POWER UP!
SURPRISINGLY EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR MEMORY AND READ FASTER PAGES 6–7

Be inquisitive
Asking questions boosts innovation and is the key to success, writes Roshan Thiran → Pg 03

THAT'S NOT PURPOSE
What's the purpose of your organisation? Is that purpose or your rationalisation?

Harness the crowd
Increase knowledge and ideas by tapping into the resources of others

Just exhausted
You may have time, but what if you don't have energy?
END THE YEAR BY EXPANDING YOUR MIND

MORE than a year ago, I met an interesting man named Anant Kasibhatla, CEO of Memory Vision. He was a speaker at a conference, and I was there to conduct some interviews. Anant said he was a memory champion, so I tested him of course. I gave him a sequence of 20 numbers to see how quickly he could memorise them. In 27 seconds, not only did he rattle the list back to me with no hesitation, he confidently recited the sequence in reverse order as well. I was very impressed.

So when it came time to decide how we would end 2013, Anant immediately came to mind. I wanted quick, simple techniques to help readers improve their memory. I had no trouble recalling Anant’s name because he had taught me exactly how to remember it. “Just think of me with AN ANT on my head!” he chirped, and Anant with an ‘ant on his head had been etched in my memory ever since. We approached Anant to contribute to this week’s issue, but he recommended his brother, who he said had an even better memory than him. We were intrigued and our expectations were not disappointed. Nishant, Anant’s brother, is a Guinness record holder in memory and can memorise a 2,000-digit number. It made me laugh at my feeble test of 20 numbers. That’s an additional two zeroes! Oh the shame of walking to the kitchen and forgetting what I went there for.

I was also curious about the idea of speed reading, and to our delight, Nishant had wisdom to share on that too. You’ll find Nishant’s guide to a better memory and quicker reading on page 6-7, including a clever way of remembering his name.

I suggest you stick centuries and warm up on your wall and leave it there. The tips are practical and easy to do. I hope we’ll all be expert memorisers and speed readers by this time next year!

In Be A Leader on page 3, Roshan gives his advice for a successful 2014, and that’s by asking learning questions. John Baybay in this week’s WorkLife Balance on page 10 brings up the intriguing thought of energy being the new time. For students and graduates in internships during these holidays, you’ll find handy tips to make the most out of your internship on page 11.

I hope you’ve had a great 2013. It’s been our team’s pleasure to look back and find those resolutions that you have also achieved this year. And have fun in the process.

TIME FOR REFLECTION...

BY EVA CHRISTODOULOU
eva.christodoulou@leaderonomics.com

THIS year has come and gone at the speed of lightning. The world has seen many natural disasters, wars, atrocities and loss of some great people, well respected around the world.

At the same time though, we have seen many examples of people coming together, of uniting and fighting for a common cause, helping in an hour of need. The world has been extremely busy and ever changing as always – how about your life though?

How has the year been for you? Have you stopped to look back? It’s the time to go back and find those resolutions that you made at the beginning of last year, and see how much you have achieved. What progress have you made? Reassess your values, achievements, and behaviour, and see how best you can equip yourself to reach your goals in the coming year. Whether in your personal life or in your career, be willing to take an honest look at yourself and see what you can do to move closer to your end goal.

Take your time this weekend to really plan your year ahead, based on your learnings from the year that has passed. Be honest with yourself and identify all your shortcomings, but also be sure to give yourself a pat in the back for all the great things you have also achieved this year. And have fun in the process.

TIPS FOR BOOSTING YOUR MEMORY POWER

EXERCISE RIGHT
When you treat your body well, you enhance your ability to process and recall information. Physical exercise helps increase oxygen to your brain and reduces the risk for disorders that lead to memory loss, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

GET SUFFICIENT SLEEP
The key-memory-enhancing activity occurs mainly during the deepest stages of sleep. When you lack sleep, your brain would not be able to operate at full capacity, hence compromising creativity, problem-solving abilities, and critical thinking skills.

HAVE MENTAL WORKOUTS
Although it’s easier to zone out during boring meetings and discussions, why not challenge your brain instead by actually focusing. This would make you sharper and help you remember more effectively.

HAVE SOME BRAIN FOOD!
There are quite a number of foods that are good for your brain, for example green tea, blueberries, salmon, broccoli and dark chocolate. These food are filled with antioxidants and vitamins that help improve your memory.

PLAY BRAIN GAMES
Keep your brain active by playing brain games like Sudoku or crossword puzzles. Brain games like these help improve memory and delay brain decline.

CAREER TIPS

1. What you like about the myStarjob.com career guide.
2. Areas for improvement.
3. What topics you would like to see covered in 2014.

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We look forward to hearing from you. Happy holidays, happy new year, and for those who celebrated, I hope you had a blessed Christmas.

See you in 2014. To greater things ahead.

LILY CHEAH
Editor, myStarjob.com

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\section*{Questions Change the World}

\textbf{By ROSHAN THIRAN}

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5 we end 2013 and go into 2014, I asked myself, what one thing should I do differently next year? My thoughts ran over from how to better manage the business, to being more creative in our product innovation, to spending more time with employees and to being a better father and husband. And as I was dwelling deeper into the question, I realised my most important lesson in 2013 – Answers don’t change the world, questions do!

And I knew that this was the biggest change I needed to drive in my life in 2014 – I needed to move from being an “answer-man” to a “question-man”.

What does this mean? Well, many leaders spend 80% of their time telling and 20% of the time asking. Great leaders flip the equation over spending 80% of the time asking the right questions and only 20% of time spewing answers.

\section*{Why Questions are Key to Success}

All of us typically get frustrated or end up in tough situations from time to time. We naturally look for answers and solutions but in doing so we unwittingly create blocks instead of openings. In fact, we end up recycling the same over-used, unhelpful answers. To overcome this, we need to ask new questions. Results are driven by questions.

A few weeks ago, over lunch with Citibank chief executive officer Sanjeev Nanavati, he mentioned that many senior leaders made bad decisions because they never questioned assumptions. He claimed that by questioning assumptions, we end up making better decisions. Indira Gandhi goes a step further by asserting that “the power to question is the basis of all human progress.”

