SERVICE ABOVE SELF

By DARSHANA SIVANANTHAM
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The word “servant” quite instantaneously creates a negative connotation, and to associate this word with leadership may as well be unheard of. Introduced in 1970 by Robert K. Greenleaf, the term servant leadership basically suggests that the leader is a servant first. In this form of leadership, one naturally feels the need to serve others first, and only then is aspirated to lead.

IDENTIFYING A SERVANT LEADER

Servant leaders usually put others before themselves. There is a high drive to ensure that the growth, development, well-being and needs of people and communities they belong to are fulfilled and met. As a team environment, this would simply mean having a manager who is ready to do whatever it takes to ensure that his team doesn’t get left behind. The ten characteristics of a servant leader according to Larry C. Spears (former president of the Robert K. Greenleaf Centre for Servant Leadership) include:

- Conceptualisation
- Stewardship
- Building communities
- Listening
- Commitment to the growth of others
- Foresight
- Empathy
- Healing
- Self-awareness
- Persuasion

THE CHALLENGE

Due to their unique nature, servant leaders have almost opposite characteristics to other styles of leadership. As servant leaders tend to prioritise others, it is always difficult to measure the level of impact their actions have on the people they serve. How does one know if those being served are truly growing and developing? How can we measure, realistically, the effect of a servant leader on all levels of a community? In many ways, servant leadership uses more “heart” than “head” in decision-making. The ability to connect intimately with the people they serve through empathy and awareness, is a gift not many have been able to develop naturally.

Nevertheless, it is a skill that can be honed over time. However, this can also cause some servant leaders the issue of having an imbalance of too much heart and too little head when it comes to the decision-making processes.

In A NUTSHELL

To summarise this unique behaviour associated to leadership, it is safe to conclude that servant leaders place trust, and empathy as their key differentiators. The definition of power to a servant leader, is heavily influenced by the need to use it ethically, and conscious decisions are made to ensure everything they do is focused on serving others better. Their objective is always to enhance the growth of individuals and communities they come into contact with.

To be a servant leader takes a lot of patience, strength and a sense of equanimity. If this is your style of leading, then it is likely that you are good at engaging people and enjoying healthier working relationships with the people you interact with.

You may not always end up making the difference you wanted, but at the very least, always remember that you (literally) put your heart and soul into it!
WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A SOCIA LLY INTE LLIGENT LEADER

By DANIEL GOLEMAN
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WHEN a workshop organ-ised by the human resources (HR) depart- ment drew an unexpected standing-room-only turnout, they acted quickly to move the meeting to a larger space.

The trouble with the new space was that it wasn’t well-equipped for easy viewing and clear acoustics. Some had trouble seeing and hearing the speaker, in particular, a woman who spoke up during a break. She approached the head of HR in a rage, explained how she hadn’t heard or seen a thing, and declared the work-shop a total failure.

The head of HR quickly realised that her best option was to listen, acknowledg-e the woman’s frustrations, and express empathy. Then she spoke with the audiovisual (AV) staff—thoroughly tempering these complaints—and tried her best to at least elevate the screen for better visibility.

At the end of the workshop, the woman approached the head of HR again to say that she saw her working on adjustments at the AV table and really appreciated it. The woman still pointed out that her viewing experience was sub- par, but she felt more relaxed after seeing the HR director advocate on her behalf.

THE RIGHT APPROACH AT THE RIGHT TIME

Socially intelligent leaders have the ability to respond deftly in these types of situations. When colleagues express their frustrations, a socially intelligent leader— like this head of HR—knows how to listen carefully, empathise, and take measures to help improve conditions.

Even when these measures fail, they can provide emotional support to the person in distress. Paying attention to someone’s concerns actually allows that person to process them faster, shortening the time spent ruminating.

But by ignoring these demonstrations of anger and frustration, a leader will only encourage the person to seethe, and then seethe some more about being ignored!

Keep in mind: As a socially intelligent leader, you can do this even when a per-son’s complaints seem truly unfounded.

