OCTOBER 2018 • ISSUE NO. 10

BE TIME WISE

A Monthly Newsletter On Self-Development

HOW TO FIND YOUR MOST PRODUCTIVE HOURS

“Everything is a system … It’s a repeatable process that allows you to scale and it outputs things with the same quality every time the system runs.”

You can’t be productive unless you have a system, a method, a process, whatever you want to call it. Some people invent a system, others on the other hand learn a system. But everyone has a system.

A life without a positive daily routine or structure is so much more draining mentally, physically, and emotionally than you can ever imagine!

Thomas A. Edison wisely said, “Being busy does not always mean real work. The object of all work is production or accomplishment and to either of these ends there must be forethought, system, planning, intelligence, and honest purpose, as well as perspiration. Seeming to do is not doing.”

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

HOW APPROACHABLE ARE YOU? BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR TEAM
CORE COMPETENCIES: THE VALUE OF UNIQUENESS
TABLE MANNERS TIP FOR THE MONTH!

Many people lead complex lives. They have an endless amount of commitments, communication, and information to manage and execute.

A productivity system provides you the ability to manage and execute those commitments, communications, and information at a specific time.

It's simply a collection of behaviours, repeated consistently and in a particular order, plus the tools that support them. It makes you efficient. You can achieve more in less time. "Efficiency is doing better what's already being done," says Peter F. Drucker.

You can't be productive unless you have a system, a method, a process, a routine, whatever you want to call it. Basically, you have a way of doing things.

Mike Murdock was right when he said, "The secret of your future is hidden in your daily routine."

According to a recent McKinsey report, today's workforce spends 61% of their time managing work rather than doing it. Productivity is fairly simple, in theory.

Many people cannot commit to any productive system.
Discipline is probably the biggest reason people can't commit to any productive system.

Jim Rohn once said "Either you run the day or the day runs you." If you have clarity of purpose every morning, your focus will change.

A solid daily structure that guides your actions every day can make a huge difference in how you work. "Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort," says Paul J.

A productivity system is an enabler, something you can use to understand what needs to get done, bring order from chaos, and save you from too many sleepless nights.

Every productive person has a system for getting things done. What works for others may not necessarily work for you.

When your system makes you feel comfortable and confident that your productivity bases are covered, and it has a track record of actually helping you do your work without missing anything important, stick to it.

"Be Productive"

Focus on the results, not the system.

If you're spending more time researching and implementing a productivity technique than you are being productive, it's not actually helping you. Select and work with principles that work for your needs.

Once you settle into your system, you need to customize it. Make it your own.

How Approachable Are You?
Building Relationships With Your Team

Being approachable is key to building relationships with your colleagues, and to creating a strong team in which trust, confidence and ideas can flow. When you're approachable, team members do not sit on or cover up problems. This means that they are able to bring issues to you before they become full-blown crises because they know that you won't react badly.

"Being approachable!"

Team members who have approachable managers feel able to contribute ideas and find the workplace a safe environment in which to do so. They're not scared about being knocked back because they know their manager is open to their suggestions and will consider them fairly.

Certain organizations have reputations, correct or otherwise, for keeping their leaders in "ivory towers," far away from their team members. In these high "power-distance" situations, you might have to call your boss "madam" rather than by her first name, and go through a PA if you want to talk to her. She might have her own reserved car-parking spot, chair meetings from the end of the table, send overly formal emails, and so on. It can be scary to approach this kind of person!

Often, leaders who act this way do so as a way of maintaining their authority. However, they will be missing out on opportunities to identify issues or discover ideas for improvement by not being "on the front line." You'll be much more approachable if you reduce power distance.

How approachable you appear to others is very much down to you. Sure, some of the people who work for you may have a fear of authority, but you need to break down those barriers and create an environment of trust.

Approachability is about being accessible, consciously breaking down perceived barriers, having appropriate body language, and using the right verbal communication and listening skills.

