Outpace The Rest

How To Excel In Your Workplace

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INTRODUCTION

The world is often viewed by many sociologists as an urban jungle in which people have to vie for position and status in order to survive and succeed. Thus, wherever a person goes, one finds oneself in an odd position to develop and enhance one's talents and assets to be able to cope with the ever-growing demands of the society and the world at large. Once a person graduates from college and applies for a job in a company or corporation, he/she finds oneself vying against other applicants for a specific position. A person immediately gets a taste of competition even at the very onset of one's entry into the work force. And once one gets accepted in a corporate job, one finds oneself in an awkward situation of trying to be recognized in that workplace to gain further leverage and get promoted. The corporate world is a place wherein one has to carve out one's way to get to the higher echelon of the corporate ladder. It's as if one is shouldering his/her own way to get to a higher level. Yet it is a given fact that there are other people who also want to get to the higher level of the work force. In this situation, the workplace becomes a highly-charged and a highly-competitive place wherein most people can be literally clawing at each other.

The Red Queen Effect

Corollary to this concept of a highly-charged and highly-competitive workplace is the idea of the "Red Queen Effect." The Red Queen Effect is based on the idea of the character of the Red Queen from Lewis Carroll's "Through the Looking Glass," who stated: "Do nothing and fall behind, or run hard to stay where you

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are." Leigh Van Valen, an American biologist, picked up this idea and elaborated on the evolutionary principle that "since competitors and enemies are also keen on evolving, one has to keep evolving too to keep abreast of the competitors." If you look around, you will definitely discover that this "Red Queen Effect" is really happening everywhere. It is basically happening in the business landscape. It is also the driving force behind the development of technology. Likewise, it is also the overlying idea behind the quest of every employee to get a step ahead of the rest of the employees and aspire for higher or the number one spot in the corporation.

The Multiple Generations In The Workplace

Now, if you want to get ahead of the pack and excel in your workplace and get promoted, you need to study and understand the behavior and orientations of the work force in which you belong. It would be a bit easy to gauge the behavior of every employee if everybody is of the same orientation and background. But if the workforce wherein you belong comes from different generations with different orientations, it would take a bit of effort on your part to know why one employee behaves in this manner and another employee in a different manner. These differences in the work behavior and orientation of the people in the workforce are attributed to the differences in the generations among the workforce. Moreover, employees and employers have different points of view. There isa recognizable generation gap among employees owing to the fact that employees in a single work organization belong to various age brackets and generations. Let

us take a look at the multiple generations which usually comprise the modern workforce.

The Multiple Generations

Most of us may not be aware of the differences in orientations and behaviors among different generations. For this reason, sociologists have clearly established a pattern for classifying the different generations who are in the workforce today. Let us take a cursory look into these varied generations.

First of these multiple generations are the "baby boomers." These are the people who were born a decade following the Second World War. Right now, they are aged 47 to 65 and are nearing their retirement age. This generation is said to "have it all" because there was a marked prosperity during the post-war era. One common characteristic of this generation is their seemingly "self-obsessed" tendency and apparent "unbending" and "stuck-in-their-ways" attitude.

The next generation—who were born between the years 1963 to 1980 and most of them now are in their early 30s to mid 40s—belongs to the Generation X. This generation is categorically labeled as the "slacker generation." They are considered to be lacking in commitment and focus. This generation grew up when Martin Luther King Jr. and social activism was the norm of the day. Moreover, this generation grew up in an era where large-scale number of divorces happened. Most of them have had several career changes. This

generation is also characterized by their tendency to stay away from activism than to get involved in changing the world.

The Generation Y (also called the millennial) includes those who were born between 1981 and 1994. The common characteristics of this generation include being capable of multi-tasking, self-confident, tech-savvy, and having the tendency to seek instant gratification. In the workplace, they often exhibit a demanding attitude, and manifest unrealistic career aspirations. Likewise, they are internet addict and dismissive of work.

The Generation Z includes those who were born between the years 1995 and 2009. They were the ones who were born when the internet is already up. For this reason, they are the ones who are technology-focused. They are considered to be the iPad generation.

Lastly, there is the Generation Alpha which include those were born in the year 2010 and onward. It is believed that this generation will be the most formally taught and educated generation in the history of the world. Likewise, even though they have just started, they are tagged already as "materialistic."

The Generation Y who have recently entered the workforce will find themselves face-to-face with a two other different generations—those of the baby boomers, the Generation Xers. A keen understanding of the specific characteristics of other generations can greatly help the Generation Yers in their aspiration towards a

better and more rewarding career and position in the future, and in the process can greatly help them break the vicious cycle of the "Red Queen Effect in the workplace and in their career."

CHAPTER I- The Competitiveness In Workplace

One of the most basic ideas I have learned in life is the conviction that knowledge is power. The more you understand a situation, the better you can cope with a situation. Knowing thoroughly a situation—its "ins" and "outs"—give you a sense of control, an influence on whatever outcome you would like to produce. As Gen Y'ers, there are many things you got to learn. The more you understand the different aspects of your job, the better you can control and cope with it. One aspect of knowledge which you have to gain in your job is the keen understanding of the different types of personality in the workplace. Remember, the more you understand the nature and characteristics of other people, the better you can deal with them and the more you can angle yourself for a better position to improve and get promoted. The deeper your understanding of the nature of your co-workers, the better equipped you will be in achieving your goals and aspirations, because you are putting yourself in a better position to deal meaningfully with your co-workers and the management.

In the introductory remarks of this book, I have discussed the obvious reality that the modern workplace does not constitute workers who have homogenous characteristics and backgrounds. On the contrary, the modern workplace is characterized by a workforce of diverse personalities and characters. There are many generations of varying traits that constitute a single workforce and anywhere you go, the interplay of these personalities and generation traits come to the fore. Managements often find themselves at a loss as to how to deal with this basic problem of generational differences among their workforce. Yet these

generational differences can readily affect everything in the workplace and should not be ignored. They can affect the recruitment process of workers, the building of teams, the motivational approaches to be used by managements, the management of the workforce, and the productivity of the workers. In a way, we could say that these generational differences should be understood to gain more insight into the modern workforce.

The Nature Of The Modern Workplace

Modern workforce is not homogenous and anybody who thinks otherwise should better rethink one's conviction. Aside from the various types of characters and characteristics which make up the work force, there are underlying traits and characteristics which are rooted in the kind of generation to which a worker or employee belongs. Moreover, researches indicate that most people communicate depending on their generation's distinct characteristics. Learning and understanding these generational differences can readily eliminate most misunderstandings and conflicts in the workplace, and can give you the necessary leverage to get to a higher position in the workforce.

In any work setup, people may appear to you as practically the same. If you look at your co-workers, you may see them as plain workers who are just concerned about eking out their living by belaboring themselves in that workplace. Yet, if you look closer into the intrinsic characteristics of workers, you will readily distinguish their differences apparent in the attitudes, behaviors, habits, expectations, and motivation buttons. If you are quite observant enough, you will

discover that certain age brackets have certain behavior peculiarities. Once you have discovered these peculiarities, you have then discovered the generation differences.

