A CAREER IN SOCIAL MEDIA?

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS ALIKE
PAGES 06–07

Positivity is underrated
Soichiro Honda’s never-ending optimism despite numerous downfalls has led to Honda’s fame today. → Pg 01

THE FUTURE OF MEDIA
Futurist Gerd Leonhard’s take on the future of music and media

NO MORE PAPER
Should offices go paperless? Is this even possible?

DON’T SLURP, DON’T BURP
Brush up on your meal etiquette, and dine at meetings and interviews with confidence
THE DIGITAL GENERATION

My 96-year-old grandmother grew up in a different time. It took years to explain to her that when people die on television shows, they don’t actually die. This offered some relief to the confusion experienced when she saw them reappearing in different shows.

When e-mails became a norm to correspond with one another, we struggled to explain how we could receive messages on the large screen that sat on our desks.

Her eyes widened when we introduced her to Skype. When she realised that people were speaking to her in real time from across the globe, and that she could speak back to them, she was amused to say the least.

I hadn’t attempted explaining social media to her. She only notices that her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren have a profound ability to spend copious amounts of time staring at computers or phones.

We stare at our screens, react with some sort of emotion – a smile, a look of shock or otherwise – then move our fingers to type something on the keyboard. How would I even begin to explain my limited haka that people now interact and engage with information and one another on virtual platforms?

Names like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Wikipedia and Pinterest have become household names in digitalised societies. As our modes of content consumption shift towards empowerment of the individual, and as we integrate the virtual world more and more into the way we live, social media is playing an increasingly large role in our lives.

Like it or hate it, social media is here to stay. Branding and marketing initiatives today cannot ignore social media avenues. Those who run the platforms themselves also have to embrace the convergence of their content and advertising.

Pinterest recently sent a mass e-mail to all users as they too are opening their world up to advertisers.

One definite piece of good news out of all this, is that interesting career opportunities open up. What are these opportunities and can you truly have a career in social media? Pages 6-7 have the story.

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There are 12,747,100 Facebook users in Malaysia, meaning of the Malaysian population is on Facebook.

The opinions expressed in this career guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.

CAREER TIPS

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS FOR YOUR CAREER

GET CONNECTED Create a LinkedIn profile. Not only does it allow you to network but it’s also strictly business with decorum and professionalism hard to find on other social media channels.

STAY UPDATED Be aware of the different social media platforms available to you. For starters, there is Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google + and 46 other channels if you are interested.

FACEBOOK / TWITTER RESTRICTIONS Don’t get dooced. Dooced: (v) getting fired for something you’ve written on your website. Refrain from complaining or saying unpleasant things about your workplace and/or colleagues in social media platforms.

DON’T CONTRADICT Do not post content conflicting with your line of work. Social media activity is a representation of you, so be aware that it could have a bearing on your professional self.

DON’T BE EMOTIONAL Refrain from negatively responding to a situation or incident by putting it online. Always maintain a cool head and keep your problems off social media.
The other person interpreted the same meaning “the boss is so relieved to see my annoyance and anger at his carelessness in the team.” One person even said “I am such a critical part of both their work from the meeting, networking in every difficulty.” One person was upset at me for their reactions. Sir Winston Churchill once said, “I see the difficulty in every opportunity whilst an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.” He always remained positive but his positive spirit. Unfortunately, the first models were too bulky. He continued and adapted until finally “The Super Cub” became a reality and success. With success in Japan, Honda began exporting his bicycle engines to Europe and America.

**THE EARLY YEARS OF OPTIMISM**

Just as Honda was getting up and running in his business, he was called up for military service. He did not want to be drafted tracked in his business goals, but in typical Soichiro style, he left everything and joined the military, determined to do his best there too.

Fortunately, as he saw it, he was medically examined and found to be colour blind. Thanks to this diagnosis, he managed to avoid military service and was back at Tai-eki, trying to manufacture piston rings for Toyota.

The war soon began but with the Toyota contract. Honda’s thoughts were all on building a factory to manufacture piston rings. But building materials were in short supply. What did he do? He invented a new concrete-making process that enabled him to build the factory. The factory was soon built but bad luck hit again. The factory was bombed twice. He redoubled his efforts. Then steel became unavailable. Not again! Did Honda whine and give up? No. He started collecting surplus gasoline cans discarded by US fighters calling them “gifts from President Truman,” which he used as his new “raw materials” for his manufacturing.

Finally, the Mikawa earthquake destroyed his factory and the dream was over. Honda was left with nothing but his positive spirit.

After the war, gasoline shortage forced people to walk or use bicycles. Honda noticed this trend and built a tiny engine, attaching it to his bicycle. Everyone wanted his bicycles and Honda Motors was born. Disaster struck yet again and materials could not be found to supply the demand. He remained positive. Honda wrote an inspiring letter to 18,000 bicycle shop owners asking them to help him rejuvenate Japan. Five thousand of them responded by advancing him money to build his bicycle engines. Unfortunately, the first models were too bulky. He continued and adapted until finally “The Super Cub” became a reality and success. With success in Japan, Honda began exporting his bicycle engines to Europe and America.

