

NEWSLETTER

Volume 38, Number 1 Richard Knowdell, Publisher. Steven E. Beasley, Editor. January-February 2016

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Career Development in Asia

Job Opportunity. Free Resource.

Networking Contacts. Newsletter Contacts.

Taipei at night



CONFERENCES OF INTEREST

ASIA PACIFIC CAREER DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION [APCDA]

2016 Annual Conference.

Career Counseling Best Practices in the Asia Pacific Region: Promoting Inclusiveness

May 18 - 22, 2016. Taipei, TAIWAN

Contact:

e-mail Info@AsiaPacificCDA.org

BRITISH COLUMBIA CAREER DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Career Development Conference 2016

March 10 & March 11, 2016. Vancouver, BC. CANADA.

Contact:

**BC Career Development Association, 728 W Hastings St, Vancouver, BC V6B 1L8 CANADA
604-684-3638. e-mail: <admin@bccda.org>**

CAREER THOUGHT LEADERS 2016 Conference

March 30 – April 1, 2016. Denver, CO, USA

Contact:

*Marie Zimenoff, Career Thought Leaders, 333 West Drake Road, Suite 11
Fort Collins, CO 80526 USA. e-mail: <marie@resumewritingacademy.com>*

MARYLAND CAREER DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION 2016 Conference

April 28-29, 2016. Columbia, Maryland USA

Contact:

*MCDA, c/o Lisa Oliver, P.O. Box 553, Mechanicsville, MD 20659 USA
e-mail: <MCDA.Info@MDCareers.org>*

TRAINING PROGRAMS

MBTI Certification:

Live onsite MBTI Certification training for career counselors will be done by CPP. Contact them at *www.cpp.com* for more information.

Strong Interest Inventory Certification:

Live onsite Strong Interest Inventory Certification training is available from GS Consultants in groups of up to 30 individuals. In addition, GS Consultants offers Strong Certification training online at \$850 per person. Strong training materials are purchased directly from CPP for \$110 per person + shipping. Contact: *Noreen Sandino, Client Services Coordinator, GS Consultants Post Office Box 225335, San Francisco, CA 94122. USA (415) 661-8227 e-mail: <noreen@giconsultants.net> Web Site: www.giconsultants.net*

CAREER COUNSELORS CONSORTIUM NORTHEAST

2016 Professional Development Seminars

Location: Northeastern University, Curry Student Center, Curry Room 440, Boston, MA USA

Contact: *Amy Mazur, (617) 964-7048. e-mail: PDS@careercounselorsne.org*

Thanks for the Feedback: A New Approach to Dealing with Feedback in the Workplace

Friday, **January 8, 2016**. 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. Facilitator: **Robert Wilkinson**

Going Even Deeper with Career Counseling Techniques

Friday, **February 5, 2016**. 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. Facilitator: **Sue Motulsky**

The Core Connection Collage: Creative Collaging in Career Assessment

Friday, **April 8, 2016**. 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. Facilitator: **Stephanie Legatos**

Contemplative Career Counseling: Using Mindfulness to Enrich the Counselor-Client Relationship. Friday, **May 6, 2016**. 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Facilitators: **Jennifer Earls, Deepesh Faucheux, Linda Faucheux**

Advanced Resume Writing

Friday, **June 3, 2016**. 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. Facilitator: **Louise Kursmark**

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

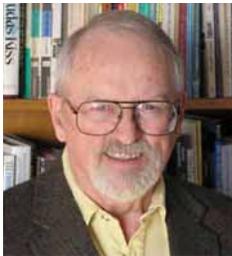
CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS SPONSORED BY THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



JOB & CAREER TRANSITION COACH CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP

Three-Day Workshop. 21 Continuing Education Hours.

Singapore: March 14-15-16, 2016 [Dick Knowdell]
Atlanta, GA: April 11-12-13, 2016 [Rich Feller]
Chicago, IL: June 26-27-28, 2016 [Rich Feller]
Washington, DC: September 12-13-14, 2016 [Rich Feller]
California: December 5-6-7, 2016 [Rich Feller]



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP.

One-Day Workshop. 7 Continuing Education Hours.