The Influence Of The Social Milieu

Certain generations have their own distinct social milieu from which they have evolved, developed, and have reached maturity. This milieu is the social background in which they were nurtured and have grown. Likewise, this background has conditioned and shaped their subconscious minds, behaviors, traits, and personality. We call these differences in personalities and traits, the effects of a particular generation on the personality of any person. We can never really downplay the effects of these traits on their personality. Likewise, knowing these generation differences can spell out the effectiveness or failure of an organization or workplace.

The Power Of Four Generations

There are four distinct generations in the modern workforce right now. The oldest of which are the baby boomers who are nearing their retirement. The social milieu in which the baby boomers were nurtured are very much different from the social background in which the Generation X,Y and Z were nurtured. These obvious differences in the nurturing and rearing of each generation have often been the source of conflicts and misunderstandings among workers and have

greatly shaped the modern face of every workplace. Likewise, a wise management would surely look into these generational differences and should try to play around these differences to achieve a significant success in their work organization.

Why Is There A Workplace Competition?

Competition in the workplace is a common reality because everybody is basically selfish. Man is by nature selfish. Even at the onset of one's life, a baby is already crying for food when hungry without regards to the financial situation of his/her parents. Society has tried to mitigate this inherent selfishness of man by programming and reprogramming the instinctual drives of every person. Yet, we still carry this selfish attitude into maturity by aspiring for the number one. Moreover, many of us want to succeed because we need to provide for a family or we want to prove to ourselves that we are something. In a society where power, fame, and fortune are glamorized, most of us would definitely want to succeed. It is drive in us—an instinctual drive—which moves us to reach for higher positions and success. Yet, this inner drive readily creates competition in the workplace where there are many individuals all aching for the number one. So, it happens that when you apply for a job and get hired, you find yourself in a highly competitive environment wherein first you got to prove your mettle before you move higher in the organizational echelon of the workforce. Adding to this highly-charged and highly-competitive work atmosphere are the generation gaps and generational differences. Most of the bosses and corporate owners came from the baby boomer generation. The next in line to them is the Generation X.

So it behooves you to understand these generational differences so that you can inch closer to success and angle yourself for a better position for improvement and promotion.

The Descriptive Analysis Of The Three Generations

As I have said earlier, knowledge is power and time, the person with superior understanding is the one who could work his/herself to the top. So let us try to understand deeper the mystery and characters of each generation to gain insight into why there are competitions and conflicts in the workplace.

Previous to the baby boomers was the veteran generation. Yet, most of the people who belonged to the veteran generation have either passed away through old age. So, let us not delve into a character analysis of the veteran generation. Instead, let us start with the analysis of the character of a baby boomer. A decade after the World War II, a marked improvement in the lifestyle and living standard of people was very much apparent. It is in this kind of milieu where the baby boomers were born. Most baby boomers have shown a marked optimism and highly-involved character. Yet, during this time, there was a surge in the disintegration of the family, though most of those who belonged to this generation aspire for education and they consider education as their birthright. In the workplace, baby boomers are workaholics and manifest efficiency. They readily involve themselves in crusading causes for personal fulfillment. They desire quality, and they usually question authority. For them, work is an exciting adventure, and their leadership style is consensual. Moreover, they are team

players and love to have meetings. They love highly personalized meeting. You can definitely motivate them by such statements as "you're valued," and "you are needed." They usually don't balance their work life and family life and they work in order to live. If you were a manager of a baby boomer, it would not be good to tell a baby boomer to take time off or to go off for a holiday break, because they wouldn't appreciate it. It is better to give them bonus for working so hard.

The Generation X constitutes the next batch of population in the workforce. The core values of the Generation X are skepticism, fun, and informality. Most of the Generation X believes that education is their way to achieve their dreams instead of looking at education as their birthright. Moreover, they make use of cell phones and they will tell you to call them at work. Their way of handling money is very cautious, conservative, and they tend to save and save. With regards to their work ethic, they always tend to eliminate the task, they are self-reliant, they don't want structure and direction, and they tend to be skeptical. For them, work is a difficult challenge and a contract. If they are your leader, they tend to look at everyone as the same, and they challenge others and usually ask why. In their interaction with others, they are very entrepreneurial. The manner of communicating is very direct and immediate, and they tend to ask "how they are doing?" Likewise, they think that freedom is their best reward. They are motivated by statements such as "Do it your way," and "Forget the rules."

There are more differences as we move further into the analysis of the Generation Y. The core values of Generation Y are realism, outright confidence, and they are extremely fun and very social. For them, education is extremely

expensive, and their means of communication are the picture phones and internet. They usually earn money in order to spend them. Their work ethics are peculiarly multi-tasking and they always ask about what is next. They are tenacious, entrepreneurial, very tolerant, and goal-oriented. Work for them is a means to an end, and for this reason, they would work so that they could have money to spend for holiday. They are very participative, and their means of communication is through voicemail and e-mail. They like to receive feedback at the push of the button for every meaningful work they do. If you want to motivate them, you should use statements such as "you will work with creative and bright people," and their family life and work life is well balanced.

Baby Boomers, Generation X, And the Generation Y Gap Hits The Workplaces

It is already anticipated that once the Gen-Yers enter the workplaces, another generation gap would ensue in the workplace. National experts have already noticed the gnawing gap among these different generations. The baby boomers are usually the bosses and owners of the companies, while the Gen-Yers are the young workers who are nipping forcefully at the heels of their more mature co-workers. Yet, these young turks will be running the show 10 to 25 years from now. Moreover, this generation gap is apparent in the way they do their work. Older generations tend to do their works meticulously, while younger generations seek to accomplish their work faster and with more efficiency.

The New Popular Management Theory

There are many managers nowadays who take a positive approach to management by espousing an increasingly popular theory, i.e., "In order to improve productivity, management should treat their workers of different age brackets differently."Management sometimes hire consultants to train managers on the how to deal with generational issues, and they usually hold discussions of their immediate experiences of generational issues so that other managers could learn from their individual experiences. They do this because they clearly recognize the outright reality of possible conflict which may arise from generational differences. It is a reality and companies around the world are grappling with the issues which arise from generational differences in the workplace. Managers, as well as consultants, readily notice the new potential problems arising from varying mindsets and manners of communicating among employees. The potential frictions are usually aggravated by work patterns and new technology.

Effects Of Generational Differences On Management Styles

It is quite obvious that there is a gap between the different management styles among the different generations involved in the workplace nowadays, and these differences may be a potential cause of conflicts and competitions among managers as well as the rank-and-file of workers. Say for instance, the baby boomers have different styles of managing their workers. They are very inflexible and more authoritative. Their ways of motivating are likewise different, and they

focus more on the outright enforcing of rules instead of motivating their staffs individually. If you are a Generation X employee, you will readily resent this type of management, and in turn, if you become a manager, you will surely try to veer away from this type of management. Theory says that Generation X dislikes formality and bureaucracy. Thus, there is a tendency for baby boomers to alienate the generation X in the workplace by over-imposing the rules and protocols of the company. It is the other way around if the manager belongs to the generation X and some of the workers are baby boomers. The management style of Generation X will be very informal and their work ethic usually follows the "do it yourself," and "forget the rules." These differences in management styles, viewpoints, traits, and other qualities are indeed potential flashpoints in a typical corporate setup.