Oprah Winfrey became a billionaire and a celebrity through her unique way of connecting with people. Her guests, like Lance Armstrong sometimes even ended up confessing publicly on her show.

How does she do this? All she does is to ask questions differently! From a new question being asked (or an old question being asked differently!).

Questions triumph.

Change your Questions, Change your Life.

She confirmed my belief that questions are at the core of how we behave, think and even relate with each other.

She spent the rest of the afternoon with me talking about Question Thinking. She claims that every single human thought process and what we end up doing is framed in question form.

But she adds that there are two forms of questions we ask. One is called the Judge mindset whilst the other she terms the Learner mindset. All of us have both these mind-sets and we constantly toggle between these two.

When a situation hits us, the Judge reacts and asks questions such as:

- Why am I such a failure?
- Why are they so stupid?
- What’s wrong with them/or me?
- Why bother?
- Whose fault is it?

By asking these questions in our mind, we form answers to them which we then express out, causing issues to deepen and worsen. The Learner mindset asks a different set of questions. They include:

- What happened?
- What do I want?
- What are the facts?
- What assumptions am I making?
- What can I learn?
- What am I responsible for?
- What’s possible? What are my choices?
- What’s best to do now?

By asking these questions, we come up with answers for them. These questions usually lead us to thoughtful choices which are solution focused whilst the Judge ends up making automatic reactionary moves and is blame-focused.

Dr Adams believes that each of us has a choice to move from Judge mode to Learner mode by asking switching questions. This is a choice we all have, and she calls her framework “The Choice Map”.

Most of us don’t realise it but we are shaped by the questions we ask. If questions we ask are from us being open-minded or trying to learn, then the resulting answers are optimistic, hopeful, and full of possibilities.

If our questions are asked from negative reactions, the answers will lead us to failure, stress and limited options. So are we constantly in a Judge mindset or a Learner mindset? For 2014, let’s strive to spend more time in the Learner space.

\section*{Innovations Begin With Questions}

When Albert Einstein was a little boy, his mother told him to ask his teacher two questions every day that the teacher could not answer. Little Einstein spend all day thinking up hard questions that the teacher could not answer. I bet none of his teachers really liked him and his barrage of hard questions.

However, once he grew up, his continuous questioning of everything enabled a watch-repairman to become of the greatest scientist ever.

He once claimed “I have no special talents. The important thing is to not stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.” If you look into all great innovation and disruption, in different industries or in products or services, they usually stem from a new question being asked (or an old question being asked differently!).

Asking Learner questions helps us to clarify and gather information. It allows us to discover and challenge assumptions and most importantly it allows us to evaluate, assess and resolve problem correctly and in an open-minded basis.

\section*{Asking the Right Questions}

So, where do we start? What are the right questions we should ask daily? Dr Adams lists down 12 questions she feels helps her when she is stuck, frustrated and when she wants to drive change. The questions are:

- What do I want?
- What are my choices?
- What assumptions am I making?
- What am I responsible for?
- How else can I think about this?
- What is the other person feeling, thinking and wanting?
- What am I missing or avoiding?
- What can I learn?
- From this person or situation?
- From this mistake or failure?
- From this success?
- What action steps make the most sense?
- What question should I ask myself or others?
- How can I turn this into a win-win?
- What’s possible?

You can leverage these questions yourself and make a point in 2014 to constantly ask these Learner questions instead of the reactionary Judge questions.

\section*{Final Thoughts}

Voltaire once said, “Judge a man by his questions rather than his answers.” He was on to something. Many of us are so busy coming up with answers and excuses for everything under the sun that we may have forgotten one of the most defining aspects of who we have become and who we can become. Start asking questions. But more importantly, ask Learner questions. The more questions we ask, the more likely 2014 will be a year full of happiness, joy and prosperity. Wishing each of you a very blessed 2014 and warm wishes from all of us at Leaderonomics.

Roshan Thiran, CEO of Leaderonomics, a social enterprise passionate about transforming the nation through leadership and youth development, wishes you a very blessed New Year. He hopes 2014 will be a year where your “curiosity” questions enable you to “change the world”.

The “Be a Leader” video series is now available for free for you to learn valuable leadership lessons. To watch these videos, go to www.leaderonomics.tv and click the “Be a Leader” icon.

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I felt sick. I wanted to curl up in a ball and be alone. I didn’t want to talk to anyone. I was ashamed. To most people, what I did would seem sensible, but to me it was much deeper. I gave a talk to an organisation that violates the very core of my beliefs. In my mind, I felt like a sell-out.

In my pre-engagement calls, I had a bad feeling about this group. They treated me like some vendor. I could barely get a question in, they were talking so much. They also sent an email telling me what to wear – dress pants and a jacket. Had they done no research on me? I always wear jeans. But I talked myself out of it. “Stop acting like a diva,” I told myself.

I sat backstage waiting for my time to speak, listening to the executives give their talks to the group. They presented themselves as a company that sells financial advice, but in my opinion, they weren’t doing it in an honourable way.

I believe in helping people and doing right by others. This company preyed on people’s ambitions. They weren’t interest-ed in helping people, they were interested in exploiting them and profiting off their risk. I felt sick. I didn’t want to be there and I didn’t want to be a part of it.

I made my choice. There was something I had that they didn’t: the microphone. They were going to put me on the stage, turn on a spotlight and let me talk. They were going to put me on the stage. Why would they do this to me? They clapped at the end, but I didn’t.

They clapped at the end, but I didn’t stick around. I walked off the stage, grabbed my staff and walked straight out the back door. I didn’t talk to anyone and I didn’t want anyone to talk to me. I felt sick and ashamed that I was a part of this. I joined the daily huddle call our little company has where we share what we’ve done to the day and ask for help if we need it. I didn’t follow the normal procedure. Instead, I confessed. I told them how I felt.