Workshops led by **Dick Knowdell**

Singapore: March 19, 2016
Atlanta, GA: April 14, 2016
Chicago, IL: June 29, 2016
Washington, DC: September 15, 2016
California: December 8, 2016

To register for the above programs or for information, contact: **Dick Knowdell, Career Development Network. Post Office Box 611930, San Jose, CA 95161-1930 USA 408-828-3858; e-mail: rknowdell@mac.com.**



INNER HEROES CERTIFICATION TRAINING February 23-24, 2016. Long Beach, California USA

Are you interested in a program that ensures you are meeting your SSSP goals by helping students choose the right major and career pathway? If so, I invite you to join me for my Inner Heroes Certification Training. Inner Heroes Program helps students find careers that match their personality strengths and natural talents while also overcoming obstacles that block success. It includes cards and an assessment based on the Keirsey Temperament Theory. Registration: Early bird January 7, 2016: \$550. After deadline \$595. Contact: **Carolyn Kalil, MA 310 993-2164. www.InnerHeroes.com**



ONLINE JOB SEARCH PRACTITIONER CERTIFICATION

Earn an Online Job Search Practitioner Certificate. Fifteen-hour online, self-paced course for career practitioners, plus five teleconferencing sessions. Instructor is Sally Gelardin, EdD. To register, view the web site: www.jobjuggler.net/career-professionals.html, then link to Online Certificate Program.

For more information, contact the instructor, **Sally Gelardin at 415.924.6369 (Office). 415.312.4294 (Mobile).**

NEWSLETTER COLUMNISTS



ABOUT YOUR PRIVATE PRACTICE, by Jack Chapman

Jack Chapman owns a Chicago-area career consulting private practice, Lucrative Careers. He is author of *Negotiating Your Salary: How to Make \$1000 a Minute*. He is the executive director of the Private Practice Alliance: www.PrivatePracticeAlliance.com. Contact him at: **Jack Chapman, 511 Maple Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091. 847-251-4727. e-mail: <jkchapman@aol.com>**.

A NEW WAY TO GET CLIENTS FROM THE INTERNET

In this electronic age I discovered the fairly straightforward, service-oriented marketing program. I offer free online webinars. Some of the webinars I am the organizer/host. Others are delivered by colleagues. I have about 20 webinars now. A few I give every month; the rest are woven in to a three month cycle. When any webinar is complete, "Go to Webinar," sends me the name, telephone number, and email address of participants. By always surveying the participants to make sure your webinar is the best it can be, you can call them up asking for feedback. In that conversation, if they are in need or want career coaching, you can bring in a new client immediately! Employed or unemployed everyone is job hunting in some manner, working to advance their career nowadays. Therefore I have webinars about job search, and also webinars just to improve productivity and satisfaction on the job. I soon will password-protect these webinars. For now they are *free* open and available to you, your friends and relatives, your job-search and career-search clients, and anyone who feels they might profit from attending. Here are 10 of the 20 webinars I give. Feel free to come and join any or all of them. You'll find the schedule at Lucrative-CareersInc.com.

1. Salary Negotiation

- 1) have you ever felt you were underpaid ?
- 2) do you think you know what to do in negotiations, but need coaching around why and how to do it?
- 3) are you worried that negotiating might jeopardize a job offer
- 4) would you like to learn some sources on how much to ask for? If you want to make sure there is *no dollar left behind* when you accept an offer or a raise, Go to Webinar for *salary negotiation*.

2. Innovative Marketing Materials

- 1) are you sending your resume out but getting no response?
- 2) have you identified all five *audiences* for your resume and cover letter?
- 3) do you know how to double the chances you'll get a response by using a *parallel match* document?
- 4) do you have a cache of P. A. R. building blocks so you can quickly assemble the right marketing tool for each of the five audiences? If you answered no to any of these, Go to Webinar for don't send that resume!

3. Online Job Search

- 1) do you know the six stages of job search activity, ranging from the passive to the very active?
 - 2) can you explain the reason why the *hidden job market* exists? Think about it. Why would a company or person who wants to hire someone keep it a secret? Creating the *hidden job market*?
 - 3) can you explain the concept of incubation, and job search? The opportunities "incubate" before they "hatch" into job opening.
 - 4) do you know how to find those unpublished, hidden jobs?
- If you want to make sure your working on the highest yield job search activities, for *online search*.