Understanding Coworkers By Understanding Their Past

We can usually tell where people want to go by looking into where they have come from or have been. In the workplace setup, a newly hired Gen-Yer will definitely find himself or herself in a very awkward situation of trying to figure out the different types of personalities he/she encounters in the workplace. One way of easily understanding the peculiarities of personalities you encounter in the workplace is by knowing where these people have been and how their cultural background differs from your very own cultural background.

Corporation heads would usually call me to give a seminar because they are really having some trouble in motivating their employees. I immediately

understand that there may be some cultural or generational differences which may be the cause of misunderstanding in the workplace. Sometimes, corporation heads can't understand that their younger staffs came from different culture and backgrounds. They usually generalize that what motivated them to succeed may be the needed motivations to make the younger managers and staffs succeed. I would say that these kinds of thinking are usually very dangerous and such assumptions are unwarranted in the new workplace setups. Value systems differ from one generation to another. What may be valuable to a baby boomer may be of trifling importance to a generation Y employee or manager.

Generational Differences—A Source Of Competition

The potential for conflicts in the workplace is not the only problem which is rooted in the generational differences among managers and among employees. Another possible problem which may arise from generational differences among people in the workplace is that of unhealthy competition. I would say that competition is healthy when it buoys up the spirit of creativity of workers and managers and prods them to excel in their jobs. It must be good to remember that there is always that inner drive in every person to win. This instinctual drive to win is almost inborn in each of us and this drive is very manifest in the enjoyment of games. Yet, when the competition in the workplace becomes highly charged and the competitors become highly aggressive sporting the rationale: "I really don't care about what other people may think as long as I get my own way," competition becomes unhealthy. Competitors in this situation begin to force people to do it their own way, even to the point of arguing, and pulling ranks. The

use of whatever power at hand is imperative in order to achieve their objectives, and hence, division and conflicts ensue in the rank and file of the workplace. Considering the fact that generational differences engender different values and needs, you may find oneself in the middle of value conflicts among people of different generational backgrounds. This situation may begin to alienate people. Tensions may get too high and may affect the efficiency and effectiveness of people in the workplace. If you belong to Generation Y and you find yourself in this highly-charged and highly-competitive situation, you got three options at hand: first, you may opt to resign and find another job where competition based on generational differences have not reach a pitch level; you may choose side and join your own generation and wage a defiant struggle against the other generations; or you may make a paradigm shift, look at the situation, work on your circle of influence and expand it so that you may grow and succeed.

CHAPTER II - Trade Off with Time & Energy

Time &Energy Is Your Asset, Spend Time To Learn, Don't Stay In Comfort Zone

At the onset, I have discussed the Red Queen Effect which is based on the concept propounded by the Red Queen from Lewis Caroll's "Through the Looking Glass, who said "Do nothing and fall behind, or run hard to stay where you are." The Red Queen, referring to the nature of the Looking-Glass Land, likewise said: "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place."Leigh Van Valen made use of this concept to explain the "Law of Extinction." Leigh Van Valen also explained that "since competitors and enemies are also keen on evolving, one has to keep evolving too to keep up with the competitors." This is good if your goal is to be at par with your competitors. However, if your goal is to get ahead of your competitors, you should double your effort of evolving yourself so that you can outpace the growth and evolution of your competitors. You got to run faster than the rest of the crowd to excel and succeed and be recognized by others. You should develop new skills and knowledge to exceed the evolution of other people.

In this chapter, I will try to delineate some good ideas on how the Generation Y can effectively evolve themselves in the modern workplace setup. Since the other generations, such as the baby boomers and the Generation X, have entered the workforce ahead of the Generation Y, the Generation Y people find themselves in an odd situation of competing and collaborating with the previous

generations. It would be good for the Gen-Yers to get some insights on how to realize and actualize themselves in the modern workplace where they have to contend with the more experienced previous generations.

Ideas And Tenets On How To Succeed

If your effort is equal only to the effort of your coworkers, you may be promoted by sheer luck. Yet you cannot rely heavily on sheer luck in order to get promoted. You got to improve yourself and put yourself in a better position to excel and get promoted. Of course, you need not shove your way to the top without regards to anybody. Neither should you spouse the Machiavellian tenet which says: "the end justifies the means." If you spouse the Machiavellian tenet, you will be despised and hated by your colleagues for you will use cunning and deception to achieve what you would like to achieve. Likewise, you will use any means as long as it will land you to the number one position. A more palatable idea than that of the Machiavellian Theory is that of Robert J. Ringer, the author of the book "Looking Out for Number One." This book became the manual for success in the 70s. It says that man is by nature selfish, but there is a kind of selfishness which is acceptable and that kind of selfishness is called the rational selfishness—which is a belief that you can do anything as long as it doesn't encroach into the rights of other people. The good thing about the idea of Ringer—although he was most maligned by those who haven't read his book, but heard the title of the book—is the fact that you have to make rational decisions which lead to the "maximum amount of happiness over a long period of time." However, Ringer departed from the Machiavellian tenet by saying that your

decisions should not involve coercion or the use of fraud against anybody. In some way, this must also be the attitude which a generation Y should espouse to succeed in life. One should make rational decisions which may lead to one's greatest happiness without having to resort to coercion or use of fraud. Another abled writer reacted to the idea of Ringer's rational selfishness. His name is Dr. Denis Waitley who wrote a book which is partly a reactionary work against the book of Ringer. His book is entitled "The Double Win." Waitley maintained that real success is not a matter of simply looking out for number one and working on the rational selfishness principle. Instead success and happiness, according to Waitley, is a by-product of working well with other people. He said that you should win together with other people and he called this principle—the "double win" principle.

As part of the generation Y, you will definitely encounter people of different sorts, with divergent perspectives, and backgrounds in the workplace. Moreover, you will surely encounter people who subscribe to the Machiavellian tenet, or a fanatic of Ringer's "Looking Out for Number One," or someone who believes in the idea of Waitley. The viewpoints of your coworkers and managers may be divergent, yet the challenge on you is still the same—the challenge to realize your full potential and actualize your dreams.