You don’t need to condone a reaction, but you should acknowledge the emo-tions behind that reaction, and suggest a couple of solutions. This will at least decrease the magnitude of any harmful emotions.

Studies show that socially intelligent leaders do more than just make people happier at work.

In a survey of employees at 700 com-panies, the majority said that a support-ive boss mattered more than how much money they earned.

This study also showed that caring bosses drive increased productivity and encouraged employees to stay with their companies. It seems that most people don’t want to work for hostile bosses, regardless of the pay.

HOW DO I BECOME SOCIA LLY INTE LLIGENT?

You probably already are. If you don’t agree, know that you can cultivate social intelligence.

First, learn how to focus. Socially intelligent leadership begins with being engaged and focused on your work. If you’re disengaged from your role, you won’t be able to put others at ease.

An engaged leader can tap into his innate social intelligence—discerning how people feel and why, expressing appropriate concern, and interacting skilfully to encourage positive states of thinking.

There isn’t a foolproof formula for doing this right in every situation. You can get better at it over time, especially by staying in sync with your team. This is imperative to being a socially intelligent leader.

PARTING THOUGHTS

Now, more than ever, organisations are in a key position to promote socially intelligent leaders. As people work longer hours—connecting nights and weekends via mobile technology—businesses start to feel like a substitute family.

But, many of us can be ejected from this substitute family at any moment. That uncertainty means that hope and fear run rampant. That’s why social intelligence matters.

To manage people effectively, a socially intelligent leader pays attention to these undercurrents of ambivalence because they affect people’s abilities to perform at their best.

And because emotions have a ripple effect, leaders at all levels must uphold their responsibility to maintain a productive environment.

GROW, BUILD, TRANSFORM.

AT LEADERONOMICS, we believe leaders can profoundly affect the social, economic and spiritual health of communities they belong to. And we believe that all human beings have the potential for leadership. No matter who you are, what you do and whatever challenges are hampering your progress, Leaderonomics can help you and your organisation achieve maximum potential.

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Hence, we think of notable and influential human resources (HR) leaders, a name that may come to mind is Dave Ulrich, a professor, consultant and author recently known for developing the Leadership Capital Index. Other names that may come to mind are Susan P. Peters, the senior vice president of HR at General Electric, and Lazlo Bock, the senior vice president of people operations at Google. While these are HR practitioners to look up to, it is also imperative that we as Malaysians look up to the pool of home-grown talents that are impacting the development of our workforce.

The Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management (MIHRM) president and chief operating officer Aresandiran Jaganatha Naidu said the HR industry aims to produce Malaysia’s very own top HR leaders. He emphasised, “The younger generation needs a role model. By identifying the top industry players through an award, this generation will be able to learn from these leaders.”

With this line of thought, the MIHRM Malaysia HR Awards was inaugurated in 1999. But why an award?

Aresandiran had this to say: “For this, we need to think back to what our objective is as a developing country.” He conveyed that it is to raise the standards of the workforce in the country. A step towards achieving this is to recognise the standards of HR in the country and to recognise the best industry players as a role model and benchmark for others.

Some of the MIHRM’s 2015 Malaysia HR Awards winners, seen here with their trophies.
By ERIC LAU
www.leaderonomics.com | Saturday 26 March 2016

Embracing the Spirit of a Servant in Building Great Organisations

By Jack Chow
www.leaderonomics.com

The humble road to leadership

Famous servant leaders and how to lead like them

A CASE STUDY
TONYHSIEH AND ZAPPOS

Tony Hsieh, chief executive of Zappos—one of the world’s largest online shoe and clothing companies—is known for his servant leadership. As a company that moves over US$1bil (RM4bil) and a 10mil transactions in the last 20 years, Zappos is a great example of a company that is run with servant leadership.