4. Speed Search

Do you have an effective system for keeping track of all the details of a job search? Would you like to have an extra 5 to 10 hours a week productive time in your job search? Do you know how to make 15

minutes solitude and planning in the morning give you an extra two or three hours of productive time on the job, or job search. If you want to manage your time and priorities and feel more peace and tranquility at the same time, Go to Webinar for *speed search*.

5. LinkedIn Basics

- 1) Do you know how to put up your profile, and how to make it 100 per cent?
- 2) Do you know how to optimize your profile for keywords and how to fill out the summary section (hint: don't paste your resume)
- 3) Know how to use LinkedIn not just as a sort of *billboard* but as a way of actively networking, building your reputation, building your visibility, and letting new jobs come to you?
- 4) do you know what a *lion* is, and why you want to find a lot of them? If you want to make sure your profile works for you day and night, 24/7, Go to Webinar for *LinkedIn Basics*.

6. LinkedIn Advanced

Once you're grounded in LinkedIn fundamentals, you'll want to follow up with our LinkedIn Master Class. A LinkedIn training that goes way beyond the basics of *Put up your profile; stock it with Keywords*. Steve Frederick shows you how to use LinkedIn to actually get connected for job, career, or business. You'll learn how to use it for research, for uncovering hidden job opportunities, enhancing your brand/identity, building *high-touch* relationships with this *high-tech* tool. We'll go in depth on three LinkedIn elements: Groups, Companies, Search. If you are ready, take your LinkedIn skills to the next level, Go to Webinar for *LinkedIn Mastery*.

7. Job Hunter's Magic Bullet

Jack Chapman will present a little-used Job Search technique. It's a *Magic Bullet* proven in current PhD research to accelerate job search 5 times faster for 80 per cent of job hunters. Works at all levels from senior executive to mail room clerk; works for every industry, function title from Anesthesiologist to zoologist; works as well or better in a tough economic climate; adaptable to focused or unfocused career change; takes only one hour to learn (right there in Jack's workshop) and it will last throughout your career. Requires no extra expense or complicated training. Published research citation provided at workshop.

8. Safest Way to be Your Own Boss

Discouraged in your job search? Looking for a *second career*? Been out several months and don't see yourself getting closer? Do you think owning your own business could solve your job and career problems? Would you like to own your own business, but don't know how to go about it safely? Do you think owning a business is not affordable for you? Lucrative Careers Inc's *Safest Way to Be Your Own Boss* webinar explores this option. There are businesses that are profitable and successful – even in today's economy. Some are franchises, others are individual companies. Still others are work-from-home opportunities. Come learn how to find one that is right for you.

9. Conquering Paper Pile Up

Time spent finding things is time spent on *not* your most important things. Feelings of frustration at not finding what you need when you need it. Practicing the *Go Vertical Model* for conquering paper piles. Needs the *foundation* of a planner and SDTL to work. Once you have that foundation, this habit is rather quickly acquired because it's so simple and feels so good. Lasts the rest of your lifetime.

10. Getting Things Done by Getting Other People to do it for You

Why we don't delegate more: we are trapped in the following incorrect beliefs: no one to delegate to, or even if someone to delegate too, still worried task will be incorrect, incomplete, or inefficient. Discovering the tremendous power of delegation in our life and career you live the life of Riley while others are doing your work for you.



A JOB HUNTING TIP by the Wizard of Work, Dick Gaither

If you have questions or just want to motor-mouth about job finding, give a call at **(800) 361-1613** or drop an e-mail: **workwizard@aol.com**). Web site: **www.wizardsofwork.com**

Talking Tattoos In The Interview

Anyone who's been in the job search business has had a client with visible tattoos or piercing. The worst I've dealt with is the guy with a snake going up his neck with its tongue flicking in the guy's ear or the girl who had more than twenty different piercings on her face. ***Forty per cent of applicant rejection is based on appearance***, and even though the job seeker feels this is the *real him or her* and that it isn't fair to discriminate, the reality in today's labor market is that tattoos and piercings can create a hiring barrier, even though twenty to forty per cent of us have one.

Here are the realities:

More than a quarter of employers feel people with tattoos and/or piercings are not as smart (can't learn as fast). More than fifty per cent of employers feel they're more problematic and rebellious (won't follow rules). More than thirty per cent of employers say piercings and tattoos negatively impact a person's career advancement. Seventy per cent of employees with tattoos or piercings hide them at work. In order to counter some of the negative reactions associated with tattoos and piercings, I instruct applicants to deal with the issue in a similar way to divulging a visible disability during an interview.

