much as you can.

After you have progressed substantially in this area of specialisation, ask your boss again for an upgrade in your role.

Be specific in your requests. Before the year ends, speak to him and ask what the specific things are that you need to do to qualify for a promotion.

Alternatively, if the environment is conducive, look out for a mentor within the organisation to learn from. This mentor shouldn’t be your superior. Be careful not to turn your mentorship sessions into complaining as this will not reflect well on you as well as your superior.

While you work internally to grow in terms of knowledge and role, don’t give up on looking for better opportunities elsewhere.

In your job search, look for a position that is one level higher than your current, and preferably focused on the area of your intended specialisation. I believe everything happens at an appointed time. The key thing on your end is for you to be ready when that appointed time comes.

So keep growing, don’t give up and don’t be afraid to ask for what you want.

All the best!

ELISA DASS

The opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics or myStarjob.com