**BAD LUCK NEVER DETERS LEADERS**

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Countless times, Honda Motors was close to bankruptcy, but Honda fought on and on. When the Jap scooter flopped and bankruptcy beckoned, his reaction was to embark on the Tourist Trophy race programme, which eventually brought him to the limelight. Honda remained positive throughout his life. In the 1970s there was another gas shortage causing Americans to want smaller cars. Honda was quick to pick up on that trend, with Honda Corp making tiny cars. This ushered in another wave of success.

**POSITIVITY ATTRACTS POSITIVE OUTCOMES**

Honda’s positivity attracted positive experiences. Recent research shows how children who smile attract more attention. People are drawn to a positive child than to an unsmiling one. Optimistic people have more positive experiences.

Whilst most attribute bad luck to unfortunate people, research seems to indicate that there may not be luck involved. The law of attraction alludes to a negative spirit attracts negative experiences. So, our attitudes determine the experiences we have, which in turn determine the opportunities and problems that come our way.

On June 7, 1936, Honda had an accident at the wheel of the “Hamamatsu” in the opening race at the Tama-gawa Speedway. He could not avoid hitting another car that was making its way back on the track after a pit stop. Honda was thrown out of the car but was not seriously hurt. His younger brother and mechanic Benjiro fractured his spine.

In spite of his wife and father’s lashings at him not to take part in another race, Honda took part in another race in October of the same year. He attributed the accident to one freak incident and decided to move on. Most pessimists would take every single setback as further evidence that the entire world is conspiring against them and give up. Honda was not a person who was overly positive about everything and sputtered optimistic words everywhere he went. That’s his blind optimism. He simply had a positive attitude towards the future, always believing that things will somehow work out. He had the confidence that he could face all the challenges and win.

**OPTIMISM HELPS**

Our view of the world and how we interact with it governs how the world reacts and responds to us. In a landmark study by Heady and Wearing, they found that “lucky” people were always lucky. People with bad “luck” would continue to have one bad experience after another. This study, which was later confirmed by others, suggests that pessimists tend to have more negative experiences whilst optimists have more positive outcomes. Optimism has other benefits. In a study of male Harvard undergraduates that started in the 1940s, high amounts of optimism at age 20 predicted good health at 65. Meanwhile, those who were highly pessimistic at the start of the study could not be found at age 65, and were believed to have died. Research carried out on 100,000 women by US scientists found that pessimists had higher blood pressure and cholesterol. Optimistic women had a 9% lower risk of developing heart disease and a 14% lower risk of dying from any cause. Optimists usually love life. They have less stress and tend to have better social lives.

Honda was such a happy man seeing joy in the most mundane things, like manufacturing, air raid drills, and playing with custom- ers. In 1956, he presented a standard job description of “The Three Joys” that every single employee had to learn. The first joy was producing and manufacturing quality cars. The second was the joy of a seller when a buyer purchases a Honda product. The third was the joy of the buyer. The buyer has to be in a state of delight when purchasing a Honda product. This is the mind’s eye saw joy in everything.

Honda believed that any difficulties or setbacks faced his company temporarily and usually not entirely his fault. According to psychologist Elaine Fox, “optimistic people accept the world as it is and believe in the innate goodness of humankind.”

“This is in contrast to the mind of the pessimist which is infused with negativity and convinced that their problems are beyond their control and will never go away.”

Are you a pessimist? The good news is that you can become an optimist. It’s a learned skill. All it requires is to laugh at yourself more, forgive more, lose more, give more, and look at everything that happens to you positively. Soon, everything will start becoming positive. Honda, a drop-out, created a great company by being positive. You too can create great things. It all starts with a smile.

By ROSHAN THIRAN

smilelikesoichiro.com

**BE A LEADER**

**OPTIMISTIC PEOPLE LIVE LONGER AND HAVE MORE POSITIVE EXPERIENCES**

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REJECTION – DWELL ON IT OR DEAL WITH IT

FEAR OF REJECTION
A senior executive was mentoring a group of “stars” as part of the bank’s talent acceleration programme. Chin was particularly impressed with Craig who presented a potentially game-changing idea to the bank’s senior leaders.

The workshop was to test and further validate Craig’s proposal in order to trigger a final recommendation for his idea. However, when brain-storming, Chin observed something troubling. Instead of engaging with his peers constructively, Craig was aggressively fighting off suggestions from others and was missing opportunities that he thinks will work. His tone and manner made some of his colleagues uncomfortable.