A servant leader is one who always looks out for the best interest of others. Although the principles of servant leadership have been a timeless practice, the modern understanding of this term was first pioneered by Robert K. Greenleaf in the 1970s. Greenleaf taught that a servant leader leads by serving others. They place the interests and needs of others above their own interests and needs. In short, servant leaders place others before self. They are servants first, then leaders second.

Although the principles of servant leadership have been a timeless practice, the modern understanding of this term was first pioneered by Robert K. Greenleaf in the 1970s. Greenleaf taught that a servant leader leads by serving others. They place the interests and needs of others above their own interests and needs. In short, servant leaders place others before self. They are servants first, then leaders second.

Most matters is how leaders behave, and not what they are being called. Servant leaders are those who are always seen as leaders because they genuinely care about others and their leadership expression.

Servant leadership is about the process and understanding the results—hence the expression of ‘following through’—rather than the outcomes of the process.
By TRAVIS BRADBERRY

11 THINGS SMART PEOPLE WON'T SAY

TRAVIS BRADBERRY is the award-winning co-author of the No. 1 bestselling book, Emotional Intelligence 2.0, and co-founder of the world’s leading provider of emotional intelligence tests and training. His bestselling books have been translated into 25 languages and are available in more than 150 countries. To learn more about how to manage people, write in to training@leaderonomics.com.

1. “IT’S NOT FAIR.” Everyone knows that life isn’t fair. Saying “it’s not fair” suggests that you think life is supposed to be fair, which makes you look immature and naive. If you don’t want to make yourself look bad, you need to stick to the facts, stay constructive, and leave your interpretation out of it.

2. “THIS IS THE WAY IT’S ALWAYS BEEN DONE.” Technology-fuelled change is happening so fast that even a six-month-old process could be outdated. Saying “This is the way it’s always been done” not only makes you sound lazy and resistant to change, but it could make your boss wonder why you haven’t tried to improve things on your own. If you really are doing things the way they’ve always been done, there’s almost certainly a better way.

3. “NO PROBLEM.” When someone asks you to do something or thanks you for doing something, and you tell the person, “No problem,” you’re implying that his or her request should have been a problem. This makes people feel as though they’re imposed on you. What you want to do instead is show people that you’re happy to do your job. Say something like, “It was my pleasure,” or “I’ll be happy to take care of that.” It’s a subtle difference in language, but one that has a huge impact on people.

4. “I THINK.../THIS MAY BE A SILLY IDEA...I’M GOING TO ASK A STUPID QUESTION.” These overly passive phrases instantly erode your credibility, even if you follow these phrases with a great idea, they suggest that you lack confidence, which makes the people you’re speaking to lose confidence in you. Don’t be your own worst critic. If you’re not confident in what you’re saying, no one else will be either. And, if you really don’t know something, say, “I don’t have that information right now, but I’ll find out and get right back to you.”

5. “THIS WILL ONLY TAKE A MINUTE.” Saying that something only takes a minute undermines your skills and gives the impression that you rush through tasks. Unless you’re literally going to complete the task in sixty seconds, feel free to say that it won’t take long, but don’t make it sound as though the task can be completed any sooner than it actually can be.

6. “I’LL TRY.” Just like the word think, try sounds tentative and suggests that you lack confidence in your ability to execute the task. Take full ownership of your capabilities.

7. “HE’S LAZY/INCOMPETENT/A JERK.” There is no upside to making a disparaging remark about a colleague. If your remark is accurate, everybody already knows it, so there’s no need to point it out. If your remark is inaccurate, you’re the one who ends up looking like a jerk. There will always be rude or incompetent people in any workplace, and chances are that everyone knows who they are. If you don’t have the power to help them improve or to fire them, then you have nothing to gain by broadcasting their ineptitude. Announcing your colleague’s incompetence comes across as an insecure attempt to make you look better.

8. “THAT’S NOT IN MY JOB DESCRIPTION.” This often sarcastic phrase makes you sound as though you’re only willing to do the bare minimum required to keep getting a pay cheque, which is a bad thing if you like job security.