There are four main attributes that make up approachability:-
i. Looking Available
ii. Listening Skills
iii. Having Good Verbal Communication
iv. Using the Right Body Language

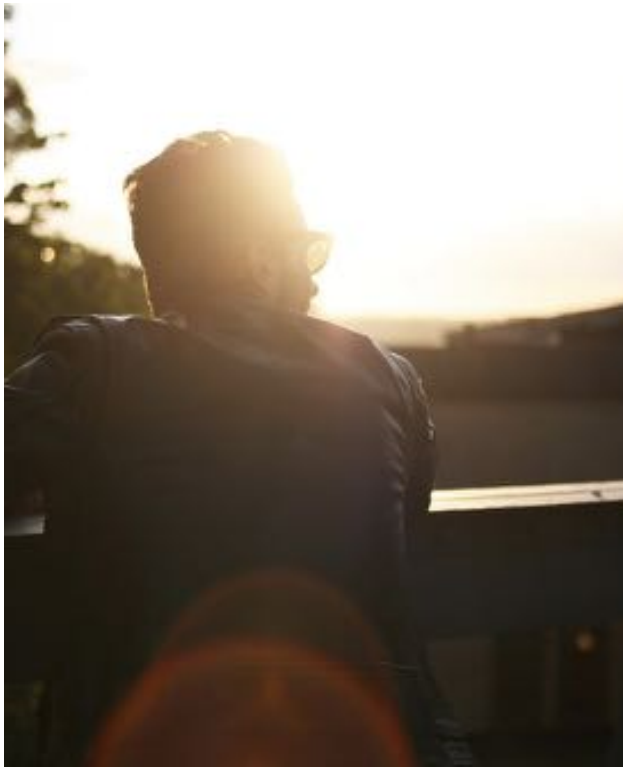
1. Look Available
It seems obvious, but looking available is one of the most effective steps we can take towards breaking down physical barriers, reducing power distance, and keeping lines of communication open.

If you don't have an office, improve your visibility by getting up from your desk and walking around. Your desk is your turf, and this can make it hard for team members to approach. So, go and speak with people at their desks, where they feel comfortable, or talk to them somewhere neutral, like at the water cooler. Use this informal time to recognize good work, and to gain feedback. You'll be amazed how much people like to share their thoughts when they're asked!

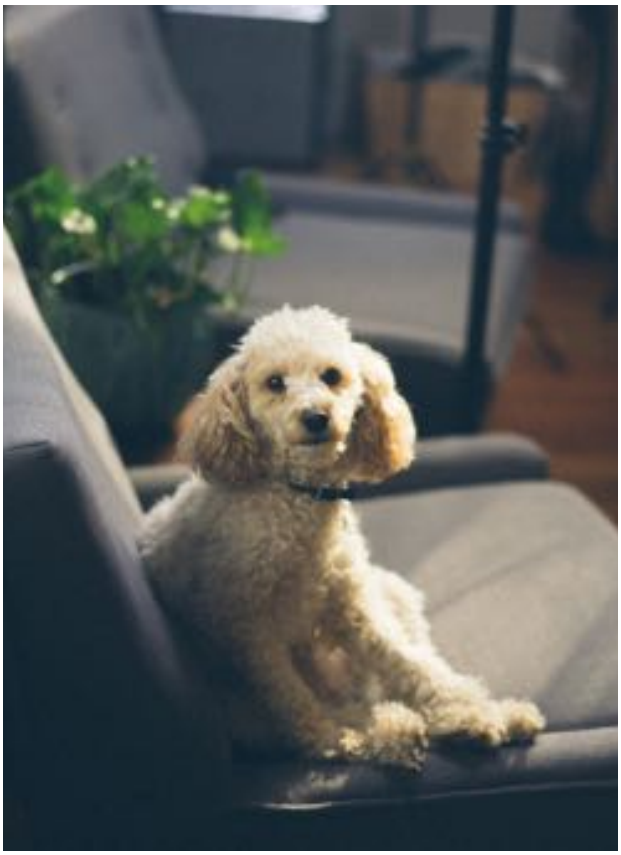
You must make a determined and genuine effort to talk to and understand your team members, to find out what they do, check they have what they need, make sure they're happy, and to take action where necessary to correct things that are going wrong.