My team was amazing. “Don’t sweat it,” they said trying to make me feel better. “We’re sure your message resonated and you converted a few.”

One by one they took turns trying to help me see something good that may have come from this experience. But purpose cannot be rationalised.

I remember when I worked in the advertising industry and I asked one of the executives what societal good advertising does. “We help drive the economy,” was his response. So did the manufacturers of gas chambers during the holocaust. Finding elements of good does not equal a noble purpose. It’s just rationalisation.

Providing jobs, driving the economy, serving the shareholder are not purposes. They are rationalisations used when a greater cause or purpose is not clear or not there.

Real purpose has a clear and definitive direction. It is a path that points towards a very specific vision of the future. Rationalisations have no destination, they are simply a calculation to demonstrate some benefit to justify the actions. Rationalisations are just that: rational. In contrast, purpose is deeply emotional.

This is why we feel passion and intense drive when we are involved with something that has purpose. And it’s why we get that sick feeling when we do something in violation of that purpose.

There is no sick feeling from violating a rationalised purpose... nor is there an invigorating passion to pursue it. Because a true sense of purpose is deeply emotional, it serves as a compass to guide us to act in a way completely consistent with our values and beliefs.

Purpose does not need to involve calculations or numbers. Purpose is about the quality of life. Purpose is human, not economic.

I thanked my team for the support, but insisted that we could not and should not try to rationalise making these kinds of errors. They are mistakes and we should learn from them to avoid finding ourselves in the same position again in the future.

We should feel ashamed when they happen and we should also hold each other accountable and support each other to avoid decisions that would leave us in a position where we are forced to compromise what we stand for. We’ve already implemented new checks and balances to avoid the same situation happening again.

The company I spoke for already signed a contract for them is, I won’t be there. There is no contract on the planet that can force me to violate what I stand for. I will lose money and I will certainly ruffle some feathers... and that’s fine by me.

They will all get over it in due course. I wouldn’t. They will rationalise why I was the wrong person for the job anyway. But I could never feel whole for showing up, no matter how much money they offered.

Money is a calculation. My values are who I am.

5. After the event the client sent a complaint to the speakers’ bureau. The client was upset that I wore jeans and no jacket.

Simon Sinek is a trained ethnographer and author of Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action. An optimist, he believes in a bright future and our ability to build it together.
CROWDSOURCING
A NEW PARADIGM OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

By RAJ KUMAR
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

HERE is a saying “the more the merrier,” thus the concept of collective intelligence. What is better known as crowdsourcing is fast becoming a new paradigm of knowledge management. The Oxford dictionary defines knowledge as facts, information, and skills acquired through experience or education, and the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. It describes memory as the capacity to store such information. But more importantly the ability to use any form of knowledge to one’s advantage is strategically known as knowledge management. This basic principle applies to any organisation as well. Knowledge management in organisations is often dependent on two factors. One is from the experience and knowledge of the senior management team, and the other is the ability for the organisation to learn especially through formal education or training. However, there is a new paradigm to knowledge management, and it is called crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing in a nutshell is about tapping into the knowledge pool internally or externally in order to produce ideas and insights which can give the organisation a competitive advantage. Tapping into such collective intelligence can be done through various forms. Crowdsourcing can be divided into two types, internal and external.

EXTERNAL CROWDSOURCING

External crowdsourcing refers to an open call to the general public to contribute ideas. This can be very insightful and minimise risks associated with uncertain marketplace demand because it involves a cadre of customers in key marketing, branding and product development processes.

A good example is Pepsi’s “Do Us A Flavour” campaign where Pepsi’s potato chips brand asked consumers to come up with a new flavour. The campaign awarded US$1ml to the person who submitted the winning flavour. Apart from getting a winning flavour, the company gained a strong social media following.

Another example is Starbucks, “My Starbucks Idea” was one of the early crowdsourcing-like initiatives that gained widespread attention. It encourages customers to submit ideas for better products, better customer experience, and new community involvement, among other categories. Customers can submit, view and discuss ideas along with employees from various Starbucks departments. The company regularly polls its customers for their favorite products and has a leaderboard to track which customers are the most active in poll participation and submitting ideas and comments.

As of early 2013, they have received more than 150,000 ideas and of these, 277 have been implemented. This is a good example of marketing success and nothing less of a good innovation story. External crowdsourcing is also a great way to engage end users for product design and development where products can be developed, not necessarily via research and development alone, but from crowd ideas.

Caterpillar Inc, an American corporation which designs and manufactures construction and mining equipment, launched a website called the Online Customer Research Panel that asked potential buyers to weigh in on features they wanted to see in a new truck the company was designing. It encouraged professional truckers and trucking companies to submit ideas via a website. These individuals were also encouraged to provide feedback about existing designs. Caterpillar’s crowdsourcing effort helped the company offload production costs. It would normally have spent on guessing what customers wanted.

External crowdsourcing is usually done via social media or web portals. Most of these platforms do not cost a lot of money to set up but it can have a huge impact on the company’s performance in terms of demand driven products and services, not to mention brand engagement from the public.

INTERNAL CROWDSOURCING

The second type of crowdsourcing is to tap into the collective intelligence of the company within the organisation amongst employees without prejudice.

So anyone, regardless of rank and file, education background or experience, can have the chance to submit an idea. This could help to improve processes or even potentially be a game changing idea for the organisation.

A good example here is AirAsia’s “BRAIN” programme, which stands for AirAsia Big Red Awesome Idea Network. BRAIN is an internal crowd-sourcing website where employees can submit an idea on how to improve AirAsia’s business in terms of operations and market development. Employees are given the opportunity to contribute, comment and vote for ideas put forward to improve business related tasks and services.

The best ideas bubble to the top and feasible ideas get rewarded. Ideas which are not feasible are also given a lapen pin as recognition for their effort. This is a best practice which engages staff at all levels to play an active role in helping the organisation to succeed.

AirAsia also uses crowdsourcing to get suggestion on routes to travel from their 841,271 followers on Twitter, which is evidently a great pool for external crowdsourcing.