9. “IT’S NOT MY FAULT.” Eliminating these phrases from your vocabulary pays dividends. They have a tendency to sneak up on you, so you’re going to have to catch yourself until you’ve solidified the habit of not saying them.

10. “I CAN’T.” There’s no taking them back. People don’t like to hear “I can’t” because they think it means “I won’t.”

11. “I HATE THIS JOB.” The last thing anyone wants to hear at work is people complaining about how much they hate their job. Doing so labels you as a negative person and brings down the morale of the group, bosses are quick to catch onto naysayers who drag down morale, and they know that there are always enthusiastic replacements waiting just around the corner.
By ANTHONY LAM
editor@leaderonomics.com

E ven though it feels like ages since, it was only a year ago when I confidently walked into a conference room for a job interview that would, unbeknown to me, impact the rest of my career.

The position was a Klang Valley office-based role with a reputable international Christian non-governmental organisation (NGO) that I was hoping would afford me the opportunity to involve myself in some form of advocacy work. It seemed the sort of position that suited my passion, conscientiousness and educational background in both humanities and social sciences.

After greetings were exchanged, one of the two interviewers informed me that they would be interviewing me for another position, one that needed to be filled more urgently.

The proposal was that I be sent to Kelantan to help in rebuilding the orang asli communities that were severely affected by the floods of December 2014. I would be required to relocate to an unfamiliar, remote location to work with communities that may be culturally and linguistically strange to me.

It was not an offer I anticipated, so it was unsurprisingly difficult for me to accept immediately. Yet I believe the twists and turns in our lives happen for a reason. Personally, I believe that God has a way of changing our plans and redirecting us to paths He may feel suit us best.

We just have to take the first step with faith.

STEPPING OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE

As part of the organisation’s second phase of response to the devastation of Lah Kuning, I was charged to lead a team of field staff to carry out post-disaster rehabilitation projects in several sectors, namely WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction), and agriculture. Sustainability was also a key focus in our operations.

Therefore, the projects did not consist merely of physical structures such as water catchments, wells and emergency food storages, but also educational programmes for the communities.

My previous work experiences were mostly in book publishing, so I knew that the toughest part of this role was that I did not have extensive experience within these fields. I had experience doing short-term cross-cultural community work through my church since my early teens, but the tasks at hand seemed much more daunting. There was a lot of pressure because of the amount of responsibilities—first to the communities that I would serve and secondly to the donors who entrusted our organisation with their financial contributions.

The working environment was challenging, to say the least. I had to swiftly learn to operate a 4x4 vehicle in treacherous conditions. Some villages and schools were four hours or more deep in the jungle. Consequently, there were many close calls as the tyres slid on muddy slopes whenever it rained.

There were many aspects of my work that were unfamiliar and required me to assimilate technical knowledge concerning construction, agriculture, irrigation and water treatment. While I was fortunate to have technical consultants to refer to from time to time for certain projects, as a leader, I had to be well-versed in these areas and be quick on my feet.

I had to overcome the initial culture shock and understand the community’s perspective. I often find that people have preconceived notions about orang asli communities, jumping to conclusions prematurely during their interactions with the indigenous people. It was important for me to not see the communities and their struggles through the eyes of a city boy raised in an upper-middle class family. I learnt that only when a deep sense of empathy is infused with the organisation’s community development approaches is it possible for the programme or project to be sustainable.

LEADERSHIP LESSONS

1 LEADING BY FOLLOWING

As a youth, I was actively involved with community work through church groups. It was during those days that I was reminded that in order to truly lead, I must first understand how to follow. It was difficult being in the field and receiving directions from my office-based superiors sometimes. Nevertheless, I had to understand that the organisational structure is there for a reason—to ensure that each part is delegated and members play their role to the best of their ability.

While we may question the structure, we should acknowledge that it helps and respectfully make the most of the system.

Communicating with my leaders factually was vital to having productive discussions. At times, the office base would recommend a particular course of action within a programme. However, being in the field and spending time with the villagers daily afforded us contrasting perspectives from those of our superiors.