Craig conducted himself in a way which surprised everyone around him. It was obvious that Craig had been a healthy strategic debate derailed into a disrespectful display of arrogance through a combination of coaching and adamantly defending what he was particularly impressed with Craig as part of the bank’s group of “stars” as part of the bank’s human resources (HR) department.

C.R.A.P.
Your career will take you places where you experience highs and lows. Rejection and failures are part and parcel of the journey. To be successful, Richard St John, best-selling author of the book If I find 10,000 ways something won’t work, I haven’t failed. I am not discouraged, because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward.

This conviction resonated with me so much that I eventually perfected the ideal macaron. To add another feather to my cap, my macaron troubleshooting guide became a valuable reference for my friends who nick-named me as the “Pied Piper” for the cute French cookies!

FINAL THOUGHTS
So, when life throws you a curve ball, do you lose it or have a meltdown? Or do you bounce back, dust yourself off and persist? Corporate life often dishes up unpleasant as well as positive experience. Get ready and get mentally tough in the face of rejection.

The secret is to be positive and constructive. I know that overcoming setbacks can be emotionally draining, hence, a good level of positivity helps to ease any ride on the emotional rollercoaster.

But don’t stop there. Do something constructive – never see yourself as a victim. Focus on what you can control.

Remember you can never change others’ behaviour, circumstances or contributory events. However, you can change your attitude and be in control of your destiny by turning a bad situation into an opportunity for you to maximise to its fullest.

Anna Tan is a bean counter who works in corporate HR. She has led her team to pen "STRETCHED! Unleashing your Team’s Potential by Coaching the Rubber Band Way", in which she shares human potential to be as flexible and agile as the rubber band.
The future for the press is clearly going to be focused on cost-reduction, global distribution and servicing a large number of users.


The Future of Music

By Cindy Yap
mystarjob.com, Saturday 19 October 2013

Futurist Gerd Leonhard says advertisers should develop new creative rules for digital advertising.

THE FUTURE OF MEDIA – WHERE SCIENCE FICTION COMES TRUE

Gerd Leonhard and his Magic Crystal Ball

A futurist may raise eyebrows as an unconventional profession and would likely invoke the image of a psychic gazing into a magic crystal ball. Essentially, this field involves foreseeing the future in order to help people understand, prepare for and gain advantage from what could be happening soon.

Gerd Leonhard is one such person who had taken this avant-garde path with much success. Described by Wall Street Journal as “one of the leading Media Futurists in the World” in 2011, Leonhard, the CEO of the Futures Agency, has travelled the world delivering keynotes and presentations about the future of marketing and the media. A leading expert on topics such as social media and communications, leadership and entrepreneurship, consumer trends, next-generation advertising, marketing and branding, Leonhard is renowned for his hard-hitting and provocative, yet inspiring and motivational style.

FROM MUSICIAN TO FUTURIST

Contrary to kick-starting his career by embarking on futures studies, the native German who now resides in Switzerland started off his career in music and the music business. Leonhard attended Berklee College and obtained the institution’s “Quincy Jones Award” in 1985. He subsequently spent 10 years as a musician and producer in San Francisco. When he caught the Internet bug in the mid-90s, he went on to become a digital media entrepreneur. Leonhard then wrote a book called Future of Music, which became a bestseller. He recalls: “I realised that as a businessman, I was always five to 10 years too early with ideas, which is not a good thing.”

That’s when his career as a futurist began. “As a futurist, I focus on becoming a digital media entrepreneur. Leonhard then wrote a book called Future of Music, which became a bestseller. He recalls: “I realised that as a businessman, I was always five to 10 years too early with ideas, which is not a good thing.”

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By RALPH SEANLING FRANCIS

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THE SOCIAL MEDIA SCENE

Global growth and a rise in the number of social media users has led to a steady increase in the number of businesses using social media channels for business and 83% of them believe it’s one of the most essential tools for them.

A total of 915 experienced social media marketers surveyed earlier this year by Social Media Examiner compiled statistics on social media from various sources.

In global terms, when it comes to using social media for businesses, studies show that:
- A majority of businesses use social media channels for business and 83% of them believe it’s one of the most essential tools for them.
- Of the 11.5 million people aged between 18 - 24 years old, 34.5% are Facebook users in Malaysia as of July 2013.

In Malaysia, taking into account the online world, studies reveal that:
- There are 17.5 million Internet users in 2012 and 22 million in 2013.
- Internet users spend nearly 20 hours per week online, 32.1% of that time social networking, following 31.5% for entertainment.

Social media is the best way to get people talking about a product because “content-based marketing gets rolled in social media and increases word-of-mouth memories,” says Mani Charla, author of Ultimate Customer Service Guide: How to Connect With Your Customers to Sell More.

Social media also allows two-way communication between companies and consumers making the relationship more personal.

An online presence allows companies to use social media to promote instant feedback regarding a brand, allowing the organization to further improve.