And don't just talk about work; indulge in a little personal disclosure. Sharing information about yourself is important when you're in a leadership role because it shows others you are empathetic, compassionate and authentic. Speak about your family, what you did at the weekend, and your hobbies. Build rapport with others by finding out about their lives outside work, too. (If you share information and take time to chat, you'll probably find that you end up liking the people you work with - that's great, and mutual liking and respect can be hugely powerful!)

If you're in and out of meetings a lot, let your team know where you'll be and when you'll be back. Tell everyone how to contact you if there are any problems, and make sure you're available.



"Look Available"



Should you not be able to respond immediately, reassure people that you'll do so at the first opportunity you get.

2. Listening Skills
Put simply, if your team members think you are not listening to them, they won't want to approach you.

Good listening is not about hearing what someone is saying and waiting for him or her to finish so you can have your "two cents." You have to engage your eyes, as well as your ears, give the other person your full attention, and draw on your emotional intelligence. Being switched on in this way builds trust and respect, both of which are important for increasing approachability.

Engage in Active Listening . This is the process by which you pay attention to the words someone is saying, and understand the complete message that he is sending. Listening in this way is important, because it shows you are paying attention, so your colleagues feel engaged and valued.

Another approach is Empathic Listening. This can help you win your team members' trust and get to the root of any issues they may have. Do this by identifying key points and repeating them back to the speaker to get her to open up. What's important is to pay attention to what's not being said, as well as what is - the absence of words can often be telling.

3. Verbal Communication
There is a huge crossover between appearing approachable and being positive, and this is especially important when we consider what comes out of our mouths. What we say is a crucial part of approachability, because good verbal communication helps us build trust and a strong team spirit.

Few people will want to engage with you if everything you say is negative. Although it will always depend on the circumstances, team members will have more confidence in approaching you with ideas or problems if they are not fearful of the outcome. With this in mind, make sure you acknowledge ideas from your team and give credit where it's due.

"Listening Skills"

(You don't have to go over the top. Try to give much more positive feedback than negative (because people take negative feedback much more to heart than positive feedback - a simple "thanks for the suggestion" encourages people to contribute again.)

If an idea is great, make sure you give your team member the recognition he deserves. Research shows that receiving praise raises our dopamine levels - the neurotransmitter associated with feelings of joy and satisfaction - which helps us establish good working habits. But if an idea is not so good, you need to explain why. Failure to do so may leave your team member feeling like his input is not wanted, and this can stifle future creativity.

Responding positively to good ideas is the easy part. It's how you react to bad news that's the real test. Self-regulation, which is an important part of emotional intelligence, isn't always easy but problems can fester if team members are too scared to come to you with their issues. Appreciate that it takes courage to speak up when something is wrong, so always thank the person for letting you know.

4. Body Language
Your team members could be sitting on ideas that could transform your organization but previous experiences, when you've seemed disinterested, may have put them off telling you about them. And you could be none the wiser!

We know that positive managers tend to have happy teams, and they are naturally far more approachable than those with a negative outlook. Positivity shines through all communication, including our posture, eye contact, hand gestures, speech, and tone of voice. And how we hold ourselves determines the way people act toward us.

Using the right body language is a vital yet simple way of increasing your approachability. Smile more, unfold your arms, look at your team members in the eye when you talk to them, and speak slowly in a moderate to low tone. Take your time when you're walking to and from your desk - even if you're in a hurry - and remember to look around rather than straight ahead or down at the floor.

"Be Positive"

Key Points

Being approachable is the foundation of building good relationships with your colleagues, and of creating a strong team in which confidence can grow and ideas can flow. You can improve how approachable you are by breaking down barriers and creating an environment of trust.

Develop your skills by increasing your visibility, using appropriate body language, and working on your communication and listening skills.

CORE COMPETENCIES: THE VALUE OF UNIQUENESS

The starting point for understanding core competencies is understanding that businesses need to have something that customers uniquely value if they're to make good profits.