The Red Queen Effect And The Generation Y

There are so many insights into the human nature and nature at large which one can glean from the idea of the Red Queen Effect. The fact that the idea of Lewis

Carroll is indeed great even though he couched it in the make-believe and fictional scenario of the Wonderland is also precocious. Who would have thought that the simple statement of the Red Queen has so much implication on the kind of life we used to live and even on the evolutionary process at large. For this reason, Leigh Van Valen—who was a century detached from Lewis Carrol—immediately grasped the insight from the seemingly unimportant statement of the Red Queen, and turned it into the very kernel of his evolutionary theory. Who would have thought then that this 18th century idea of the Red Queen Effect will be the starting point in explaining and leading the Generation Y's out of the workplace's status quo towards a more successful and fulfilling journey throughout their careers. The generation Y's who were born in the mid-1980's have started to enter the workforce. They are numbering more than a hundred million and they are also known as the millennial. They have different attitudes, needs, and wants which employers can't readily ignore. They are tech-savvy and family-centric. They are achievement-oriented and team-oriented, and they crave for attention. These characteristics make them a unique and distinct generation. Yet,the previous generations may definitely not vow down nor give way immediately to the whims and fancies of these newbies in the workforce. These Gen-Yers should earn their rightful place in the workforce.

Breaking The Vicious Circle Of Red Queen Effect

Nothing in this world is given in a silver platter unless you were one of the sons of billionaires who were born with a silver spoon in their mouth. Yet, even these fortunate heirs of billionaires should really evolve themselves if they want to

leave a mark in the society in which they belong. In the same way, there is an onrush of Gen-Yers into the workforce. They find themselves in the uneasy position of having to contend and compete with the previous generations. Some of them may view this as a challenge and may plunge themselves in frenzied excitement in embracing the challenge. However, some of them may find the challenge unbearable and may be forced to either give up or ship out. Yet, it is better to view the situation as a challenge to prove oneself and eventually succeed and find fulfillment in life. As a Gen-Yer, you will find yourself face-to-face with people of different values and needs, either you work around this differences and turn them into an advantage, or you run in conflict with the interests and needs of the older generations.

When the initial excitement of having entered into the workforce has waned after a year or two in the workplace, you will find yourself in the vicious circle of the Red Queen Effect forcing you to either change or ship out. If you haven't gotten the momentum on how to barrel your way to a higher position, and when you seem to be stuck in the status quo with no improvement in sight, then it is time to rethink your style and your attitude. The scenario may be that you are not getting the right appreciation from the previous generations or you are working just as efficient and effective as the other workers in your workplace. Remember the Red Queen Effect—you got to run twice as fast as the rest to gain some mileage over the other. If you are only as efficient as the other workers, when the promotion time comes, your managers will think twice whether to promote you or not considering that others are just as efficient as you. Hence, you got to get out of the Red Queen Effect and prove your mettle to the management to be

recognized and promoted. But how can you accomplish this feat? The answer lies in the words of the Red Queen, i.e., "you should run twice faster than the rest to get ahead of the crowd." Yet breaking the Red Queen Effect is similar to breaking your old habits and refashioning yourself. Aristotle once said that "we are what we repeatedly do." What he definitely meant is that a person is basically a product of all the habits which that person imbibed in his growing up process. Thus, if we find ourselves unable to rise from the status quo, it may be a case of us being unable to change some of our habits. If we could not achieve the promotion we desired so much in the workplace, it may be time for us to improve some of our present habits. Tweaking our habits means changing our personality.

The Power Of Habits

Habits are like gravitational pulls which hold our personality intact. It requires extra effort on our part to alter some of our old habits. Moreover, once an action has become a habit, it becomes second nature to us. Say for instance, if you are always shy at work, it becomes a habit. Once it becomes a habit, it becomes natural and effortless for us to be shy every time the boss wants to talk to us. To break this habit of shyness, we need to develop the opposite habit. Yet there will always be a pull to revert back to the old habit of shyness. A spacecraft need some extra boost from a specialized engine booster to get out of the gravitational pull of the earth and reach the safe zone of the space wherein it would no longer revert back to the earth, but would just revolve around the earth at some distance. In the same way, we need to make use of extra will power to alter any

bad habit while being wary all the time of the fact that there is always the prospect of a relapse to the old habit. Similarly, to break the cycle of the Red Queen Effect, we need extra will power to improve ourselves. It may be difficult, yet it is very rewarding.

Breaking The Bad Habits Of Relying Heavily On Payoff

Most people are motivated by reward and punishment. This is apparent in the workplace wherein people would really put extra effort in a job or activity with the view in mind of receiving a payoff. Payoff is a good motivator, but the concept of reward is somewhat an immature way of motivating oneself. What if the reward is no longer there? What will happen to your efficiency? Reward and punishment is a good way to motivate children and young adults, but it is not the best way to get you motivated. Your motivation should stem from within. When all the payoffs and rewards have been removed, your inner motivation and your habits should carry you through the doldrums and ennui of the workplace. In situation wherein rewards and payoffs are non-existent, your good habits will be your best shield and assets.

Working In Your "Circle Of Influence" Instead Of Your "Circle Of Concern"

One of the greatest books ever written on success is that of Stephen Covey's "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People." One of my favorite parts of that book is the part where Mr. Covey describes the two circles in our lives—the circle

of concerns and the circle of influence. According to Covey, there are basically two circles in our life on which we usually focus our attention. First is the circle of concern of which we don't have control. The circle of concerns includes all our apprehensions, fears, anxieties, aspirations, dreams, ambitions, and goals. Most of these factors are beyond our absolute control at present. Yet, many among us focus on this circle, wallowing in our own misery thinking of what should be. We worry about politics. We worry about the future. We are anxious of life after death. Yet, all these thoughts are sometimes not within our influence and for this reason, our worrying and anxieties are always futile. Covey advises us to focus on our circle of influence instead. The circle of influence includes the factors and aspects of our lives of which we have perfect control. We have perfect control of ourselves—our time, our habit, our thoughts, our behavior, and our actions. By focusing on our circle of influence, we can expand it to a point in which it will engulf our circle of concerns.

The Circle Of Influence

The circle of influence includes all our habits which we have imbibed throughout our growing up process. It includes our preconceptions, our subconscious programs, our values, our beliefs, and our very own body. The baby boomers have peculiar habits which are different from the generation Y. As a member of the generation Y, you have imbibed habits which are peculiar to the generation Y. These habits are within your circle of influence and you can change them. So if you focus on your circle of influence and keep on expanding it, you will definitely find yourself later in a very advantageous position of influencing the

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people around you. It is a sad thing that many people who belong to the generation Y focus on their circle of concerns. They usually complain about the management; they talk about their dreams; they complain about the lack of rewards and payoffs. Yet, these are not within your influence. The management has the final say on whether they would give you reward and payoff. The management has the final say on whether you will be promoted or not. So, you got work on your circle of influence and expand it instead of focusing on your circle of concerns.

Your Energy And Time As Your Greatest Assets

The circle of influence also includes your time and energy. Likewise, this includes the physical aspect of your life. So you got to work on your health and improve it so that you can do your work properly. There is a Latin saying which says: "Menssana in corporesano." In English, this saying means: "A sound mind in a sound body." If you want to improve your performance in a job, the first thing you should take care of is your body. Your body is your anchor in this life. It is one of your greatest assets. Maintain a healthy diet and a regular exercise regimen so that you can readily perform your job. Moreover, your mind depends on the soundness of your body. If your body is weak, your mind will never function well. So work on this first asset of your circle of influence—and that is your body.