On my part, there would be an initial tendency to think my leaders have no idea what they are saying because they do not work and live among the communities.

Therefore, they lack relevant contextual knowledge for making crucial decisions. After all, I’m the one in the jungle, spending time with these villagers and learning about their needs and potential hurdles that might affect project feasibility. However, I have found that the best outcomes have come from speaking to my leaders respectfully and humbly, offering my opinions and advice while acknowledging my place within the organisation. While they may struggle to see things from a field staff’s perspective, their contrasting perspectives help us, as a team, to look at issues from several points of view and consider alternative solutions.

One of the rewards of respecting my leaders was the example it set for those who were following me. Even though I managed to learn these skills and technical knowledge promptly, I still felt I had been abruptly thrown into a leadership position. In such a volatile environment, my weaknesses were exposed for my field team to see. It was in this moment that I could reinforce the importance of being a humble follower whilst being a strong leader.

On many occasions, when there was internal conflict, I could lead by the example I consciously set.

2 LEVERAGE

As a leader, it was important for me to strive to be humble and identify my own weaknesses. Had I not done that, I might have failed to realise that I needed to capitalise on the knowledge and skill sets of the amazing individuals that made up the team.

While working with the Temiar communities in remote areas, I often relied on my fellow team members who had more context-specific experience than me. I prepared myself to learn from those under me because I was not as adept in the fields of construction, agriculture, irrigation and water treatment.

When I believed I lacked the capacity to execute a particular task, it was important that my team knew I was prepared to make way for them to take the lead. It was pivotal to take a step back and allow them to develop as leaders, but also reinforce that I trusted them and believed in their talents.

The team was able to build off-grid water systems for 10 Temiar communities, initiate agriculture projects for three communities and construct emergency food supply storages for 12 communities in the interiors of Kelantan last year.

We also facilitated workshops and discussions on health, hygiene and disaster preparedness, among other issues, with the communities and their leaders.

PARTING THOUGHTS

While many of my peers may have found the experience of working in the Temiar community, it was most definitely a joint effort by a large team of individuals who understood that each of them had two pivotal roles to play—first a follower, then a leader.

Personally, I believe that God has a way of changing our plans and redirecting us to paths He may feel suit us best. We just have to take the first step with faith.

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Anthony Lam driving through the jungles of Kelantan.

Anthony Lam led a team of five field staff during a 10-month-long community project among Temiar (Orang Asli) communities who lived in remote forest areas in Kelantan from March to December 2015. The project was part of an International Christian NGO’s response to the post-disaster rehabilitation needs of communities there after the devastating floods of December 2014. To get in touch with Anthony, e-mail us at editor@leaderonomics.com.
**DO TALKERS GET PROMOTED MORE?**

**THE KEY TO GETTING AHEAD AT WORK**

By SANDY CLARKE
editor@leaderonomics.com

REMEMBER that time you walked into a networking event and were met by a roomful of discreet, quiet and measured professionals? Me neither. Such events are usually abounding with buoyant, effervescent types with a penchant for self-promoting and they aren’t afraid to reel off their accomplishments when asked.

Perhaps it’s an image thing. No one attends networking events thinking, “I’m going to talk big, land big.” It comes to netting leadership roles or windows of opportunity that present all about image and performance and looking forward to a night of just being buoyant, effervescent types with a penchant for self-promoting and they aren’t simply prefer working away in the back-head above the parapet might simply prefer working away in the background.

The findings revealed that extraverts do indeed flourish at the high-earning end of the scale, with the top two extraverted types—ESTJ (Extroverted, Sensing, Thinking, Judging) and ENTJ (Extroverted, Intuition, Thinking, Judging)—earning an average salary of US$77,931 and US$76,000 respectively. Conversely the leading introverted types—ISTJ (Introverted, Sensing, Thinking, Judging) and INTJ (Introverted, Intuition, Thinking, Judging)—earned significantly less, bringing home on average US$55,934 and US$55,220 respectively.