Getting Social Media Right

A company’s social media is mentioned 23 times more than its publicity. The result was that a brand image generated based on its publicity. Then in 2010, successful digital campaigns by companies involved with newspapers and magazines are now also familiar with the platforms available. Many have interviewed some individuals who have embarked on a career of social media.

Brands that endure are ones who understand the incredible new opportunities offered by social media and learn to use it effectively in managing their social media presence.

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The Social Media Scene

The rise of social media also requires more than just knowledge of how to navigate a social networking platform. Most users are influenced online by reviews, opinions and experiences from others.

Understanding the impact of social media on your business is essential. Some companies have even found help from market researchers and social media experts. Some are using social media to enhance customer service, while others are using it to build their brand.

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WHEN I was younger, I used to be fascinated by futuristic things. Be it science fiction TV series or the latest cutting-edge novel with flying cars and minute gadgetry that could do nearly everything — I would lap them like cold milk for a puppy.

Now, it seems that we are on the cusp of an era where technology is catching up with fantasy. The concept of levitating cars might still be locked away in some genius mind, but technological progress in communications and computers have defined the workplace since the 1980s and continues to do so at a breakneck speed.

To me the technological Holy Grail in the office has always been going paperless. It has tantalised me since I started working because I have never experienced a totally paperless workplace.

Where I used to work, paper would accumulate and eventually invade desk spaces. Before long, you would be snowed in by file boxes, reference guides and hardcopy printouts.

We were constantly reminded that a cluttered workspace reflects a cluttered mind — every three months or so, most of the paper would be shredded, dumped in recycling bins or worse, getting work done faster instead of messing around with paperwork.

The less paper is used, the more a company saves.

In addition, cutting paper usage is logically the ecologically sound thing to do. According to a report on Apr 6, 2010 in The Star, 900 million trees are felled annually for paper, making it one of the world’s largest contributors of greenhouse gases.

In the bigger picture, lower the use of paper and more trees will be saved, as less forests would be exploited.

To switch the focus back to the office, going paperless means less time spent digging through files and stacks to find that piece of invoice from three months or even three years ago — provided your archives are digitised that far back. Scanned documents can be retrieved on the computer monitor in less than a minute.

And it is the speed at which things get done — you can electronically send faxes via your computer or forward e-signature documents. Going paperless allows the company to focus on getting work done faster instead of messing around with paperwork.

In a report by the Environmental Protection Agency USA, the typical office employee generates up to 680g of waste per day.

In a 30-person office, this is equivalent to disposing about 1,060kg of paper annually. By reducing this waste, an office can save up to seven trees per year.

Going paperless allows a company to adopt flexible working hours, which has shown to increase productivity and efficiency in employees.

Peter Boucher of UK daily The Guardian Professional observes “a more efficient and productive organisation; a more empowered and motivated workforce; better customer service and increased customer loyalty; increased staff retention and attractiveness to potential employees; reduced levels of sickness absence; and working hours that best suit your employees and customers.”

BARRIERS AGAINST FULL IMPLEMENTATION

For all the wonderful promises that a paperless environment can deliver, there are some companies that are hesitant to make the transition.

Among the many things that hold companies back is the ubiquitous IT upheaval in order to make this model work.

For established companies, it involves retraining staff in the new ways of doing things — ways that are ingrained as a corporate culture. Some will be resistant to change. Furthermore, this new system requires constant upgrading to keep it efficiently at the cutting-edge. That translates as extra expenses because the company has to spend on new hardware and software, in addition to training.

That burden is also compounded by the downtime in productivity during the transition period. These pecuniary factors make it rather costly for companies, especially startups, to take the initial setup.

In the bigger picture, lower the use of paper and more trees will be saved, as less forests would be exploited.

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In addition, the system is vulnerable to extraneous attacks and virus infections. Constant updating of the system becomes a necessity and again therein lay more expenses.

And unlike physical filing of documents, human errors are more evident. Improperly scanned documents result in incomplete records, while files incorrectly named or wrongly stored electronically are often difficult to retrieve.

But intrinsic to all the problems above is the basic human need to still use paper. It has been around since the ancient Egyptians first screwed cursive hieroglyphs upon papyrus sheets and gained impetus after man invented the printing press — it will not go down without a fight.

REALITY CHECK

The fact is, with the annual rising cost of paper, combined with the idea of a mobile workforce, the whole concept of the paperless office is another way of cutting costs and increasing productivity, whilst being ecologically correct. But does it do so in reality?

Most companies attempt to lessen their carbon footprint by adopting the paperless concept and do so in order to be competitively sustainable. In doing so, some begin to show discrepancy between the ideals of a paperless environment and what is practised.

In most cases, paper is still required in certain sectors of business — government-related matters, legal contracts and even some companies’ proposals and memoranda are still circulated in a physical format everyday.