Another interesting example is IBM’s “Innovation Jam” which was the largest IBM online brainstorming session ever held with more than 150,000 employees from 104 countries and 67 companies.

As a result of this initiative, 46,000 ideas were produced and 10 new IBM businesses were launched with seed investment totaling US$100ml. This could have saved the company hundreds of millions in terms of research and staff costs.

The liberalisation of knowledge management is the key to success in an ever changing market environment.

Insights to demand creation can be quickly understood as compared to numerical data which is often skewed towards the supply side.

Crowdsourcing has proven to be a strategic approach to improve open innovation and creativity while minimising labour and research expenses. It is convenient and time saving, especially with the use of the Internet to solicit feedback from an active and passionate community of fans.

Organisations should consider crowdsourcing as a serious initiative to remain competitive and innovative especially in an ever changing business environment today.

Raj Kumar is the vice-president of Global Consulting for UCSI Blue Ocean Strategy Regional Centre and is passionate about strategy and innovation. Follow him on twitter @ rajkumar77
**BOOST YOUR BRAIN POWER**

**MEMORY AND SPEED READING TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE YOUR PRODUCTIVITY**

**Solve puzzles**  
Sudoku, Crosswords and other puzzles are an excellent way to train your brain. For solving different kinds of puzzles, you will be needing to use different mental faculties (such as imagination, logic, critical thinking).  
Every time you attempt to solve a puzzle, you set your brain working in a new way and help to solve very difficult puzzles involving reasoning, inferences or complex calculations. You can start with the easy ones.  

**Drink water**  
It is known that the human brain is made mostly of water. Our bodies are 60% water, and our brain is about 75% water! Maintaining a good hydration level is important. A small amount of dehydration can reduce your mental energy and cause confusion and memory loss. You should drink at least two litres of water (or a minimum of eight glasses) every day to keep your body and brain hydrated.  

**Write a diary**  
Writing a diary is a great way to be on record and exercise your brain. Over a period of time, you can really notice that your memory is getting better and better!  

**Learn a new skill or a language**  
Your brain performs at its peak as long as it is “learning” something. Did you ever wonder why you remember things much better when you were a student than you do now?  
It is because a student you had exams. You were committing new things to memory on a daily basis. You were engaged in learning. You were mentally active. And the simple act of being mentally active will also tremendously increase the quality of your learning.  

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The HE second of my biggest failures is being shot down. I realise that it happens in war, but a fighter pilot is not meant to be shot down. Period. It is part of the job description. The definition of a bad pilot is one with more take-offs than landings."

This was John Peters’ answer when asked about some of the biggest failures in his professional and personal life. The first was failing to pass the Buccaneer Operational Conversion Unit test at the end of his flying training.

"The one aircraft I expressly did absolutely not want to fly was the Buccaneer and I got posted to it. I was absolutely gifted!"

Peters, a best-selling author, writer and performance coach caught the world’s attention back in 1991 when television screens across the world displayed his battered and bruised face as a result of being held captive by the military of Iraq for 47 days.

His aircraft was shot down while on a mission over Ar Rumaylah airfield, during his stint as a fighter lieutenant. His harrowing experience was a 47-day ordeal of pure interrogation and torture that pushed Peters to the absolute limit which nearly resulted in his death.

Today, Peters, an experienced speaker gives talks on international repute to corporates, public sector and charities. He was the sole reader representing the British Armed Forces at the National Gulf Memorial Service, in front of the Queen.

He also was the presenter of the "Sir James Martin Lecture" at the Royal Aeronautical Society in the presence of Prince Philip and fellowed Nelson Mandela on stage in South Africa.

He has written two best-selling books and the documentary, Tornado Down was independent Documentary of the Year and a BAFTA award nominee. Peters also has extensive international TV, radio, PR and media experience.

EARLY DAYS
Since his childhood, Peters cannot remember wanting to be anything else except a fighter pilot. He finds himself to be one of those lucky ones who managed to fulfil their childhood dreams. He completed his degree in Building Engineering, sponsored by The Royal Air Force.

Peters’ first job during his schooling years was not a comfortable one. He worked in a rubber factory, starting off with cleaning the factory before going on to the production line.

"The cleaning was hard, dirty work, climbing into the huge machines full of sulphur dust, rubber, oil and grime. Each of us could only do 30 minutes at a time before being yanked out with goggles steamed up, masks clogged up with dust and completely covered in black oil and white dust.

"The production line was mind-numbingly boring, we were not for the people. My whole school career assumed that you 'failed' unless you went to university and into the professions."

"My fellow workers in the factory were fantastic – bright, intelligent and knew exactly how to 'play the performance game'. And the pay was good. It was an insight that I will never forget: never assume or under-estimate people. And be respectful of people, whatever role they play."

When he was with the Royal Air Force, Peters flew Tornados on a number of squadrons in Germany. Upon his return to the UK, he became a flying instructor on the Tri National Tornado Establishment where his role required him to train the Italian, British and German air crew.

HIS OWN START-UP
During his tenure with RAF, Peters spread his wings and conducted many programmes on leadership, safety and human error in aviation.

Once he left the air-force, he leveraged on these experiences and started his own management consultancy that provides business critical development, consulting and coaching from a leadership perspective.

His company, Monkey Business, provides expertise on leadership, strategy and change for senior business teams. Having a MBA has helped him a lot in starting up his own business as well.

"The sole reason as to why I decided to start my own consulting business was opportunity. I had completed an MBA, I had a speaking profile with my Gulf story and my last position in the RAF was exploring human performance."

Despite being offered three other jobs upon resigning from the RAF, Peters turned them down to give himself a year to see if he could run his own show.

"I had no prior business background, no influential networks and no experience in opening up a business, but all I thought was, what is the worst that could happen? It would fail and I would end up flying again or working for a consultancy firm.

Undeterred by the uncertainty, Peters went on to pursue his dreams and 13 years later, he can proudly boast of having senior managers of major companies as advocates of the effect that he has had upon their businesses.