On the other hand, as a Generation Y, you got the vitality and the youthfulness to achieve a lot. You got so much energy at your disposal. Use your energy in worthwhile undertakings such as in developing some of your skills and in learning

new knowledge. The greatest mistakes you will ever do in your youthfulness will be to shun away from challenge and to be smugly self-satisfied with the status quo. It is easy to fall prey into the trap of not wanting to get out of your comfort zone. Yet without getting out of your comfort zone, you will never be able to grow and learn new things. Remember, being a generation Y means you got ample time and energy to try new things and learn new skills and habits. Time is still on your side and so much energy is at your disposal. Learn to utilize your time by focusing on the more important things in life. Stephen Covey delineated some of the principles which you have to follow in the dispensation of your time. He reminds you to "put the most important things first." What he means is that you should learn to prioritize things. If necessary, you should

"delay gratification for future satisfaction." According to Scottpeck—the author of the best-selling book "The Roadless Travelled"—one of the characteristics of a mature person is the ability to delay gratification for future satisfaction. This means that if you want the management to see you as a mature and able person, you should begin to develop some of the characteristics of a mature person and one of them is that of "delaying gratification for future satisfaction.""Delaying gratification for future satisfaction" will allow you to prioritize things and make good use of your time. You can put off something in favor of developing and learning new skills. If you put into practice this good habit of delaying gratification for future satisfaction, you will surely find yourself in a very advantageous position in the future.

CHAPTER III - Set A Benchmark And Work On It

"Everything is created twice: first, in the mind, and then in reality." Anybody who would like to achieve something substantial and lasting should first conceive of that something and then realize that something in actuality. This concept is indeed applicable to the generation Y's who have already entered the workforce. The backdrop in which you will find yourself when you enter the workforce is indeed a bit complicated. There are multiple generations represented in the workplace and each generation has its own distinct characteristics. Say for instance, the baby boomers are self-actualizer and belong to a very proud and self-assured generation. They hold almost 80% of the wealth of the world, and for this reason, they are a very proud bunch of people. Now, if you want to be recognized in the midst of these highly-achieving generations, you should at least set a benchmark of excellence which will set you apart from the crowd of workers. You got to conceive of standards according to which your actions and performance will be based. If you want to posit yourself as someone who is commendable and worthy of promotion, you got to set high standard of excellence for yourself. Remember the Red Queen Effect wherein if your standard is the same as the rest of the crowd of workers, you will only reach a certain level as those of the crowds. Yet, if your standard of excellence is higher than those of the rest of the crowd, then there is a greater possibility that you will reach higher and achieve greater things which the crowd will not achieve.

Setting A Benchmark

A benchmark is something that serves as a standard according to which others will be judged or measured. Most known companies and corporations have standards upon which your conducts, behaviors, and performance will be judged. The best-run companies may tolerate a considerable amount of uniqueness and individuality, but they are likewise very tough and stringent with regards to enforcing certain standards. Most successful and world-renowned companies have created a core of high standards and beliefs which exemplify them from the rest of the companies. The real purpose why there are chief executives is the fact that they are there to manage and make sure that the values of the company or any organization are realized. They make sure that there is a benchmark for excellence in the organization.

The generation Y, who have recently entered these highly established organizations and corporations may be in for a culture shock when they discover that the corporationsinto which they have entered have already a somewhat porous benchmark for excellence. So if you want to easily get initiated into the "ins-and-outs" of a well-established corporation, you got to know at the onset the culture and the standards set by the corporation. Yet aside from the high standards set by the best-run corporations, you should also set a benchmark for excellence within yourself. You should set your standards high so that when you fail to reach them, you would not have reached so low.

In the previous chapter, I have said that you got to work on your circle of influence and not on your circle of concern. Your circle of influence must expand, so that soon enough, you will find yourself being respected and listened to by a lot of people in the workplace. If you have a benchmark for your performance and actions in the workplace, you should tenaciously adhere and aspire to achieve and comply with that benchmark. It doesn't mean that you will be so much hard on yourself. Nothing is achieved without sacrifice, and if you want to achieve something substantial and noteworthy in the company in which you are in, you got to sacrifice some of your time and energy to improve yourself and achieve the standards which you have set for yourself. The reason that there are very few excellent people is due to the fact that there are very few people who would like to push themselves to their limits. Many employees would sometimes complain about anything in the company. They would complain about the working time, the overtime requirement, and many more. If they find nothing in the policy to complain against, they would then look around for something to complain about. These people are focusing on their circle of concerns and if one focuses on this circle, one loses control of oneself. For instance, there are policies which most workers don't like. Yet, the final say in the policy-making body is the management. If you are a worker then, the policy which the management imposes would be beyond your circle of influence. Yet if you always improve yourself and get promoted and reach the level of the management, you will then be in the proper position to influence the policy-making body of the company. In this case, you have actually expanded your circle of influence. Yet the expansion of your circle of influence will never be handed to you in a silver platter. You got to work on it, at times, employing the tenets you have learned from this book

such as delaying gratification for future satisfaction and setting a benchmark for excellence.

Set Proximate And Long-term Goals

When I was young, I usually noticed that my mom would usually list down the things which she would buy in the grocery. This was to make sure that she would not miss any important item from the grocery when she went back home. My father would sometimes make fun of the list of my mom, yet my mom would always remark that it is always better to list down what she would buy to minimize effort and maximize time. When I reached adulthood, I understood the wisdom in my mom's logic. So much energy and time are wasted when we do not plan ahead every important action that we do.

Many people have been used to living their lives without ever listing down their goals. They are like ships lost in the murky sea and are always at the mercy of the big waves. Many among us do not get the wisdom in listing down our goal. The ancient sage, Confucius, once said that "to be happy in life, one has to have a job to do, someone to love, and a star to follow. Many among us have a job to do and someone to love; yet not many among us have a star to follow. The star to follow is your ambition—the goals—which give us direction. Many among the Gen-Yers enter the workforce in frenzied disoriented manner. They are forced to enter the workforce after they have graduated from college. After several months of working in a particular company, you will find them wallowing in their own misery, unable to get the momentum which would catapult them to success. The

problem usually does not lie in the kind of jobs they are in. The problem lies in the fact that this bunch of Gen-Yers are often disoriented and confused because they never really have set their goals. We are not so much taught how to set our goals in school. Yet if we only know and understand the value of goal-setting, we will be scampering immediately for a paper and would be listing down our immediate and long-term goals.

Goals always keep us focus in times of boredom and anxiety. Likewise, goals give us a sense of fulfillment every time a short-term goal is accomplished. They are like a lighthouse which beckons us to move in spite of some setbacks towards a specific direction.

A more mature approach to inspiring ourselves is to motivate ourselves from within, which means we must learn to set our motivations from within. The challenge should come from within and not from other people. This is the reason why you should set your own benchmark of excellence because you want to motivate yourself from within.