These documents require signatures, which some hope will be superseded by emerging e-signature formats.

Property Casualty 360° magazine’s David Lamartina found that e-signatures are more reliable than hardcopy signatures. With today’s rigorous online system, tracking down IP addresses and email accounts is easy.

Furthermore, most servers save chunks of data on user histories, authentications and more. While it was easy to slip through holes in the “net” in the early years, today the mesh is tighter with more security.

So what we have now are companies making a compromise by using less paper if they cannot go paperless.

Michigan car accidents lawyer Michael Morse has been championing the paperless movement for his law firm. He has even published a 16-page guide to law firms on how to go paperless.

His blog www.michaelmorseblog.com concentrates on using technology within the legal environment. Now running at 80% paperless, his company “still cannot or do not throw away about 20% of the paper; things like motions, case evaluations, facilitation summaries, and authorisations where original signatures are required.”

Nevertheless he hopes to achieve 100% like his Colorado counterpart David Masten, the ex-president of the Colorado Bar Association and an American Bar Association book author.

For many companies in Malaysia, the jury may still be out on the totally paperless stand but there are notable local companies that have done exactly that. Most banks such as RHB and CIMB, and insurance agencies have adopted the paperless plan or have adapted it within their culture partially.

The Esteé Lauder Companies Malaysia has also taken the lead and so have some hospitals, notably the Selayang Hospital, touted as the first paperless and firmless hospital.

It may take a while to achieve a completely paperless work environment, as Tony Bradley of PCWorld pointed out in a recent article, but when using paper becomes critically unsustainable and costly, companies will be hard-pressed to switch to a full paperless platform.

By ERIC QAH
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

FACTS ABOUT PAPER & WORK

15% of an organisation’s revenue is spent creating, managing and distributing documents.

85% of business documents are in paper form.

The average document is printed five times.

90% of a ‘business’ information is in documents.

60% of employee time is spent working with documents.

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HOW TO START A SOCIAL EPIDEMIC

1. The Law of the Few

Similar to the 80/20 rule, where 20% of people will do 80% of the work, Gladwell goes into the specifics and attributes the success of social epidemics down to three types of people who really factor into kick-starting an epidemic:

- Connectors
- mavens
- salesmen

Connectors are people who function within multiple social circles. They most likely have a personality that is able to tie different groups together, thus bridging the gap between what was trendy in a certain group to another. Let’s just say the popularity of a certain band is high in one group. The Connector within that group then introduces the music into another social group. Without that Connector, the two groups might never mingle.

Mavens

These are essentially the shoppers, the ones with the itchy hands when it comes to the latest tech or trends. Mavens are the ones that harp on about a certain product, band, or fashion item, and who will know all the details before it even releases. They will also most definitely be the first person you know to own one.

Mavens are essential to kick-starting the “hype” that people interested in the first place.

Salesmen

As the name states, through the sheer persuasiveness in their personalities, these are the people who can get people to buy into a product, idea, practice with hardly any effort on their part. Salesmen are usually seen as being at the height of a trend and “cool”. They may be a person you know, or more likely, a celebrity who is sponsored by the brand. Either way, these people with their widespread influence is what leads the masses to purchase the product or buy into the idea, often overlooking the negative aspects of it.

2. The Stickiness Factor

Gladwell also states that the success of a social epidemic also relates to its “stickiness”, meaning its ability to actually get attention and stick within people’s minds. Celebrities pull this one off all the time, often by being involved in some scandal or another just as they feel they’ve slipped off the popularity grid. It goes to show that even bad publicity is good publicity, as long as you are what people are talking about.

Gladwell mentions that even “relatively simple changes in the presentation or structuring” can be enough to make something sticky.

This sounds familiar when thinking about certain gadgets being annually “updated”, albeit with only minor changes done to it. Yet accompanied by months of hype and elaborate press releases, it guarantees the products success year in, year out.

3. The Power of Context

So what can be the cause of something failing to become the next big thing? Often this is when the power of context comes into play.

Gladwell notes that human beings in general are much more aware of the details of our surroundings than we would seem to believe. For example, something that might have been considered trendy and a major fad in the not too distant past, can quickly become obsolete and outdated in the future.

The trend of technology, or even viral marketing and videos can quickly lose their edge once they’ve been ousted by the next “big thing.” Exclusivity is one factor that can contribute to the popularity of something. Once it becomes accessible to everyone, it starts to lose its appeal.

One noted fad was PSY’s viral video hit Gangnam Style, which dominated YouTube charts and became the most watched video of all time. Yet after a little while, parodies and copycat versions of the hit sensation began springing up all over YouTube. People began to tire of seeing/hearing the track, leading to its sudden loss of popularity.

Be it consciously or as to why trends come and go as they do, or whether to gain that extra edge on a new marketing strategy, Malcolm Gladwell’s The Tipping Point is highly recommended to help understand the intricate social sciences that make up our everyday world. The book is worth picking up and recommending to others.