Conservative Occupations

Realize there's more rejection in conservative occupations (banking, direct sales, general office work, etc.). Look for jobs, and at companies, where self-expression is more acceptable (artists, manufacturing, construction, self-employment, etc.). Take out the piercing jewelry. It really distracts the interviewer. You want interviewers remembering what you can bring to the company, not the gold tongue stud that flashes and bounces every time you open your mouth. Use the hide, divulge and question tactic. If a tattoo can be hidden, hide it (long sleeves for arm tattoos, collars or turtlenecks for neck tats, rings for finger tats, etc.), especially if it might be considered offensive or perceived as a prison tat. Towards the end of the interview and after you've made a good impression, let the interviewer know you have a hidden tattoo. Ask the interviewer about the company's policy about visible tattoos and piercings.

Preempt the issue

Contact the company, Human Resources, or someone in the company, before the interview, and ask them about the company's hiring policy for people with visible tattoos and piercings. If the tattoo can't be covered, bring up the issue and find out if it disqualifies you. Plead youth and stupidity. Don't get upset with the interviewer. Accept the fact that you made this decision. Now you have to pay the price for that decision.

Drop me an e-mail at **workwizard@aol.com** or call me at **(800) 361-1613** if you have questions or comments.



SMART JOB SEARCH, by Susan P. Joyce

Susan P. Joyce is Editor/Publisher of Job-Hunt.org and WorkCoachCafe.com. She is a Visiting Scholar at the MIT Sloan School of Business, and is the author of *How to Find a Job Using Craigslist*. She is co-editor of *New Year, New Job!* Her background includes service in military intelligence in the United States Marine Corps. Contact her as follows:
e-mail: sjoyce@netability.com

Overcoming the Employment Gap Handicap

In our research at MIT and the Institute for Career Transitions, we have learned that a large gap in employment is a problem for job seekers, particularly a gap of six months or more. In a research project, Dr. Rand Ghayad sent out thousands of resumes, and employers preferred the resumes of candidates who were not qualified for their job openings over the resumes representing qualified people who had been out of work six months or more. So, being long-term unemployed has a stigma associated with it. Negative assumptions are made, like the job seeker is unemployed *for a reason*. Poor performance, poor effort, poor skills — clearly a flaw in the job seeker causing the unemployment. Fortunately, being hired with six months or more of unemployment is not *mission impossible*. Specific strategies to address the gap in employment can be very effective and are very helpful.

Fill that Gap!

If someone has been unemployed for more than six months, the key is to find a good way to fill that employment gap on the resume. The best solution is to find an activity that provides both financial support and relevant experience and activity, if possible. Job seekers need to avoid staying at home all day, sitting in front of their computers submitting job applications. Completing online job applications is not the way that most people find new jobs, and doing it endlessly without success, as most people do, can be very discouraging and lonely.

Stay Involved

The best strategy is to stay involved in work related activities, which has many benefits in addition to helping the job seeker to stay up-to-date, or even sharpen their skills to be more competitive. This involvement is great for networking, demonstrating the job seeker's market value. Last, but *not* least, staying busy is very good for morale. Yes — the job seeker *can* do things valued by employers! And, getting out of the home (and away from the computer) can help both attitude and confidence, essential elements of a successful job search.

Publish the Gap Fillers on the Resume and LinkedIn

The goal with all of this activity is to fill a gap on the resume and also to make it visible in social media, particularly the LinkedIn Profile. Resumes are compared with (and validated by) the *public* information the job seeker has made visible on the LinkedIn Profile. In addition, when the profile is found by a recruiter searching for qualified candidates, the gap between *permanent* jobs will be less visible.

Options for Filling the Employment Gap

1. Contract assignments.

Hiring contract workers is a popular way for many companies to get important work done without adding permanent staff, similar to the temporary agency approach but usually longer term, ranging from a few weeks to several months — typically the length of a project. Sometimes, the contract is a test to see if adding a *permanent* employee is appropriate. Sometimes these opportunities can be through an agency. Often the job seeker connects with these opportunities through the usual job boards or sites like the Craigslist *gigs* listings. The most effective sources depend on the field, target market, and location. This is a combination foot-in-the-door with a paycheck as an added benefit. This may also demonstrate that the job seeker was able to set up and market their services as a business, something that can be very impressive and appropriate for some corporate cultures, enhancing the job seeker's market value. It can also develop into a career as a freelancer/entrepreneur.