The Need For Direction

"Leadership methods seem to vary greatly," according to Alan Loy Mcginnis, the author of the best-selling books "Bringing Out the Best in People," and "The Friendship Factor." Likewise, according to Mcginnis, the best motivation employed by successful motivators which always bring great results is a "dogged

devotion to superior work." If you want to see a vertical movement in your career, you should be doggedly devoted to superior work. The benchmark then would be your guiding light amidst the noise and trivialities of life. Your goals should be your steering rods in your daily work.

Debunking The Negative Programs Of Your Subconscious Mind

One of the greatest discoveries of the 19th century is the subconscious mind. Sigmund Freud posited the existence of the subconscious mind as the repository of all our mental programs. Most of our mental programs are imbedded in the subconscious mind and these programs, like computer programs which work at the backdrop, condition our attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. We may not be aware of these subconscious programs, yet we are unwittingly motivated and led into actions by these programs. Earlier in this book, I have discussed the circle of influence and we all know that our mind is part and parcel of our circle of influence. Yet many among us do not really know which programs are imbedded in the subconscious mind. The mental habits we have incurred during our growing up process were lodged into the subconscious mind without our knowing it. When they are firmly established in the subconscious mind, we seem powerless to control them. Our fears are some of the programs in the subconscious mind, and once these fears become uncontrollable, they become phobias. Many people among the Generation Y may not be aware of the workings of the subconscious mind. Yet, if you want to succeed in your career, you got to be aware of the negative programs imbedded in your subconscious

mind because these programs may be hampering you from complying with your benchmarks and from achieving your goals.

You can be aware of these subconscious programs by listening to your self-talks, or by taking note of your dreams. Self-talks are instances wherein you got to reason out to yourself about something. Say for instance, you are about to give a business report to the managers and you believe that you are a good speaker. Yet, before you make the presentation, you hear a gnawing sense of incapacity deep within your mind telling you that you are not good at reporting or speaking. This inner voice comes from your subconscious programs and it is a negative program which you have to overcome. You can alter the programs of your mind by infusing the opposite programs into your mind. If you have the habit of being pessimistic most of the time, you can debunk this mental habit by trying to develop the opposite habit of optimism, though this debunking may take some time and effort, because it also takes effort to break a mental habit.

CHAPTER IV - Show Off Your Strength

In one survey, it says that 70% of the older employees have the tendency to be dismissive of the abilities of the younger workers such as the Gen-Yers. If this is the general tendencies of the older employees, the Gen-Yers should then let their skills and talents to come out. A cursory look at the characteristics of Gen-Yers can readily let you see what aspects of their personality they should be working on to let themselves excel and be recognized in the workplace, and consequently develop themselves holistically.

First, the Gen-Yers are fun to work with and they tend to take work lightly. Another characteristic of the Gen-Yers is their seemingly absolute confidence in their very own selves. Likewise, the Gen-Yers are tech-savvy and very efficient in technology, allowing them to multi-task. Moreover, the Gen-Yers exhibit zero intolerance with regards to other people and their points-of-view. Likewise, Gen-Yers are team players and management would be very much pleased with the kind of team spirit they usually exhibit.

One of the greatest assets of the Gen-Yers is their being tech-savvy and their ability to multi-task. They can readily improve on this aspect and let the management and older generations see the value of the Gen-Yers. Likewise, since the Gen-Yers are team players, they could improve on their team spirit and make progress in the workplace. They can work on other skills so that the older employees will see their development in a holistic manner.

Generation Y As Tech-savvy

It is very hard to be recognized and excel in a workplace if you have nothing to show off to the older employees. First, the older employees who belong to the baby boomers and Generation X are more experienced in the job, boasting of longer tenures and field experiences. Yet, the Gen-Yers do not approach the workforce bereft of anything to offer. On the one hand, they enter the workforce with measurable advantages over the older generations. They are tech-savvy and know more the intricacies and uses of most modern gadgets allowing them to finish their task faster and more efficiently than the older employees. If for example, you are an old school designer who usually sketch their designs and submit those designs using drafting papers, your work may be quite intricate and more laborious because every time you want to alter the design, you have to sketch again the design on another paper which entails a lot of work. On the other hand, if you are a Gen-Yer who knows how to make use of the latest software in designing and the latest updates in AutoCAD, you need not laboriously sketch again the design every time there is alteration or change in the design. Likewise, in any other field where newer technologies have trickled down, the Gen-Yers are in better position to speed up their work and show off their technological know-how and skills. This trait of the Gen-Yers is sometimes very intimidating and daunting to the older employees who have to belabor themselves just to know the very basics of some technological advancement. If the Gen-Yers can make use of their technological know-how and advantage in the workplace, they could readily outpace the older employees and consequently excel in the very workplace they find themselves in.

Try To Maintain Your Competitive Edge By Improving On It.

This is one of the best pieces of advice I usually give the Gen-Yers regarding work-related improvement and development: "We don't live in an ideal world where we get promoted solely on the basis of our skills and merits." It is a given fact that you should develop your skills and enhance them further, because if you remember the idea of the Red Queen Effect, you will be left out if you do not evolve, considering the fact that the surrounding is evolving. Likewise, if your evolution is just as fast as the evolution of the average guys in your office, you will never get a higher chance of getting recognized and promoted to a higher position. So it is imperative that you improve whatever skills you have so thatwhen others have reached your present skill level, you would have already progressed beyond that level.

In some way, you already have that competitive edge with regards to the technological aspects of work; you got to improve on it to further excel and maintain that competitive edge over others. Likewise, you got to think-out-of-the-box by being innovative and by enhancing the existing ideas and processes which you have already found firmly set in place in the workplace. The tendency of older generations—who sometimes have run out of their creative juices and have been used to doing things the customary ways—is to be self-satisfied and consequently maintain the status quo. Yet, it doesn't mean that if you can introduce a newer outlook and a better perspective, you will never be recognized and listened to by the older generation. As long as you work on your circle of

influence and continue on expanding it, you will be a voice to reckon and to listen to, and a person to be respected and recognized in the workplace.

Develop The Other Aspects Of Your Personality

If you really want to make progress in your career in a corporate world, you got to enhance your skills while developing your personality holistically. Gen-Yers may be hypertrophic in some aspects of their personality leaving behind the development of the other aspects of their personality. This may be bad to your progress and advancement in the workplace. You may have commendably mastered your technological skill, yet may have left behind your interpersonal skill which is also necessary to advance to a higher position in the corporation you are working in. Hence, one good advice would be to also develop other skills and aspects of your personality which may be necessary to advance further in the higher echelon of management.

Develop your management skill if you want to belong to management. There is a saying that "it is nearly impossible to become what you hate." Say for instance, if you abhor the aristocrats and their manner and behavior, it would be difficult for you to become an aristocrat. Likewise, if you hate the management, it would be very difficult to become a part of management. Yet, that saying may be partly true. However, if you want to become a manager, you must to a certain extent prove that you have the management skill to lead people. We have discussed in the previous chapter the circle of influence, and we have learned that you must expand your circle of influence. One aspect of your circle of influence is your

management skill. You can work on it, improving it to a point wherein you know and master all the management skills essential to a good leader and manager. It may not be enough to have great skills in performing your job. It may be expedient to develop some marketable skills which will definitely prepare you for higher responsibility.