YOU DON’T perceive a reality as it really is. You perceive a reality as it is constructed by your own mind.

Henri-Louis Bergson stated, “The eye sees only what the mind is prepared to comprehend.” He was right.

Your brain thinks in pictures, not words.

Close your eyes for a moment and think of a tomato. Notice that you saw the letters “t-o-m-a-t-o” in your brain. Once or twice won’t do it. Put them there over and over again. Then close your eyes for a moment and think of a tomato. Notice that you saw the word “tomato.”

Your brain is a thought producing machine. Thoughts are real forces. Thoughts produce pictures in your brain. These pictures are more powerful than you suspect.

Any picture that is held in the mind’s eye is a force that will eventually produce an effect. And remember, thoughts that are emotionalised become magnetised. They attract similar thoughts.

Albert Einstein said, “Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.” You will always remain where you are unless you change your picture. By changing the picture in your mind’s eye you begin to change your reality.

Put the exact pictures you want in your brain. Once or twice won’t do it. Put them there over and over again. Then watch things change.

Congratulations on learning some thing about your brain today. The Brain Bulletin is committed to help to do just that.

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

By TERRY SMALL

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What picture do you see when you think about yourself? What about success and failure? 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.

THE POWER OF CONTEXT

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SLURP OR BURP? PICK OR SPIT?
DINE WITH CONFIDENCE AND CLASS DURING MEETINGS AND INTERVIEWS

By WENDY LEE
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

A couple of days ago, while waiting for my client at a restaurant, I was led to a table next to a young man. Like me, he had an iPad, but it was not switched on.

The man was obviously waiting for the arrival of his guests. There was a glass of water and some leftover crumbs on a small plate. He looked anxious and fidgety.

A few minutes later, two well-suited gentlemen walked towards him and he stood up nervously to greet them. Then came the uncomfortable part. The table was too small for the three of them. There was no space to place their documents and laptops.

The table was near the window and the guests were positioned where they had to face the glare of the sun.

The young man got up to clear his glass and plate, and even used his hands to sweep the crumbs off the table. The two gentlemen graciously helped out. But they were not smiling.

AWKWARD, UNCOMFORTABLE, EMBARRASSING. A BAD START.

In the corporate world, business deals are sealed over a good lunch, and candidates are hired based on how they behave over a meal.

Table manners do matter. And it is not just knowing which fork goes with which knife, it is about conduct yourself elegantly while achieving your main target of impressing your client or future boss.

IT IS NOT JUST KNOWING WHICH FORK GOES WITH WHICH KNIFE. IT IS ABOUT CONDUCTING YOURSELF ELEGANTLY WHILE ACHIEVING YOUR MAIN TARGET OF IMPRESSING YOUR CLIENT OR FUTURE BOSS

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK

With a more relaxed atmosphere over a meal, remember this is still a test between two parties. So think strategically about how you behave and respond during the business meal. Whatever you say will be interpreted by your interviewer.

For instance, saying, “Getting a car park is really horrible here,” as compared with, “It took me awhile to get a car park, but I’m glad I got it!”

The former sounds negative, while the latter makes you a chirpy, positive person! Always remain focused and respond professionally.

PICK WHAT YOU CAN EASILY EAT

You are there to talk. So don’t pick messy food that will inhibit your ability to communicate confidently. Save hard-to-eat food like ribs, spaghetti or curry to when you are with your friends.

Save your ice-blended drinks. The residues tend to get stuck on your teeth. Also, this is not the time to try to decipher the name of the food on the menu. If you are not sure, ask politely.

DO NOT WOLF DOWN YOUR FOOD

Gluttony is not thy middle name. Take your time, take small bites, and chew before you swallow. A business meal is not for you to gorge yourself silly. That is why it is always advisable not to go on an empty stomach.

Even if you are starving, wait for everyone’s food to arrive before you touch anything.

This goes for even a simple meal like fish and chips. Don’t pick on the chips just because your meal arrives first. And never pick on food from your neighbour’s plate.

UTENSILS AND FOOD ONLY - ON THE TABLE

Which means elbows off, no smart phone, name card holder, tissue paper, cigarettes, toothpicks, keys, medicine, lipstick, spectacles or false teeth.

All these fall into the visual range of the people seated opposite you, and believe me, it can be very distracting.

If you need to use your notebook, make sure there is an extra table or that the space is big enough to place your important documents.

REMEMBER YOUR BMW – BREAD, MEAL, WATER/WINE

Your bread is always on your left, and water on your right. As food must enter from outside to your inner tummy, the same goes with your utensils.

Start off with your soup spoon on your right, followed by your salad fork and gradually work your way in. If unsure, slowly take a sip of water, watch and learn what others do. If the setting for your business dining is a high-end establishment, then brush up on your etiquette beforehand so you will steer clear of mistakes and mishaps.