2. Temporary employment.

Many employers hire temporary help to fill a necessary function while someone is on vacation or out of the office for a few days to a couple of weeks. Sometimes, the temporary work becomes permanent (often called temp-to-perm). Temporary work is usually sourced through an agency, preferably one with clients who are related to the job seeker's field and/or target employers. Many job seekers work with more than one agency. As with contract work, temporary work is a foot-in-the-door move plus a paycheck while filling in a gap. Excellent combination! This may be difficult or you may need to start on the *bottom rung* or in a job related to your target field. If you can't find experience in a related field, try finding any temporary position at one of your target employers. The beauty of this is that job seekers can build a reputation with the temporary agency, have an opportunity to try-before-you-buy with new employers (and vice versa), and expand their networks.

3. Learn new skills.

This *break* can be a good opportunity for the job seeker to add or to polish their professional skills. The learning can be in college or graduate school as well as technical certifications that are relevant to the target field. These activities demonstrate intelligence, interest, and ambition, and they also usually enlarge the job seeker's network.

4. Volunteer at a related nonprofit.

Nonprofit organizations almost always need help. So do political campaigns and organizations that support important local issues (from food banks to cancer research). Sometimes even local governments can accept free assistance. Or, perhaps the school the job seeker's child attends needs some parental assistance. Sometimes the work is paid. More often it is unpaid. The work should be relevant and related to the job seeker's field. If their goal is a position in marketing in *the real world*, volunteer to help a nonprofit with their marketing, perhaps in an area where the job seeker's experience is limited or in need of more experience. During election season (which seems to be permanent these days), volunteering with a candidate or for a cause close to the job seeker's heart can be beneficial in many ways, from the satisfaction (if the election is won) to the network. The downside could be that the candidate or cause might be viewed negatively by potential employers.

5. Writing articles, posts, or books.

Writing can be a great reason to contact people for interviews, collecting information for the article/post/book as well as expanding the network and meeting interesting people (perhaps employed by a target employer?). Done well, writing nonfiction related to the job seeker's field adds credibility as an expert. If the job seeker has good writing skills (and/or access to a good editor and proofreader), writing can be very useful. Posting substantial articles of 800 words or more on LinkedIn can be very effective, even if the articles don't receive thousands of views and positive comments (*very* nice if that happens, of course). LinkedIn members can simply click on the **Publish a post** link on their LinkedIn Profile's home page, enter the article (with an image), and click the **Publish** button to make the article visible. LinkedIn automatically adds links to the articles to the writer's Profile where an employer can find them. Recent surveys have shown that employers are increasingly interested in demonstrations of the job seekers skills and knowledge, even for jobs that don't require writing skills. Writing a book and officially becoming an *author* can be fun. With Amazon's help, converting a Word document into a Kindle book is not difficult. Much can be learned in the process of writing, publishing, and marketing ebooks. If the writing skills are not good, care should be taken. Employers will find the articles, and the job seeker will likely be judged by their quality. Best of all, writing can become a second or part-time career, and it can generate substantial revenue to supplement or to replace a salary.

Added Benefits of Gap-Filler Activity

Activity also offers an opportunity to get out into the marketplace – demonstrating value (to self and to others), building self-confidence, adding to the portfolio of skills and experience, and helping the job

seeker to be as up-to-date and current as they can be. All of those fill that employment gap, and make the job seeker more appealing to potential employers. In job interviews, these gap-filling activities should be presented in a very positive light, highlighting what the job seeker did and learned, and making it clear that they job seeker wasn't *goofing off* during their period of unemployment

The Institute for Career Transitions, Cambridge, Massachusetts [ICT].

At ICT, Boston Area Job Seekers Receive Free Job Search Support via MIT-Based Research. Initially open only in the greater Boston area, this program will grow to include more locations in the future. Job seekers who are unemployed may sign up for the opportunity to receive free job search support made possible by MIT-based research and career coaches and counselors who have agreed to volunteer their time. As part of research focused on effective job search strategies and support, a number of experienced career coaches and counselors have volunteered to provide for free the same job search support that often costs amounts not affordable to many long-term unemployed job seekers.