"This itself provides me with a huge sense of satisfaction, not to mention that business is good."

MOTIVATIONS AND INSPIRATIONS
Peters does not believe in stopping after the first round. He believes that one has to pick up one’s self and give it another go if unsuccessful during the first time around.

"For example; if I had not 'failed' my A levels, I would not have gone to Manchester University and met my wife Helen – this changed my life. If I had not 'failed' at the Buccaneer Operational Conversion Unit, I would not have been flying Tornados, and so would not have been involved in the Gulf War."

"Despite being shot down, it was still unbelievable to be involved in history. If I had not been shot down, I would not have the life I lead now. My life was transformed on failing to achieve my mission. "

"For my first business not 'failed' (well, I shut it down) I would not have the business I now run. It has made me a better businessman."

For Peters, his biggest inspiration is his children. They mean the world to him. Reminiscing of the time he was shot down, he says: "During captivity I wanted to see my children grow up. I did not want them calling another man, father."

"My greatest achievement and continued motivation is seeing their development, their happiness and the contribution they make to life. Like any parent, I am inspired by their youth, their vibrancy and their joie de vivre."

When asked on what he would like to say to young people, Peters had a very interesting piece of advice to offer, an advice that has shaped him professionally and personally.

"Do not chase money. When you do what you are good at and what you enjoy, work is no longer work and working long hours is enjoyable because you are absorbed in something you want to do. It is not hard work to do what you love. If you do that, then money will follow… trust me.

Just working for money is purgatory and sucks the life out of you."

John Peters is available for speaking engagements through The London Speaker Bureau in Kuala Lumpur.

"From Fighter Pilot to Successful Entrepreneur"

"Reaching for the Skies"

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THE Devil Wears Prada – Many of your first impressions would be of a predictable chick flick about an “ugly duckling” stumbling through her job in a high fashion magazine. What could we possibly learn from a chick flick? This may surprise some of you but there are some lessons in the movie we can draw from.

There is something for people who are just starting out in their career and bosses can learn a thing or two about developing people. The plot surrounds the main character Andrea Sachs (a.k.a Andy Sachs starring Anne Hathaway), an aspiring journalist who out of desperation, settles as an intern at Runway Magazine.

The movie starts off with Sachs trying to navigate her way while still scoffing at the superficiality of the Runway culture. What she discovers is that she is working for the notorious Miranda Priestly (played by Meryl Streep), the Darth Vader of the fashion world.

Slowly she transforms into a polished professional as she starts making her way up the corporate ladder into her boss’ good books. As expected, the final chapter of the movie has Sachs’ world imploding and she finally realises she has lost herself and decides to walk away from it all.

What impresses me is that throughout her journey, Sachs holds on to her core values, listens to her heart till the end and is able to survive the corporate culture.

Here are some lessons for freshies who have just entered the working world and are still getting themselves attuned to the intricacies of corporate culture:

1. BUILD RAPPORT WITH SUPERVISORS
   So you have a new difficult boss and both of you are unable to see eye-to-eye. Are you willing to compromise to succeed?
   
   Are you willing to change your looks, adjust your priorities, and sacrifice your private life?
   
   Are you willing to become another person in order to rise in the organisation?
   
   My answer may come as a surprise, but sometimes, we do need to make certain adjustments to adapt to our work environment.
   
   Having a good rapport with your boss is important, because this factor can greatly influence your level of motivation at work.
   
   The boss-subordinate relationship is important, especially if you plan to be the part of the organisation for a decent length of time.

   In the movie, despite the resistance at first, Sachs starts changing herself. The idea of “who you are” is a fluid concept.

   In your 20s and early 30s, you probably have no firm idea of who you are and what you are capable of.
   
   The fact is, we live, work and play in a world that we cannot control and it is not always ideal for us. But we can learn to adapt to any environment in order to gain influence and make real change.

   I am not suggesting that you compromise and change yourself to a point that you stab your friends in the back to get ahead.
   
   But in order to find what you want in life, you have to understand what everyone else wants, and learning how to meet your boss’ high expectations early on in your career is a good start.

2. SHOW TENACITY AT WORK
   Shoving commitment to your organisation and your boss will help you get ahead in your career.

   Sachs scored every woman’s dream job working for fabulous fashion magazine. That is until she meets her boss and discovers that her colleagues suffer from low morale.
   
   The office culture is downright toxic. Sachs displays patience, commitment and tenacity in her work. Despite several failures, work pressure, the indifferent attitude of boss and adversity thrown at her, she doesn’t give up.
   
   Her remarkable drive to keep a few steps ahead and do more than is expected of her wins her boss over.
   
   Through her drive and tenacity, Sachs displays an outstanding level of commitment toward her job.
   
   It is hard to be engaged and love your job when you perceive your boss to be an unreasonable person. Going through hardships will toughen you up as you grow and learn more about yourself as an individual.

3. KNOW WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE
   Therein lies the question, where do we draw the line? Should we become a “yes-man” and submit to our bosses all the time?
   
   There’s nothing wrong with being committed to your job, but if your employer expects you to spend a lot of time at work, it shows that he or she is not interested in your life outside the office.
   
   Research shows that to be productive, happy and engaged at work, people need to feel valued and appreciated as individuals.

   To keep healthy work-life balance is equally important.

4. REALISE THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD MENTOR
   A mentor helps an employee to move up the ladder and become the head of an organisation.

   Having a mentor helps an employee to move up the ladder and become the head of an organisation.

   His role is to guide and help you towards the top position.

   Having a mentor helps you navigate your way while still scoffing at the superficiality of the Runway culture.

   Although I did say that we do not have to be a nice boss all the time, I am not suggesting that you become mean and condescending to your subordinates.

   Priestly’s cold, harsh and at times, cruel treatment of Andrea has us cringing throughout “The Devil Wears Prada”, which has made her one of pop culture’s most hated bosses.

   Leadership traits are portrayed quite negatively in the movie, as reflected by the entry of Miranda to the office. Constant team meetings, where everyone tries to portray himself or herself as best to please the boss is not a positive sign of it all.