One obvious factor that explains why talkers and self-promoters get ahead more often than their reticent colleagues is because they, well… they talk to other people. And they self-promote. Hardy a profound insight but, then again, few people will know about your successes and talent unless you shine a light on what you can do for others. People who feel uneasy about sticking their head above the parapet might simply prefer working away in the background.

**HOW DOES ONE GET NOTICED?**

As research has suggested, reticent people who are reluctant to talk about their accomplishments, can often be less ambitious than their outgoing associates. But, for those who would like to rise through the ranks, cultivating the ability to speak about their talent and skill set is vital if they are to achieve whatever goals they set for themselves.

Self-promotion is a wonderful tool to help propel careers. I’m sure we can all think of examples of leaders and managers who, while not particularly great at what they do, have “selling themselves” down to a fine art. Like any skill, the ability to talk a good game takes practice and can be uncomfortable at first, just like riding a bike appears impossible on the first few attempts.

Talking to others about your achievements becomes easier with practice; of course, you have to make sure you not only talk a good game, but that you can back up your assertions with clear examples of results. As the Indian yogi, Sadhguru, advises, “Bull can get you quickly to the top… but it won’t keep you there.”

**PARTING THOUGHTS**

One key point to keep in mind if you’re searching for a promotion or to give your career a boost, or if you want to start up a new business, is that it’s not the boss, the confident colleague or your personality type that prevents progress—it’s your own limiting belief that you can’t be better than you are, and so it’s best to remain quiet and not disturb those who are creating change and making a difference. We can all make a difference, and we can all live successful lives according to however we choose to define success, but no one can do it for us.

While it would be nice for people to be able to discover for themselves your abundant qualities, the reality is that very few are going to come asking what you can offer and where you would like to go. It falls, then, on your own shoulders to make a name for yourself and to put any worries of posturing to the side.

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**4 BEHAVIOURS TO GET YOURSELF NOTICED**

1. **GET SOCIAL**
   - Does the thought of attending networking events leave your stomach in knots? Fear not. You can begin to build your personal brand through social media.

2. **READ ALL ABOUT IT**
   - Even if, like me, you find the idea of engaging in small talk in a room full of strangers about as appealing as wrestling a hungry bear, help is at hand. There are countless books on the art of communication that contain lots of handy tips and useful advice for navigating the social jungle.

3. **BLOW YOUR TRUMPET**
   - Rather than seeing self-promotion as a selfish pursuit, think of it as though you’re offering a service to others (which you are).

4. **BUILD MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS**
   - It can be hard to watch the big talkers effortlessly schmooze bosses and associates, and not compare your perceived weaknesses to their strengths.

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**SANDY’S TIPS:**

- Sandy believes that a little self-promotion goes a long way, which is why he won’t be shy to tell you how awesome he is… via e-mail. He hopes to one day advance to group chats. To connect with Sandy, you can find him on Twitter @ ReelSClarke. To develop your ability to self-promote or to enhance your communication skills, e-mail trainings@leaderonomics.com.
LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

By ALPA SHAH
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If you have reached another milestone by successfully completing the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), congratulations! Take in your results; they are only a translation of the effort you put in. A piece of paper with a couple of words cannot possibly define your potential, your intelligence or your future by any means. Take a moment and shut your eyes; where do you see yourself after this?

The decisions that you are about to make next could potentially change your life, for better or worse. This, however, does not mean that post-SPM signifies absolute rest and relaxation.

Ryan Duncan, a sophomore at Harvard says, “Basically my entire life I have been in a situation where a teacher stands up and talks and then you take notes and try to absorb the information as well as you can.” He claims that the hands-on approach at Harvard thus made a world of a difference to his learning.

Do you find yourself nodding along in agreement? This means that you generally prefer the hands-on approach to things too.

A FRESH START TO LEARNING

Internships, therefore, is the ideal option for one who is slightly frazzled about where to go and yet wants to sail easily into the working world.