Qualifying Job Seekers for ICT services:

Job seekers in the greater Boston area are encouraged to sign up if they fit the study's focus on:

- *Workers who are unemployed at least 6 months.*
- *White-collar workers (broadly defined, to include anyone would might work in an office, from administrative assistants to executives, to engineers or managers).*
- *Workers between 40 - 65 years old.*

While ICT seeks to provide free support to as many job seekers as possible, due to the number of available career coaches and counselors not all job seekers who sign up will be able to receive support. Everyone who signs up will receive a response, and if they wish, will be placed on a list to receive preliminary findings as they become available on the most effective job search strategies. The sign up process should take approximately 10 minutes. The sign up and the research will adhere to the highest standards of confidentiality.

Contact:

Sign up by going to the Institute for Career Transitions

Web Site: *instituteforcareertransitions.org*



SOCIAL MEDIA and YOUR CAREER, by Melissa Venable

Melissa Venable, PhD, guest edited our Fall 2013 journal special issue on the topic of Social Media and Career Development. She is an Education and Career Writer in Beaufort, South Carolina. Contact her at:
e-mail: <melissa.venable@yahoo.com>

Take a Social Media Inventory For 2016

If you've been following this column over the last two years, you know that there is a lot you can accomplish with social media. You've also heard about multiple platforms, from Twitter to LinkedIn, and many ways to participate, from networking to live chats.

What can you do to improve your social media experience in the New Year? The first step is to take an inventory of what you are using and how you are using it. Then it is important to set goals for the future. Use the following checklist to both review your social use in 2015 and develop a plan for action in 2016.

Audit Past Participation

As you reflect on how and when you've used social media over the past year, what comes to mind? Which experiences were the most valuable to you in your career services context? Consider the following activities, and add others you've been involved with to the list:

Sharing information

You can benefit as both the sender and receiver of resources that are exchanged regularly through social networks.

Building and joining communities

If you've been active in the past year it's likely that your accounts have more followers, and that you are following more accounts.

Networking with peers: We all stand to benefit from connecting with others who do what we do, and who work with clients and students in our target populations.

Participating in events: Social media makes it possible to learn from on-site conference and workshop sessions, even at a distance, by following the event hashtag (#) on social platforms. Do you want to do more of these things or are there ideas here you have not yet tried? Start thinking about goals (more on that coming up)!

Conduct Profile Maintenance

Your social profiles may be overdue for some housekeeping. It's not unusual to open a new account with good intentions, only to find it gets left behind when competing priorities overtake your calendar. Start your maintenance with the following steps:

List all of the accounts for which you are currently registered.

Categorize these according to use: 1) use often, 2) use rarely or never, but want use this year, and 3) use rarely or never, and probably won't use in the future.

Delete those accounts in category 3, and then update the rest.

For the social profiles you use often, or plan to make better use of in the coming year, block

some time on your calendar to review and refresh the details of each one. Here are just a few of the items you should include on an annual (or more frequent) maintenance schedule:

Annual Social Media Maintenance Schedule

Update your profile photograph

Have you ever met someone at a conference and realized that his/her picture must have been taken many years ago? Make yourself more recognizable by posting something current. [1]

Revise your bio or headline

Is your current profile information still relevant? Have you completed a degree or earned a credential that should be included? These bios introduce you to the world, so ensure that all of the pertinent details are in place.

Test links. If your profile includes links to a personal or professional website, online portfolio, or other resource, make sure that they are still working.

Provide contact information. If you are open to having other users contact you based on your social profiles, include some alternatives (e.g., email, online contact form, phone) and make them available.