   Such an environment creates negativity and affects productivity.

   A good manager should be approachable, appreciate and never should not feel rejected. Employers should be able to create rapport with all subordinates.

   While it’s important to ensure that employees respect their bosses, respect based on fear is counterproductive and will lead to a stressful and unhealthy working environment.

   Instead, work to earn respect by being a strong yet approachable mentor and leader. At the end of the day, kindness earns more respect than fear ever will.

   A tough manager who is able to empower his or her employees is a hallmark of a true leader.

5. DON’T STEP ON OTHERS TO GET AHEAD
   Be nice on the way up, because you never know who you’ll meet on the way back down.

   Think about the relationship between Andrea and her colleague Emily (played Emily Blunt).

   No matter how many snide remarks or awful tasks were thrown Andrea’s way, she maintained grace, integrity and a positive attitude.

   You will never know when you might need them and you definitely would not want your actions in the past to come back and haunt you.

6. LEARN WHEN TO WALK AWAY
   Be guided by your values. Don’t lose sight of who you are or why you’re there.

   If the job is leading you to question your own values or requires you to compromise on them – as was the case when Andrea’s colleague was cheated out of a promotion, re-examine your role.

   In the end, Andrea discovers that this wasn’t her “dream job”, and it wasn’t worth losing herself or what she stood for.

   If the job or the workplace is causing you to second-guess your judgment, values or the way you live your life, then it’s not the place for you.
WHEN SLEEPING ON THE JOB IS A GOOD THING

By JOHN WALTER S. BAYBAY
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I’ve just woken up and the sun is already up. It’s 5.45 am in Manila on a Thursday. I am writing this with a view of the sun coming down from my window. The sky has turned orange; the music has now turned down from my window. The sky has turned orange; the music has now turned down. The fact is that it is simply impossible to manage time as time just happens by itself and you simply have no control as to how fast it goes. It waits for no one! Time management experts try to milk the whole issue by giving you what really are task management techniques. If you’re lucky enough, you would’ve picked-up some skills based on real task management principles adapted from project management and work-planning practices. The hard side of time-management seems to be a lot better at giving you some adapting measures rather than the fluff that many work-life balance advocates would give you.

The only thing you could do is to get some work done as effectively and as fast as you can. The question is not whether you have the time but rather whether you actually have the energy! I read an interesting article the other week from a website called Addicted 2 Success, where they say that “Our Commodity for Success is No longer Money, It’s Energy”. The new paradigm makes perfect sense.

The good news is that while time is forever fixed, energy is elastic and renewable. The more energy you have, the more effective you are in getting the job done in less time. The new paradigm is that “You’re only as strong and as effective as how well you recover!”. Sports and medical science has proven that it is during the time of rest that you actually get stronger. Your body adapts to the added load. That’s why physical training is mostly based on the principle of “progressive overload”. You shouldn’t avoid stress but you could train yourself to handle it. The important part is setting some time to recover. This gives a whole new meaning to the phrase “Sleeping on the job”. In this case, stealing a short nap could be seen as purposeful. Just as anything that runs on batteries need to charge, so do we.

Energy management also keeps us mindful about our peaks of effectiveness that go hand in hand with energy levels. If you’re out of energy you simply can’t go on with a task without a struggle. It gets so bad it’s as if you’ve run into a brick wall. Having the energy and applying it in short effective sprints on your tasks gets more things done in a shorter amount of time than forcing yourself on a singular task dragged on for hours.

Organise your tasks in time-segments and make some room for “active recovery” in between. Active recovery could be as simple as getting some coffee or walking around after a task but also using the time to set yourself up for the next activity. These are three to five minute breaks. A 15-minute nap unlocks more than a couple of hours of energy for overtime.

Treat your tasks as appointments that deserve your absolute attention. Place task assignments as if they were appointments and your calendar. Set time bound parameters and check your progress.

You can’t manage time, but you can manage energy! And task! Focus on the latter two, and you’ll find yourself being more effective and productive. Treat your life goals like they were projects with defined beginnings and terminations and transitions.

John Walter Baybay is a regional management consultant who has worked more than 17 years in the areas of corporate strategic planning and economic planning. He is a competitive athlete who balances his time between business coaching, family and working with communities. Follow him on Twitter @JohnSBaybay

THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER YOU HAVE THE TIME BUT RATHER WHETHER YOU ACTUALLY HAVE THE ENERGY!

By TERRY SMALL
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GETTING enough sleep keeps you thin. I have been telling people in my live presentations for years that sleep is very important for brain health. Now there is another good reason to get enough “shut-eye”. Accumulating research says that even short-term, partial sleep deprivation can cause weight gain and other negative metabolic consequences.

The day following a “less than seven hours of sleep night”, the average person will eat 29% more calories. It seems that a cognitively tired brain doesn’t always make good food choices. Why does this happen? Ghrelin and leptin are involved. Ghrelin is involved in sending hunger signals. Leptin helps to tell you when you are full. When don’t get enough sleep you body makes more ghrelin and less leptin. You don’t need me to tell you what happens next...

Also, consider this:
- When you don’t get enough sleep, your neurons don’t secrete the normal amount of the “feel good” chemicals dopamine and serotonin.
- This is a powerful recipe for craving cake, candy, ice cream, pasta, and bread (You can probably think of a few other things).
- Even a 16 minute loss of sleep each night increases the risk of obesity (as reported in the medical journal Sleep).
- Lack of sleep can raise the level of the stress hormone cortisol. This encourages your body to break down muscle and store fat.
- Sleep deprivation slows down your metabolism.
- Being awake longer gives you more time and opportunity to eat.
- When your brain is tired your judgment is impaired and will power is depleted.
- The relationship between sleep duration and Body Mass Index is clear.

I think there are two bottom lines:
- Sleep more. Seven to nine hours.
- Life isn’t perfect. You won’t always get seven hours of sleep. So, when you don’t, be vigilant. Know that you are likely to make poor food choices. Set yourself up for success.