This is why there's such an emphasis on building and selling USPs (Unique Selling Points) in business. If you're able to offer something uniquely good, customers will want to choose your products and will be willing to pay more for them.

The question, though, is where this uniqueness comes from, and how it can be sustained.

"Core Competences" are some of the most important sources of uniqueness: these are the things that a company can do uniquely well, and that no-one else can copy quickly enough to affect competition.

To identify your core competencies, use the following steps:

1. Brainstorm the factors that are important to your clients.

If you're doing this on behalf of your company, identify the factors that influence people's purchase decisions when they're buying products or services like yours.

Be Unique

(Make sure that you move beyond just product or service features and include all decision-making points.)

If you're doing this for yourself, brainstorm the factors (for example) that people use in assessing you for annual performance reviews or promotion, or for new roles you want.

Then dig into these factors, and identify the competencies that lie behind them. As a corporate example, if customers value small products (for instance, cell phones), then the competence they value may be "component integration and miniaturization."

2. Brainstorm your existing competencies and the things you do well.

3. For example - list of your own competencies, screen them against the tests of relevance, difficulty of imitation, and breadth of application, and see if any of the competencies you've listed are core competencies.

• If you've identified core competencies that you already have, then great! Work on them and make sure that you build them as far as sensibly possible.

• If you have no core competencies, then look at ones that you could develop, and work to build them.

• If you have no core competencies and it doesn't look as if you can build any that customers would value, then either there's something else that you can use to create uniqueness in the market, or think about finding a new environment that suits your competencies.

4. Think of the most time-consuming and costly things that you do either as an individual or a company.
If any of these things do not contribute to a core competence, ask yourself if you can outsource them effectively, clearing down time so that you can focus on core competencies.

For example, as an individual, are you still doing your own cleaning, ironing and decorating? As a small business, are you doing you own accounts, HR and payroll? As a bigger business, are you manufacturing non-core product components, or performing non-core activities?

Brainstorm

SELF IMPROVEMENT SEMINARS IN

THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

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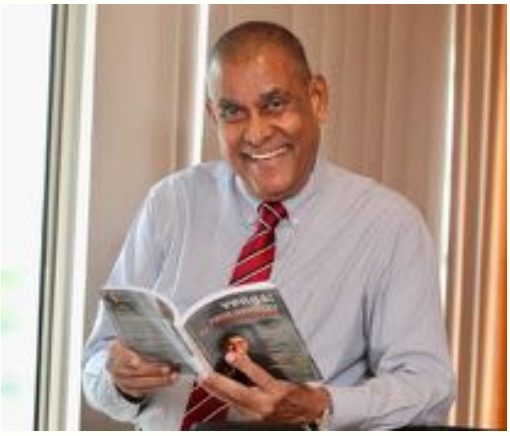

HOW TO EFFICIENTLY ENSURE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

3rd October 2018 / 6PM - 8PM

STRESS MANAGEMENT - MANAGE STRESS. BE HAPPY AND EFFECTIVE AT WORK

31st October 2018 / 6PM - 8PM

VENUE:
VENTRAX MANAGEMENT SDN BHD
NO. 37 & 39 JALAN TPP5/17
TAMAN PERINDUSTRIAN PUCHONG
47160 PUCHONG
SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN

Timely Inspiration

In the 24 hours of each day, we have to fit the 3 values. Sleep is vital and we allocate time for it. We're then left with 16 hours to perform activities related to our home and work. What we need to do is to write these activities, set goals and at the end of the day, spend at least 15 minutes for review. Build a time control plan that fits your job and your personality.

From theory to reality, it all seems very simple to implement but remember that effective time management does not happen at the snap of your fingers. You need discipline and perseverance. The practical reality for most people is that they cannot simply decide that tomorrow will be different. It's difficult to imagine that tomorrow you will be more organized, structured and efficient. You have to deal with the plans and actions – or lack of them – of yesterday before you can deal with the plans and actions of today. You then have to establish the basis today that leads to a more structured tomorrow.