Review and (Re)set Goals

Are you using your social accounts and networks the way you thought you would when you set them up? Maybe you've tried several strategies that aren't getting the results you planned for. It could be time for a change. What do you want to get out of the experience this year? Your goals might include items such as [2]:

- Establish a brand for your center or practice
- Publish updates on a regular basis (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly)
- Share new types of resources, such as images and video
- Engage in discussions through live events and/or online forums
- Promote special events
- Create a Task List for 2016

Taking some time to think about what's working and what's not, and setting realistic and relevant goals, will help you make the most of your limited social media time. Plan to accomplish several specific tasks in the coming months. Here are a couple of ideas to get you started:

Make a list of the items you routinely share, such as event calendars, marketing materials, pictures, and links, and schedule these items for the coming year, and add something new to the list. Create a roster of people you want to connect with in the New Year and begin making contact with each one through social accounts and communities. Whether you are using social media as an individual professional or as part of a school career center or other career office, you can enhance your efforts with a little reflection, revision, and action.

References

[1] The Research and Science Behind Finding Your Best Profile Picture from BufferSocial
<http://bit.ly/1ODrmVo>

[2] Social Media Inventory Checklist: Are Your Social Marketing Efforts Outdated?
From Business2Community.com
<http://bit.ly/1Ps8OL2>

CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA

The Career Development “Pill” for Singapore. by Gerald Tan

Gerald Tan is a career development facilitator in Singapore. He has wide experience working in the public service on national employment trends and policies. Contact: gtanzp@gmail.com

[Author’s note: This commentary aims to explain the latest career development initiative introduced by the Singapore government and why it is timely to embark on it. It also explains Singapore’s social context impacting employment mindsets and possible barriers preventing the people from embracing career development.]

Singapore is a tiny island nation of over 5 million people who went from third world to first world in just 50 years. Much is known of our selfmade success, relying on our only resource human capital, to create economies and better lives for our people. Our transformation is indeed nothing short of an astounding success and this is owing to the astute vision of our first government in encouraging trade and developing new economies as well as our forefathers who worked hard to sustain their families and themselves. As a tiny nation in the world, we are under no illusion that we are at the mercy of larger economic forces at work. We rode the waves of recession, including the Asian Financial Crisis in the late 1990s, the SARS outbreak in the early 2000s and the most recent Subprime Crisis in 2008. Each time we coped, through government measures, and managed to stem unemployment to around 3 per cent. Even in today’s volatile economy, our unemployment rate has been hovering in the range of 2 per cent for the last four years.

Our rags to riches story and our efforts to keep our economy strong and unemployment low have been lauded and studied by other nations. As we continue to transform our economy and prepare for the next wave, the government has identified three initiatives to move the nation towards future economic growth. The first is the need for our enterprises to move from value addition towards value creation. The next two are strongly linked to the development of our workforce. Our labor force participation rate is now 67 per cent, the highest in the last decade. The task is now to build up each member of the workforce to develop mastery of his skills and to ensure a productive and highly skilled workforce, so as to support economic growth. These two initiatives are known as the SkillsFuture.

Our “Magic Pill” – SkillsFuture?

In early 2015, our government introduced the SkillsFuture initiative, which brought together multiple government agencies to develop interventions to facilitate career development and planning, skills upgrading. The initiative caters to the current working professionals and the nation’s young. For students, the Ministry of Education has taken steps to professionalize career guidance services, introduce industry immersion experiences and more internships to guide students in developing industry awareness, explore career and education pathways. The Workforce Development Agency (under the Ministry of Manpower) is developing a national career development portal to career exploration, awareness and planning needs based the different life stages of every worker. There is also training support catered for specific growing industries to build indepth sectoral skills mastery, facilitate retraining of midcareer switchers as well as empowering all individuals to take ownership of skills upgrading through provision of \$500 training credits. Given that

majority of the SkillsFuture implementation takes place only in 2016, it is premature at this point to assess the effectiveness of the initiative. However, as we know, the sharpest tool is only useful when placed in the hands of a skilled worker. SkillsFuture is only a set of tools and interventions put in place by the government. The success of it relies heavily on how our people understand the purpose behind career development and use SkillsFuture to further their own careers. So why is it hard for our people to understand the need and importance of career development?