It has been proven through surveys conducted by schools and organisations, that those who have successfully obtained internships have a higher chance of landing themselves a decent job. Companies, too, are keen to hand out jobs to interns who have previously been with them. According to Internships.com, it turns out that internships may be the easiest way to secure a full-time gig, as 69 per cent of companies with 100 or more employees offered full-time jobs to their interns.

Stuart Landes, chief marketing officer at Internships.com, claims that one has a 7 in 10 chance of being hired by the company they have interned with.

A study conducted last year by Singapore’s Ngee Ann Polytechnic revealed that 93 per cent of their students indicated that internships influenced their career decisions. Before the stint, 32 per cent said they were undecided about their post-graduation plans. The figure dropped to 18 per cent after their internships.

21-year-old former student, Heng Pei Ling landed a job even before graduation, thanks to a five-month internship at Wine Connection, a food and beverage retail chain. She said the stint was invaluable in helping her put into practice what she learnt in school.

Moreover, internships allow you to be essential to landing the ideal job upon graduation. Remember the old adage, “It’s not what you know, but who you know.” Well, toss that right in the garbage can.

In today’s competitive job market, it’s what you know and who you know that often makes the difference. Hence, internships are a great way to address both of those issues at the same time.

Gregg Carnaffan, emerging talent and executive recruitment manager at international banking company HSBC comments, “Any internship or work experience is an advantage. Employers are looking for real-life examples of students being able to apply the knowledge and skills they have to solve problems or improve performance.”

“When employers do hire from college, the evidence suggests that academic skills are not their primary concern,” says Peter Cappelli, a professor at Wharton and executive recruitment manager at temporary work agency Manpower. “Any internship or work experience is an advantage. Employers are looking for real-life examples of students being able to apply the knowledge and skills they have to solve problems or improve performance.”

“When employers do hire from college, the evidence suggests that academic skills are not their primary concern,” says Peter Cappelli, a professor at Wharton and executive recruitment manager at temporary work agency Manpower. “Any internship or work experience is an advantage. Employers are looking for real-life examples of students being able to apply the knowledge and skills they have to solve problems or improve performance.”

Because of this, internships are a great way to address both of these issues at the same time.

According to an annual survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, a staggering 95 per cent of employers said candidate experience is a factor in hiring decisions.

A Fresh Start to Learning — Life After High School

Expanding on the topic of internships, there is no doubt that internships/industry experiences are indeed the way to go! They allow students as young as 16-year-olds who have completed their SPM examinations, to further their interests in the sector they are most passionate about.

Furthermore, an employer gets to see an intern in action on a day-to-day basis. Did the intern show up on time for work? Was the intern interested in the daily operations? Did the intern demonstrate proficiency in what he has brought to the workplace and learn various new tasks easily?Did the intern show initiative to go above and beyond the call of duty?

Was the intern a positive force in the workplace? These and many other questions are readily answered when an intern performs in an internship. Impressive work ethics and diligence could possibly land you the job of your dreams!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is indeed not difficult to understand why these young teenagers find it hard to make up their minds about career choices; there are countless options available but not enough support to back up the decisions they make for themselves. Internships provide that support that these students need by showing them what they are getting themselves into, so that they are less likely to regret making wrong career choices.

Steve Jobs, in fact, said that his internship with Hewlett-Packard was the best thing that happened to him. He commented, “When I was 12 or 13, I wanted to build something and I needed some parts, so I picked up the phone and called Bill Hewlett—he was listed in the Palo Alto phone book.

“He answered the phone and he was real nice. He chatted with me for, like, twenty minutes. He didn’t know me at all, but he ended up giving me some parts and he got me a job that summer working at Hewlett-Packard on the line, assembling frequency counters. Assembling may be too strong. I was put- ting in screws. It didn’t matter. I was in heaven.” It’s true!
FOUR LESSONS TO LEARN FROM THE INTERN AS AN INTERN

By TAMARA JAYNE
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WHEN I first saw the trailer of this movie, I thought it would just naturally be another The Devil Wears Prada, seeing as the same actress, Anne Hathaway, is also in The Intern.