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

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 thing a person can acquire. To interact with Small, email mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

A BRAIN TRICK TO KEEP YOU SHARP

By JOHN WALTER S. BAYBAY mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER YOU HAVE THE TIME BUT RATHER WHETHER YOU ACTUALLY HAVE THE ENERGY!
A

S a homegrown startup with a young and entreprenneur team, we have attracted quite a number of talented interns from diverse backgrounds — they studied different subjects (from Physics to Psychology) and came from various universities or colleges (from Oxford University to Raffles College).

From these rewarding experiences, here are eight tips for those who are applying for internships or currently interning, on making the most out of their internship.

ADD VALUE TO THE ORGANISATION

Most supervisors would be interested to find out how your skillsets could help the organisation. Your skillsets need not necessarily be derived from your formal subject of study, in fact, it could be from your hobby or extracurricular activities. For example, one of our interns studied it, but his real passion is videography. He single-handedly directed, shot and edited three corporate videos which were of immense value to us and our customers.

In fact, this particular intern subsequently represented his university to compete in videography competitions in the United States!

If you manage to bring about a positive quantifiable impact on the organisation, the chances are, you may even land a job offer (or at least a good testimonial or reference for future job applications).

ADD VALUE TO YOURSELF - ABSORB LIKE A SPONGE

Since you will be spending one month or three months of your time for your internship, you might as well make the most of it (even if it is just ticking the checklist to undertake an internship due to university requirements).

One of the things I usually brief interns at the outset of their internship is to regard their internship as if it was their own business or project because this mindset would really generate maximum learning and inculcate problem-solving skills.

Take this opportunity to enhance what you are good at and more importantly, learn new skills! Apart from learning technical skills do also observe the softer side of things, e.g. how are good at and more importantly, learn new solving skills.

AVOID WORKING AS IF IT WAS THEIR OWN BUSINESS

Most people are suckers for working as if it was their own business or project. By offering to help, not only will you become more proactive and motivated but it will really benefit both your supervisor (by easing his/her workload) and yourself (because you get to learn more).

DO NOT SET LIMITS ON YOURSELF

Interns should have the “can do” attitude, because it makes a huge difference in the end results. Most people tend to stick to what they are comfortable with, i.e. their comfort zone. But breakthroughs can only be generated if you challenge yourself. Rather than say “I won’t”, “I can’t” or “I don’t know how”, say “I will”, “I can” and “I will make it happen”.

TIME TO MOVE ON?

SHOULD YOU START LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB?

By PREMA JAYABALAN

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Of late, you have been dreading getting up for work. Just the mere thought of work has turned into a cold place with a tense atmosphere. Office is no longer friendly and warm, but bankruptcy. If that is the scenario, then no other option should be available out there for you.

It may be ugly if you are being bullied by your superior, because even if action is taken after your complaint, you may still have to report to the same person. If your superior is unethical, then he/she can make your life miserable in the name of revenge. This may affect any room for career progression.

By KHO HAN JIA

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Seek feedback

If no one is perfect. Seek regular feedback on your work and also observe the softer side of things, e.g. how are good at and more importantly, learn new solving skills.

MAKING FRIENDS

Apart from working hard, make as many friends as you can! Participate in team activities and never have lunch alone! Do not be afraid to walk up, smile and say hi — there is nothing to lose! This is not limited to fellow interns but also your colleagues and superiors.

There is so much to learn from the unique profiles and skillsets of the team and you never know who may be helpful to you in the future. The world is really much smaller than you think. At the very least, making friends allows you to have a happier internship! I have no doubt you will have a worthwhile internship if the above are achieved. With that, I conclude by wishing you “Happy Interning!”

Kho Han Jia is co-founder of Worthy Book. He holds a masters degree in Engineering, Economics & Management from Oxford University and was attached with a local investment bank before co-founding his company.

HAZARDOUS ENVIRONMENT

This is a definite indication that it is time to move on before it takes a huge toll on you, especially if it is starting to affect your health.

UNAPPEALING SALARY PACKAGE

You are being given more assignments and responsibilities to carry out but there seems to be no raise in your pay. People out there who are doing the same thing as you are earning double your salary.

Your workload is getting heavier but not your pocket and you feel that the compensation and benefits offered do not justify your work. Well, it is time to scout around for much better prospects that will give you a career a positive turn.

工作已经变得毫无乐趣。你的存在使你的上司/同事感到不快。你可能已经意识到时间到了需要离开的时候。所以这里有几个迹象表明是时候更新简历，发送给潜在的公司。

想要获得积极的反馈，不要害怕对你的上司/同事说你的想法。他们可能会非常清楚，但对许多人来说，这可能并不明显。

如果您的上司/同事是不道德的，那么他/她可能会让你的生活变得糟糕。这可能影响到职业发展。

压力是不可接受的，办公室不再友好和温暖，而是破产。如果这是情况，那么没有其他选择可以考虑。

如果你的上司/同事正在欺负你，那么即使采取了法律措施，你仍然可能不得不向同一个人报告。如果您的上司/道德，那么他/她可能会破坏您在组织中的声誉。这可能影响到任何职业发展。

工作是一场游戏

这种模式会让父母在许多方面感到满足，但你可能觉得这不是一个好事情，如果你的工作真的很累。}

你的管理似乎没有实现你的潜力。你有更多要去做，并且你有忘记了一些事情，一次或两次，可能你的老板也不知道。

这导致了你被认为是过时的。
1. IS YOUR CV THE BEST IT CAN BE?
Before you take any other step, consider your curriculum vitae (CV). Remember, potential employers only have this document to base their decisions on; therefore it should be accurate and reflective of your skills and interests.

You indicated in your letter that you have taken one year after graduation to do several things to enhance your skills and experience. Ensure you clearly articulate what you did, what you achieved and how that will be of value to the employer.

Your CV does not need to be a long-winded document. Make it concise, but outcome oriented.