DON’T SLURP, DON’T BURP

Avoid actions that will generate unwanted noises – Chomping ferociously on your food, using your tongue to dislodge stuck food, sipping thirstily, blowing your nose, sneezing loudly, clink-clanking of utensils etc. It will reflect very badly on you.

THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO THROW YOUR HEAD BACK AND LAUGH LIKE A HYENA, NO MATTER HOW RELAXED THE ATMOSPHERE CAN BE. YOU ARE NOT EATING WITH YOUR FRIENDS

MOVE WITH GRACE

From the start of the meal till the end, no matter how nervous you are, handle everything with poise and elegance.

Do not rush things – while eating, or talking, or passing on dishes, operate gently. Be a gracious guest and maintain a dignified persona at the interview.

Last, but not least, someone spent his or her time with you and paid for your meal. So, say “thank you”.

When you get home, send an e-mail to express your appreciation for the opportunity to be interviewed.

Your dining etiquette skills are the cornerstone of your executive image. Every time you improve your skills, you solidify the effective executive image you have been working hard to create. So make sure your behaviour and comportment during the meal are fully befitting a polished professional.

Wendy Lee is president of Mabic (Malaysian Association of brand and image consultants) and director at Brand Image International Institute. She is a firm believer that with Style, there must be Substance!
QUICKLY UPHUBING...ALREADY PUT THAT PHONE DOWN

By RACHAEL SHALINI FRANCIS
rachael.shalini@leaderonomics.com

HARLENE de Guzman's short film depicting life in smartphone-saturated times, I Forgot My Phone, went viral with 25,076,998 views within one month of its release. The two-minute video features de Guzman being phubbed the entire day by the many different people in her life.

When was the last time you got "phubbed"? While phubbing may be a relatively new term, it has already been listed in some dictionaries. The amalgam of the words of "phone" and "snubbing" coined by Alex Haigh to describe "the act of snubbing someone in a social setting by looking at your phone instead of paying attention".

But, phubbing has become increasingly obvious. While phones have been around for awhile, phubbing mostly involves smartphones, granting allowing individuals to read e-mails, news, log into social media platforms, WhatsApp, surf the net and so much more.

According to a study conducted by University of Michigan, 97% of people claim that their food tasted better when being a victim of phubbing. Apart from being a funny sounding term, some may argue that engaging in social networking has to meet "many people" or "make many friends". A study involving 50,000 consumers in 46 different countries in order to explore their cyber-socialising habits has in fact revealed Malaysians have the most number of friends on social networks.

The average number of digital friends a Malaysian has is 233, followed by Brazil and 217 in Norway. This is in comparison to just 12 friends in Japan, and 68 in China. However, Malaysians were also the heaviest users of social networking sites, spending nine hours online per week, not leaving many hours for physical contact.

Interestingly, studies have shown that the human brain is limited when it comes to maintaining friendships. Professor Robin Dunbar from Oxford University has conducted studies on social groupings throughout the centuries. Based on his theory "Dunbar's number", he asserts that regardless of how sociable we are, the necorect, limits us to managing 150 friends.

He even applied this theory to explore the possibility of the "Facebook effect" stretching the limits. He made comparisons of the online "traffic" of socialize people and ones with fewer friends, but his findings showed that there was no significant difference between the two.

The interesting thing is that you can have 1,500 friends when you actually look at traffic on sites, you see people maintain the same inner circle of around 150 people that we observe in the real world," says Dunbar.

MISSCONSTRUED IDENTITIES

Catfish, a 2010 American documentary film directed by Joseph and Ariel Schulman brings to light another aspect of social networking. The documentary is about a young man, Nev, building a romantic relationship with a young woman on Facebook. It all begins when Abby Pierce, an 8-year-old, and two other girls, Joost and Schulman film Nev as he begins an online relationship with Megan. He discovers some things that don't sit right but is urged to continue the relationship for the documentary.

He decides to travel to Michigan to confront Megan directly but finds out that it was really Angela posing as Megan using an alternate Facebook account and mobile phone.

The film was a success, inspiring the MTV reality TV series, Catfish: The TV Show where Nev helps people in similar situations. The series brings to light the very reality of fake identities or profiles. How then do people say they make new friends when they don’t know who the person is for?
We have experts on career management, HR and office issues who will address your questions weekly. We refer to them as careeronomers — experts in career matters who will help you in your career journey. So if you have any questions, please send them to dearcareeronomers@leaderonomics.com and we will get the panel to answer your questions.

This week, Claudia Cadena, director, Strategic Human Capital Management, president & Group CEO’s Office, SapuraKencana and Rupa Sivanou, an associate consultant, Leaderonomics, answer Lee’s question.