Develop Leadership Qualities

There are plenty of skills which you can develop given the fact that you—as a Gen Yer—have already that technical skill which set you apart from the baby boomers and Gen-Xers. Hence, I would advise you to develop further your confidence by improving your communication skill (listening, writing, verbal). One of the characteristics desired by employers is the facility with communications or good communication skills. This includes the ability to listen, speak, and write effectively. This skill is critical and imperative in any business and corporate dealing, and thus you should develop this skill if you want to excel and be recognized in your workplace. Moreover, you should also develop your analytical and research skills. Being analytical and able to assess objectively a situation is a true mark of a good leader and manager. This includes the ability to seek multiple perspectives, and the ingenuity of being able to gather more important information. Likewise, this also includes the ability to identify issues which need to be addressed immediately.

I have mentioned earlier that as a Gen-Yer, you have already the skill in technology which previous generations are desirous of learning. Yet you should

also develop a smooth interpersonal skill which most employers are looking for. Interpersonal skills can be developed by trying to relate to your co-workers easily and inspiring them to participate in job related activities, acting to mitigate and resolve conflicts, and building good rapport with the management.

Other Qualities You Have To Develop In Order To Shine In The Workplace

Other qualities such as the ability to plan and organize well and implement projects and other tasks within the given timeframe will definitely never go unnoticed by the management. For this reason, you should try to develop these abilities. Likewise, you should sport an attitude which contributes to team building. You should develop the ability to work with your co-workers in a very professional and respectful manner to achieve a common goal. This also includes building trusting relationships with your colleagues and the management.

Other great skills and values which will let you shine and be recognized in the workplace is you professionalism, which implies that you should be responsible and fair enough in all your work activities. Moreover, this includes the ability to value the essentials and the tendency to avoid the petty things in the workplace.

Of course, as a newbie or a tyro in the workforce, you have to adapt to every situation and be flexible enough. But most importantly, you have to manifest a

strong value of hard work—a work ethic which is very much valued by the management and employers.

Another characteristic which you have to develop is the ability to motivate yourself in spite of the ennui and boredom of repetitive works. Mature people carry their own weather. This means that whatever the circumstances may bring, you should never be discouraged and lose hope or enthusiasm. You may easily lose enthusiasm when your expectations are not met or when there are conflicts which are inevitable in a social environment such as workplace. Yet, if you are self-motivated, you can weather whatever challenges may befall you, because your inner motivation is driving you to succeed and excel.

Lastly, you should sport the attitude and alacrity of desiring to learn new skills and knowledge. The worst thing that could ever befall a Gen-Yer is the tendency to be self-satisfied with his/her skills and knowledge. Well, anybody who tends to be smugly contented with his/her skills will definitely shun away any progress and new ideas. Moreover, the self-satisfied person will definitely be porous to change and will become stagnant and stunted in his/her growth. To learn new skills and knowledge, one has to allow unlearning of previous knowledge. One has to have that flexibility to bend a little to reach new heights, and this is only possible if you allow some spaces for personal change which is the groundwork for improvement and development. This also means that you will allow yourself to be mentored by the preceding generations.

CHAPTER V - Keep Learning And Sharing

The workplace is not a fanciful world wherein you will find people who readily agree and respect you. It is a place where people are vying for recognition and where people of varying ideologies and values converge to form an artificial community. They are bound together by a common culture, yet their individualities are very much apparent causing conflicts and competitions. This is the scenario which every Gen-Yer will find himself/herself and it may be too daunting for the faint-hearted and too challenging for the unprepared. Yet life is a big challenge and this fact is fully recognized by older people. You may be more tech-savvy, but experience-wise, the older generations have more to boast of and more scars to show off. Hence, it would be good enough to approach your exciting entry into the workforce as a new challenge wherein you are going to learn and unlearn some of the preconceptions and values which you have imbibed in your short span of life. This means that it is good to approach the scenario with a bit of humility and respect for the previous generations without necessarily giving away your uniqueness and individuality. What I am saying is: there must be a certain amount of reciprocity between the older generations and the Generation Y. This reciprocity is necessary because learning is a two-way process. Gen-Yers have something to offer to the older generations, and the older generations have something to learn from the younger Generation Y.

What Is Learning For The Generation Y?

Learning for the generation Y is a bit differentfrom the traditional ways by which older generations learn. The majority of Gen-Yers hardly ever read classical hard-bound books. In some way, the Gen-Yers are redefining the way people learn. They are more at ease with virtual learning and thus this Gen-Yers are making the old school books obsolete and non-essential. Generation Y learn by being challenged and by experimenting just like in a video game wherein you have to master the previous level to move on to another level of proficiency. Likewise, they are so used to getting immediate feedback. Because of the fast-paced life of the Gen-Yers, most Gen-Yers may be missing some important values and knowledge which only experienced people can give.

The Present Generation Has The Largest Amount Of Gathered Knowledge At Hand

The baby boomers have relied heavily on books which they bought and were handed over to them by the previous generations. They used manual to understand the use of a particular tool or technology. Yet, they were reared in an era where knowledge and data were not easy to access. Nowadays, the Gen-Yers have at the tip of their fingertip the largest repository of knowledge the world has ever seen. If you look at Google and the direction Google is taking in the gathering and stockpiling of data and information, you will be amazed and astonished at how great and huge the stock of knowledge at hand. I guess with

all these knowledge and information at our disposal, the demand is really great for us to learn.

Keep LearningAnd Developing

With the huge repository of knowledge at hand, as a Gen-Yer, it would be good to challenge oneself to learn new ideas and skills and enhance existing ideas and skills. Companies and corporations have recognized the fact that the Generation Y has different ways of learning as compared to other generations. For this reason, new approaches which accommodate the Gen-Yers' capability allow for the gradual absorption of the Gen-Yers into the workforce. Yet learning is still based on the ability of a person to allow for change and absorption of new ideas and skills. Likewise, learning is still the unfreezing of old knowledge and skills which allows for relearning new skills and knowledge. Other skills, which are not necessarily technical skills, such as interpersonal skills, leadership skills, good work ethics, honesty, and other values, are not immediately acquired. You got to gradually master these skills by observation and constant practice until they become second nature to you. You got to have incoming lines to ensure that you will never miss any insight and new learning along the way.

The Need For A Mentor

There is a tendency for the Gen-Yers to act as if they don't need to learn from the older generations. Well, this is also the proclivity of most youngsters of any

generation because the youth want to explore and experiment. Likewise, youngsters are always trying to learn things the hard ways. However, this is apparent and more pronounced among Gen-Yers who realize that they are more tech-savvy than the previous generations. This kind of attitude may lead to a less-satisfactory relationship with the older generations in the workplace.