Employers are not interested in every single activity you have been involved in. They are interested in understanding how you have benefitted and grown from the activities you have undertaken. Not every activity needs to get to your CV. Choose those that have really made an impact in your development. The others are not necessary and are just a waste of space in your CV.

As the last advice, get someone to read your CV. Ask them to summarise what they learnt from it, and how they will describe you after reading the document.

This will help you in ascertaining if the document achieves the desired objective. A content audit and grammar check. There is no excuse for sending CVs with basic mistakes like that.

2. WHAT TYPE OF ORGANISATIONS ARE YOU INTERESTED IN?
I believe you are trying to search for jobs in all sorts of organisations with not much consideration to what you really want.

I understand it is difficult to go on for a while without a job, and this may push you to consider any available opportunity. However that may hurt you in the long-term, as you may not even be acquiring the right level of experience and exposure.

This will be a disadvantage when you need to include that in your CV and seek for further opportunities. Think carefully what area of environmental management you want to focus on. Research on the type of companies that have those relevant practices/policies and then apply to those companies.

When you do that, you will be in a better position to demonstrate how what you have been doing are aligned to those interests and can benefit the employer by hiring you.

Always remember, organisations are in the lookout for young promising individuals, they not always seek for experienced individuals.

However, in order to attract organisations to someone young and inexperienced, you must show them that you have potential. That you are interested in contributing, that you are able to add value.

3. INTERNSHIPS ARE A GOOD START.
Think also of an internship as a long term interview. During internships, employers are able to assess your fit to their organisations, their culture and their requirements.

You also have the opportunity to evaluate if the organisation can offer you what you are looking for.

Internships are great opportunities. Don’t look at them as short term jobs. If you go beyond what is expected of you, it can be a great start of your career.

Don’t see yourself as a “second class” employee, just because you don’t have a permanent position. Act as if you were an employee. Find out about the organisation, their products, services and what they do.

Find out how they use environmental management in their work. Understand what policies, policies in the area and seek to add value to their activities. Don’t want to be “spoon fed” during their time.

4. DON’T LOSE HOPE
Looking for a job is not something to be taken lightly. It may take time and it may not be a smooth road. But remember, the more you focus your efforts and the more you learn, the better and more refined your search will become.

Don’t do this alone. Talk to people that you know and ask them if they know of any opportunities and your search not only to newspaper advertisements. Try other ways like online job search websites. Keep learning. Read and do research about latest developments in the field. This is important for your future interviews. You must always be prepared as you will never know when an interview opportunity will come. So, always have a positive attitude and keep trying.

I wish you all the best.

CLAUDIA CADENA

Dear TLM,

Compared with the mainstream or established jobs, there are some opportunities in biodiversity conservation that is relatively small ones. However, over the recent years there has been a steady expansion of job opportunities in this sector largely driven by the global response to concerns over climate change and growing interest in related aspects such as CSR, sustainable production of agricultural and other commodities and responsible purchasing/procurement policies.

There is an excellent publication by WWF-Malaysia on career opportunities in biodiversity and environmental management called How High does the Hornbill Fly? Based on what you’ve written, you have been doing an interning, looking for a job with a nature conservation NGO. You have taken the initiative to increase your chances of success, including volunteering and doing an internship with NGOs, as well as working part time in an environmental consultancy company.

The experience you gained through these various stints will definitely be an asset in your future job application. Do not be disheartened or frustrated by the challenges you face in the quest for a full time position in this sector.

While it is true that in most cases potential employers are looking for candidates with relevant work experience, there are also occasional job opportunities for fresh graduates. To a certain extent, luck and timing are also crucial elements that would determine success. To give an example, there was a bright young graduate who was working for more than a year as a daily paid assistant with a conservation NGO hoping to secure full-time employment.

Unfortunately, there was no suitable opening for her and she then took up an offer with a research institution. However, not long after she left, there were job vacancies within the organisation that would have been suitable for her.

On the positive side, there was a biotechnology graduate who took on various jobs unrelated to nature conservation before finally securing a contractual position with a leading conservation NGO after three years of trying.

As for the reluctance of employ- ers in Sabah and Sarawak to recruit Peninsular Malaysians, a major cause of this is not the unsuitability of candidates, but rather the strict state government policies that generally discourage the hiring of non-locals in the two states.

So, it is not about whether you are moving to relocate or not that, all things being equal, they would rather recruit locals as it would save them a lot of red tape in securing permission from the relevant authorities to hire non-locals.

If you are interested to apply for positions within government agen- cies, keep an eye on the websites of the Public Service Department or JP4 (www.jp4.gov.my) and relevant government agencies such as the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (www.wildlife.gov.my).

The tendency for government agencies is to have large recruitment exercises once every few years, with little or no hiring in between. So if you missed a window of opportunity, you could be in for a very long wait.

Are you looking for a job just working on biodiversity?

Are you limiting your options to just working in a contractual position with a leading conservation NGO after three years of trying.

As for the reluctance of employ- ers in Sabah and Sarawak to recruit Peninsular Malaysians, a major cause of this is not the unsuitability of candidates, but rather the strict state government policies that generally discourage the hiring of non-locals in the two states.

So, it is not about whether you are moving to relocate or not that, all things being equal, they would rather recruit locals as it would save them a lot of red tape in securing permission from the relevant authorities to hire non-locals.

If you are interested to apply for positions within government agen- cies, keep an eye on the websites of the Public Service Department or JP4 (www.jp4.gov.my) and relevant government agencies such as the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (www.wildlife.gov.my).

The tendency for government agencies is to have large recruitment exercises once every few years, with little or no hiring in between. So if you missed a window of opportunity, you could be in for a very long wait.

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Women need to stop quitting early and learn to sit at the table

Also next week

7 Steps to increase your focus for a more effective you in 2014

Multitasking is not just counterproductive, it's actually impossible

Our apologies

In our 14 Dec edition of Dear CareerMonomers in response to a question from reader Siva, we wrongly attributed an answer to Roya Shodood. The advice was given by Emily Wong, head, organisational development & learning, AllianceBank. Our sincere apologies for this error.

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