- **"The future started yesterday! Yesterday's actions set your scene for today!"**
- **(Extracts from "How long can you wait for results")**

Table Manners Tip For The Month

Electronic Devices

Turn off or silence all electronic devices before entering the restaurant. If you forgot to turn off your cell phone, and it rings, immediately turn it off. Do not answer the call. Do not text and do not browse the Internet at the table.

Reflections

"Happiness comes when we stop complaining about the troubles we have and offer thanks for all the troubles we don't have."

SOFT SKILL TRAINING

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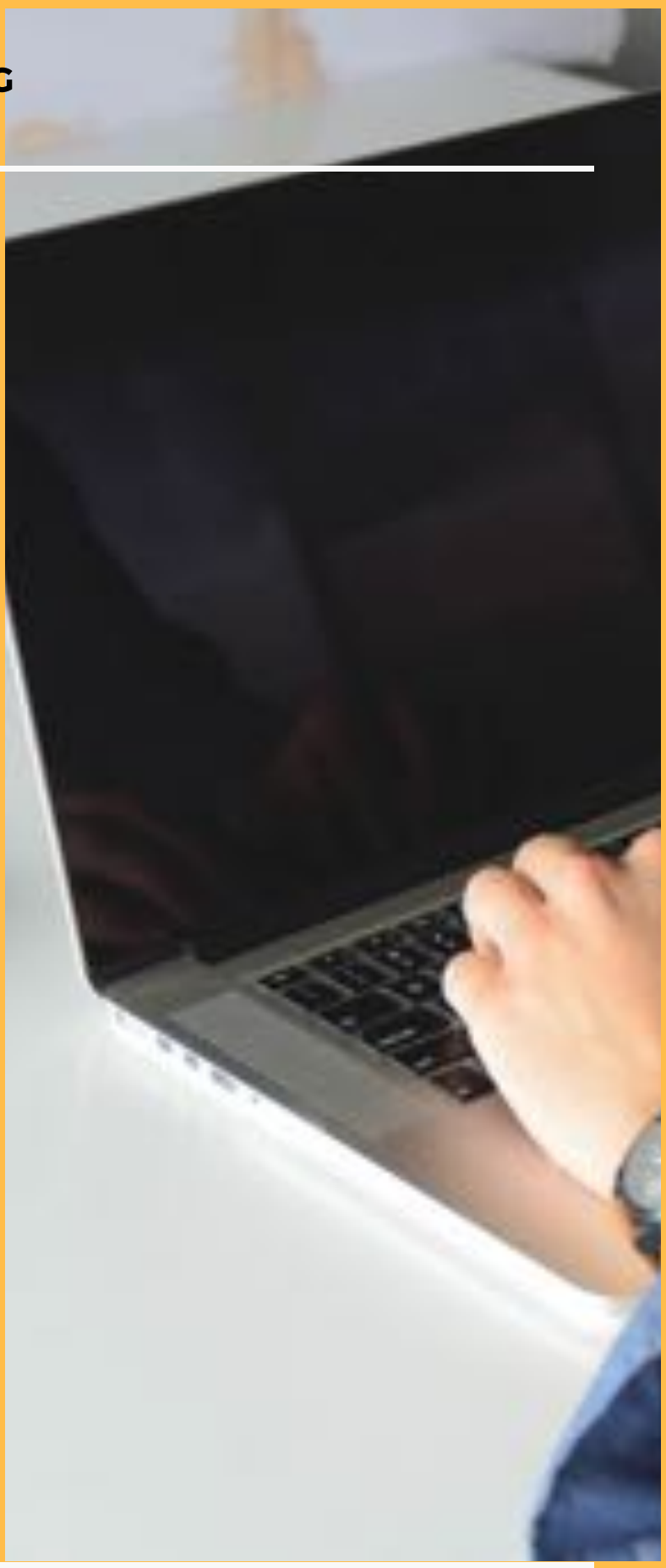
SECRETARIES COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

THINK SMART AT WORK: CREATIVE THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING & DECISION MAKING



OCT - DEC 2018