On the other hand, Gen-Yers can readily avoid this tendency and instead view the older generation as more experienced and thus more capable of giving some good insights and knowledge which can never be had from their fellow Gen-Yers. Likewise, they can readily make a paradigm shift wherein they will see things in the light by which the older generations see things.

Gen-Yers are efficient and effective in the workplace. They can multi-task which is really quite difficult to do for some older generations. Likewise, they can finish their works quickly allowing them to be more productive and more efficient. Yet, there are areas which they need some mentoring. Likewise, they need to take advantage of the insights and knowledge which the older generations can readily offer. Mentors are really needed to introduce you to new knowledge and skills. Moreover, mentors can help you deal properly with any problem with your co-worker or with your boss. They could also alert and inform you of new opportunities in the workplace. Likewise, they can pinpoint to you the necessary skills which you need to add to your present skills to further enhance your work performance and be more effective and efficient in your job.

Asking A Manager To Act As Your Mentor

There are managers who are really willing to share their knowledge on how things are done in your workplace. These people will be willing to impart their skills if you will just be willing to approach them and show that you are enthusiastically desirous of learning from them. Your willingness to be mentored by these managers can readily create good relationships with them and may open up new avenues of growth and improvement on your part. You will likely learn from them about the organization and the "ins" and "outs" of the organization for which you are working. Additionally, your manager-mentors may groom you for a higher position if they recognize and see your full potential. They will never recognize your full potential if you don't have a good working relationship with them. For this reason, you should let the right people know your career ambition and let them recognize your achievement in the workplace, and one means by which you can be recognized is by asking some of them to be your mentor. Furthermore, this is also a good way to expand your circle of influence because a good rapport with your manager will allow you to share your novel ideas with your manager.

Share Your New Skills And Knowledge With Your Co-workers

Whenever you relate with your co-workers and management, you are basically projecting your very personality towards them. It is a sort of self-posturing wherein you let them see either your negative or positive side. Yet in the workplace, it would be good to let them see your positive side instead of the

negative side of your personality because it would be good for career advancement. One best way of projecting a good and reliable image in the workplace is by sharing your skills and knowledge with your co-workers. One way of expanding your circle of influence is by being generous in sharing your knowledge and skills. Your purpose in expanding your circle of influence by sharing your knowledge and skills is definitely to carve a niche in your workplace wherein the management would think twice about the letting you go. It is creating a situation wherein you become indispensable to the organization that the organization would consider it a great loss to lose you. As a Gen-Yer, you should definitely strive to achieve this status. Remember, in the third chapter, you were advised to set goals whether these goals are proximate or immediate. What is important is that you have goals to achieve in your workplace and in your career. You can achieve higher level or status by starting with the very basic—by helping other co-workers grow by sharing your knowledge and skills with them. Likewise, even if you do not achieve that status of indispensability, the act of helping other people grow is one of the most fulfilling works you can do in life. Thus, if you share your knowledge and skills, you are indeed doing yourself and your co-workers a lot of service.

The Power Of Feedback

The worst thing that could ever happen in an organization is to have a "feedback famine" wherein workers are not given the necessary feedback regarding their performance and achievement. Feedback is necessary because they let you know whether you are achieving your goals or not. Likewise, it lets you

understand the roles which you have to play in the organization. Moreover, feedback allows you to figure out how well you are doing in the some areas and which areas of your work need improvement. Furthermore, it let you know your impact in the workplace.

Management sometimes downplays the importance of feedback in the well-being of the organization. Yet feedback is the most powerful tool that managements have at their disposal. Feedback can motivate you to further try to excel in your job. Likewise, it can also dampen your mood and lead you to a slump in your work. Yet my advice for you Gen-Yers is to always reach out for feedback from your managers.

One best way to have an objective assessment of your performance and self is through the eyes of those who manage you. There are certain aspects of our performance and personality of which we are barely aware of.Working without receiving any feedback is like setting out on a very important journey without bringing the necessary map and without seeing any important signpost which could direct us to the exact destination.

Psychologists are always in agreement with the fact that the best way towards self-awareness is through the objective assessment of an unbiased person. Feedback whether positive or negative will definitely enrich your personality. Hence, if you are really intent on developing yourself into a better employee in your workplace, you must seek feedback and imitate the great leaders of old who

intuitively seek feedback because they naturally recognize the full power of feedback in their decision making and growth.

The Value Of Sharing Your Novel Thoughts

As a Gen-Yer, you may be feeling the inner tension every time you are asked to share your thoughts or opinions. One of my great mentors once said that the only stupid idea is the opinion which is left unsaid. Well, my mentor's idea may be an exaggeration but there are times when our mind has some novel ideas which we failed to share and express for fear of being laughed at or being embarrassed. Yet if you have trained yourself in the process of clear thinking and analysis, you should not let a good thought be left unshared whether to the management or to your co-workers.

A good example of sharing your good thoughts and ideas would be that of Isaac Newton who was approached by Edmond Halley and a friend, asking Newton "what is the force which holds everything in the universe in place?" Newton reached out to a drawer in his office and took a folder which contained "the Principia" which outlined the Universal Laws of Motions. The document had been sitting there inside Newton's drawer for almost twenty years. If there were an accidental fire that might have burned the place of Newton, the world would never have had known the breakthrough knowledge of Newton. My point is that, you should never be afraid to speak out your ideas if you believe that your idea will be beneficial to the organization in which you work, because if you do, you are letting your light shine for other people to recognize your full potential.

CONCLUSION

In this not-so-ideal world, you need to find ways to show your worth and value in whatever organization you are in. As Gen-Yers, you should also take the counsel of the older generations because they have been here in this place longer than we are. There are insights and wisdom which you can readily learn from other generations as long as you are open to new learning and knowledge. Moreover, you can only get out of the status quo if you are willing to face new challenges and let go of the status quo. The workforce and the workplaces are changing rapidly. Yet there are ideas and insights which remain true even with the passing of time. Just like the idea of the Red Queen Effect which had been broached open by Lewis Carroll a century before Leigh Van Valen was born. Yet the idea spurred Van Valen to create an evolutionary explanation on how species become extinct or survive. Aristotle, two thousand years ago, had said that "we are what we repeatedly do," and at present, we all agree that our personality is the hodgepodge or combination of all the habits which we have imbibed and keep on imbibing in our life time.

Whether we are baby boomers, or whether we belong to the Generation X or Y, the fact remains that we are all human beings striving to realize ourselves in this not-so-perfect world. The only way for us to grow and create our mark in the workplace and the organization we find ourselves in is by working on our circle of influence, and expanding it to a point wherein we can have a remarkable and non-negligible impact in the said organization or workplace. Every moment of our lives, we are always confronted with a choice whether to remain self-satisfied in

the status quo or to give the extra effort to excel and realize our full potential. As long as we keep on learning and moving forward, we can say that we are alive and on our way to our self-realization with the help of other people who are also striving to realize their full potentials.