Our social context

The reality of our tiny nation competing in the global arena of nations has created a do-or-die mind set in our society which translates to priority on economic pursuits. We have embraced the ethos of always being competitive, ahead of the curve, getting things done correctly and quickly so that we can survive and thrive in the global economy. Success, is associated primarily by economic or gross domestic product gain. Cascading down to our people, we feel that we have to work hard to survive, cope with our high cost of living, manage our fear of losing everything we worked hard for and being viewed as left behind among our peers. This mindset translates to a somewhat unbalanced definition of success among our people. Success for a person is defined by the financial status, earning ability or job status, rather than self worth, career satisfaction and fulfillment. Our employment mindset is now skewed towards taking the common and safest route to go on a paper chase for an academic degree, achieve financial stability and to earn as much as possible, for as long as possible. We are fast becoming a nation of booksmart tertiary educated workforce. Our tertiary educated local workforce almost doubled in the last decade. The primary motivation for pursuing a university education is to get a higher paying job because vocational education and specialized technical industries do not pay well. This trend could eventually create a shortage of technical vocational expertise in our workforce or create a surplus of degree holders, pushing them into the vocational workforce. This article shall focus on three groups most affected by our social context mentioned above. The opinions expressed in this article were borne from qualitative professional and personal observations and are only representative of the general Singapore population.

The undecided young

While career exploration and discovery has been encouraged in schools starting from primary levels, it has not taken off in a great way. The reason is because of the parents who have the stronger influence over their children. As concerned parents who want the best for their children, they preach and base their career guidance efforts on an assumption that attaining a degree will guarantee a secure future. This is probably because it had worked for their own careers or was what they were taught by their parents. Being guided by this assumption means the pursuit of academic achievements starts off from a young age and culminates at ages 12 and 16 where the children are faced with national milestone examinations. These examinations are deemed high stakes by parents because the results will determine their children's education pathway and possible career pathways. To help their children ace the examinations, tuition has become a must-have for the child to ace every examination. Proof of this: tuition today is a \$1 billion industry in Singapore. Hobbies in the area of arts or sports have also become important not because of the interest and enjoyment of the child, but because developing excellence in these areas could create a higher chance to enter a better school which in turn increases the possibility of better grades. Over time, the children pour all their efforts into studying and getting into good schools

and finally a degree. The opportunity cost associated with this? The children lack self awareness of their interests, become risk adverse and only make decisions that benefit academic excellence rather than career inclinations or making use of opportunities that come along their way. In the care of overzealous parents, it is also possible that the children fail to develop volition having autonomous ownership of their career decision. All these because of their parents' assumption of the importance of a degree for career success.

The awakening moment comes when the growing children need to make their own education decision or enter the workforce. It is a rude awakening for most. Some children become lost when they fail to secure a university place. Those who got a place are faced with uncertainty about their area of study. They could end up making a choice based on their peers' choice, their family's choice, courses where graduates earn the most upon graduating or even frivolous considerations such as courses that increase their chances of meeting someone of the opposite gender!

There are consequences to such illinformed decision making and they could surface during or after graduation. Some graduates realize that they do not want to go into what they have been trained to work as. Some delay making their career decisions by doing further studies. Some refrain from entering the workforce because they are still confused and undecided on their career pathways. Some just follow where their peers are going, what their parents hope they do or to join any reputable firm with promise of big money. In such situations, it is fair to say that money and time has been wasted on the education. This is exemplified by a case that was reported in Singapore a few years ago where an academically brilliant student wanted to leave her biomedical research job to pursue a career in the arts field. She could not do so, given that she was bonded to her company after they had supported her with almost three quarters of a million dollars for her biomedical education.

Backtrack all these to where it all started. This assumption of a degree (any degree!) for future success is held so dearly today by parents although it is outdated. With the world of work fast changing and new work trends emerging, this assumption needs to be moderated with more focus on career development. Parents today must first take the brave step to devote some time and effort away from academic pursuits, learn how career development takes place and guide, facilitate their children's career exploration and awareness. Through SkillsFuture, there will be resources from primary, secondary and tertiary schools that parents can use too. Career learning opportunities are abound too in public spaces. For example, parents could draw attention to different occupations in the society, encourage their children to explore occupations online or even at theme parks such as KidsZania. Our society also needs to change their mindsets from academic pursuits to one which encourages our young to explore, discover the world of work and take risks. There should be more career conversations between the workforce and the young, so that our young can learn about how career choices and transitions are navigated and made.

More to come from Singapore in our next Newsletter.

Job Opportunity

Chinese-English Bilingual College Planning Counselor

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Contact:

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The *Life-Design Counseling Manual* can be found here:

<http://contactpoint.ca/listing/life-design-counseling-manual/>

Link here to View the Manual

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