Dear Careeronomers,

I am a holder of a bachelor’s degree in Mass Communication, with a major in Journalism and a minor in advertising. I worked full-time during semester breaks in customer service, journalism and surveying. They were great experiences as I learnt how to deal with different types of people at work and experienced different working environments.

After I graduated, I went into media research and the merchandising line. Finally, I found a job which is relevant to my education background and skills. I’ve been working in the social media line for about two years. I started the division from scratch and am all rounder. My role is to enhance brand awareness for the company through social media platforms. My main responsibility is to manage the website and social networking accounts on behalf of the company. My task is mainly divided into four areas, including preparing content (photography, graphic design and copywriting), managing social networking accounts (interacting with customers online, updating the website and social media accounts), liaising internally and externally (internal departments and vendors) and preparing reports (analysis).

My hard work has paid off and I was promoted early this year. A minor portion of my tasks has been delegated and I’m glad to see the team is slowly expanding, despite facing minor challenges in leading. I was looking forward to be involved in e-commerce projects, but the company decided to hold on these until further notice. Thus, the daily work has been routine. Besides, the organisation has been recently restructured.

As social media is still considered a new area, I am still figuring out my next steps and also the career ladder of social media.

Regards,

Lee

Dear Lee,

I read with great interest your career trajectory and your achievement in a short period of time from graduation. Firstly, it is worth noting that what is most important is for you to identify what are your interests and strengths within the profession, rather than trying to ascertain if there is a “right” way of progressing. When you know yourself, your strengths and areas for development and improvement, you will be able to progress and succeed.

Identify Your Strengths

From what I read, I believe you are a good communicator and have strong interpersonal skills. These are very important skills to have when dealing in advertising and social media. You will have to interact with people at all levels, relate to them, understand their needs and be able to use this understanding in the campaigns and content that you develop.

You also seem to be versatile. You have worked and put efforts in a variety of areas. In addition to being able to interact, you are able to develop content and translate that content into visual designs/campaigns. You are also able to analyse data and prepare reports.

If we look at your strengths objectively, this means that you are not only able to manage relationships, you can also manage and develop campaigns through content and design. You can also put in perspective information to identify trends and perhaps come up with new campaigns. These strengths open a lot of opportunities and will enable you to choose from a wide range of opportunities which will allow you to use one or more of these skills and progress further towards more senior roles within the organisation.

Work On Your Weak Areas

As you are young and perhaps lack experience, you seem to face some challenges in managing your team. This is just a small setback that can be overcome with practice and some reading. Remember, being a team leader means that you need to know what is expected of the team, when deadlines are due and most importantly how to utilise the strengths of every team member to achieve expectations effectively.

Most importantly, you need to be able to motivate them, and help them along the way to become better professionals. On a daily basis, you have to give them feedback and coach them to improve, something that many people prefer not to do as it may seem confrontational and may impact relationships between the employee and the supervisor. This, however, is part of being a good leader.

To improve in this area, read some books on team leadership or attend some workshops that can help you understand what is required to lead. Attending these events, will enable you to widen your network, meet new people and learn from others on how they manage and lead their teams. Having the basic understanding will then allow you to develop skills accordingly through your own style.

Your Next Steps

You indicate that your company is facing some challenges. This is not unexpected. All companies in different ways face challenges that need to be managed and overcome. If you are happy in the organisation and you see that there is a future for you, offer your ideas and understand where you can fit within the structured entity.

You wanted to explore e-commerce and start coming up with innovative ideas as well as new campaigns. You are able to learn from it. Don’t be discouraged if your suggestion is not immediately implemented. It is important to learn from it.

Situation as in this way you will be able to learn from it. I hope that this advice will help you in moving forward in your professional career. Good luck!

Claudia Cadena

Dear Lee,

I found a job which is relevant to my education background and skills. I've been working in the social media line for two years. The company has recently restructured. When you know your strengths and areas for development and improvement, you will be able to progress and succeed.

When you are full of ideas and learning new things and meeting exciting people, your next step will automatically become a smaller issue as you would have gained perspective and, possibility, clarity to do what is necessary to keep moving forward towards your dreams.

Early in my career, next steps were indeed a major focal point and collecting the right experiences mattered. However, I am now of the view that passion and a will to execute are far more valued traits by those who genuinely pursue their interests and development at heart.

Cliche as it may seem I want to share this quote by Bill Gates with you: “We always overestimate the change that will occur in the next two years and underestimate the change that will occur in the next ten. Don’t let yourself be lulled into inaction.” So Lee, don’t spend too much time figuring out your next steps, keep yourself updated with trends and hone your skills. The next opportunity that comes your way, grab it! All the best.

Rupa Sivanou

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

Also next week

Embrace into the world of tourism and hospitality

Being a leader sometimes means being unpopular

Five ways working is killing you, four ways to fight back

A dedicated nurse’s tale on her chosen vocation in palliative care

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