The curious interaction between a 70-year-old retiree working as an intern in the fast-paced world of online retail, Ben Whittaker (played by Robert De Niro), and the hardworking founder of About theFit, Jules Ostin (played by Anne Hathaway), proved otherwise with the film’s ability to draw us in through Whittaker’s likeable character.

As an intern myself, I took away some lessons from this movie to prepare me for what lies ahead.

DRESS YOUR BEST
First impressions make a big difference. In the movie, Whittaker wears a suit to work every single morning in spite of his co-workers telling him that he does not need to dress up all the time.

The subtle message here is this: it is important to look your best whether or not it is in a casual or formal setting. Looking good makes you feel good and you will be more likely to better focus your mind as you work i.e. meeting clients or attending meetings.

TWO GENERATIONS CAN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER AND WORK TOGETHER
Initially, Ostin was hesitant about having a retiree as an intern. However, she honours her agreement to the community outreach programme for seniors and takes him in. She soon realises how much she could learn from his experiences and some of his old school ways. On the other hand, Ostin starts a Facebook account for Whittaker and teaches him the modern ways of working in the industry.

As an intern, you may feel completely new to the working world and it is easy to lose yourself and what you may know. As you learn to adapt to your new environment, don’t forget that you can contribute what you know as well. You may be able to provide a daring and unique perspective on how the company is run, so don’t be afraid to share your fresh insights when necessary.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT AND WHAT IS A PRIORITY CAN BE VERY DIFFERENT
Ostin started a great company that is excelling at an extremely rapid pace, but in the meantime, her personal life is falling apart. Her husband is having an affair, she barely has time to spend with her daughter, and she works too many late nights in the office. While away together on a work trip, Ostin even confides in Whittaker about her life and marriage and how she knew her husband was cheating on her. She felt her husband’s affair was her fault. Whittaker assures her that it was in no way her fault.

As an intern, life may feel out of balance as you transition from college or university to the working world. It’s not about getting good grades now, but excelling at work instead. Being able to distinguish what is a priority and urgent from what is important, will help you during hectic times.

There was a table filled with junk at the office that keeps piling up and constantly bothers Ostin each time she walks past it. It bothers her yet she is not able to find the time or person to clear the mess. Whittaker notices this and arrives early one morning to clear the entire desk without being asked. Ostin finds out—and a huge smile of relief spreads across her face—and the whole company commends him for doing so.

As interns, we may feel the extra pressure or expectation to impress those above and around us in hopes that they may recognise our efforts. But what we should do instead, is to focus on doing our job well, not for the glory or recognition, and the rest will take care of itself.

Experience never gets old. If you would like to learn more about The Intern, visit www.leaderonomics.com to read The Other Side article was a hit last week. Think you’ve missed it? Go to www.leaderonomics.com

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By TAMARA JAYNE
editor@leaderonomics.com

WHEN I first saw the trailer of this movie, I thought it would just naturally be another The Devil Wears Prada, seeing as the same actress, Anne Hathaway, is also in The Intern.

The curious interaction between a 70-year-old retiree working as an intern in the fast-paced world of online retail, Ben Whittaker (played by Robert De Niro), and the hardworking founder of About theFit, Jules Ostin (played by Anne Hathaway), proved otherwise with the film’s ability to draw us in through Whittaker’s likeable character.

As an intern myself, I took away some lessons from this movie to prepare me for what lies ahead.

DRESS YOUR BEST
First impressions make a big difference. In the movie, Whittaker wears a suit to work every single morning in spite of his co-workers telling him that he does not need to dress up all the time.

The subtle message here is this: it is important to look your best whether or not it is in a casual or formal setting. Looking good makes you feel good and you will be more likely to better focus your mind as you work i.e. meeting clients or attending meetings.

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