

VENTRAX BE TIME WISE AUGUST 2016

THE MEANING OF RELEVANCE



The Oxford English Dictionary defines "**relevance**" as *"the state of being closely connected or appropriate to the matter in hand."* To be relevant is thus to be important, but the term implies more than that.

Trivial things - appointments, events, accidents - that intrude themselves into life can easily become "important," at least for a time. **To be relevant, an action or person must be connected to a larger scheme, a grander plan - the ultimate "matter in hand."**

In the business world, to be relevant means being an integral part of your organization, of your company, of the economy and of the future. It means being the kind of person on whom others depend, whether for leadership, expertise, acumen or emotional support.

Put another way, being relevant means never worrying about losing a job or being able to find another - Because you are valued - Because you are relevant.

A "RECIPE FOR RELEVANCE" - HERE IT IS:



1. BE MORE AUTHENTIC

Being authentic entails **knowing who you are at the deepest level**, "being" that person in your internal thought processes, and finally appearing to others as you are without pretence or phoniness. Authenticity is the foundation of relevance because if you don't understand who you are, and where you're "coming from, you can't possibly lead or influence others."

You achieve authenticity through a rigorous inventory of your strengths and a systematic mapping of the moments in your life when you've been both highly effective and extremely satisfied. When put into practice, authenticity allows you to "be real" and "in the moment", to effortlessly practice the fine art of listening, and to have the courage to speak the truth without "signing up" for how you think others might perceive you.

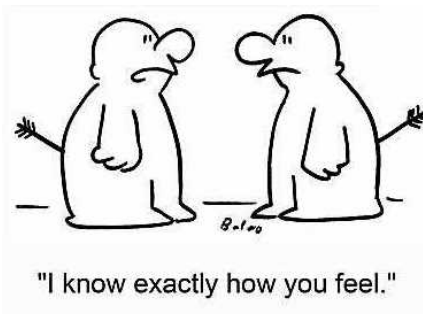
2. ACHIEVE MORE MASTERY

Mastery is essential because, if you have no useful skills, you cannot be useful to others. Mastery goes beyond mere competence and skills. It means **approaching one's life and relationships as an act of creation, rather than a reaction to people and events.** It means approaching lifelong learning with a sense of fun that adds pleasure and energy to the tasks



at hand. It means expanding your principles and practices so that they serve a greater purpose.

You achieve mastery through a process of continuous improvement of your talents and abilities, combined with a life model that stresses the importance of both the professional and the personal. ***Developing mastery requires the ability to put first things first, to take action before it is forced upon you, and to stay mindful while taking action.*** This requires a clear view of reality, a willingness to get beyond deeply rooted beliefs, awareness of your subconscious desires, and a commitment to truth.

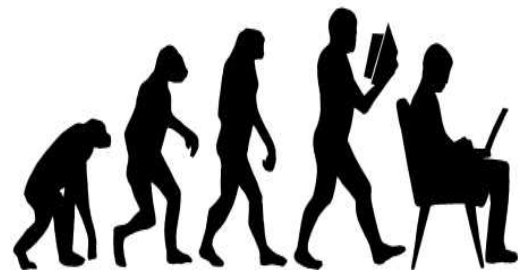


3. BE MORE EMPATHETIC

Empathy is the capacity to recognize and, to some extent, share feelings (such as sadness or happiness) being experienced by another being. It is the source of compassion, caring for other people, and the desire to help. It means the ability to experience the same emotions that another is feeling, without unnecessary judgment. ***Empathy creates relevance because it creates the deep connection that brings people together.***

HOW TO EVOLVE YOUR OWN JOB AND STAY RELEVANT

It's dangerous to rely on your job description to tell you what to do, or to wait for your manager to fine-tune your job. It's much safer, valuable, and satisfying to do it yourself.



Here's how.

Your job description gets stale the moment when it is first given to you. Then you need to figure out **how to evolve it**. As we come up on the end of the year, it is a great time to evaluate your role, your company and the market relative to your job description and your career.

Don't give this extra work of figuring out how your job needs to evolve to your boss or wait for direction. That is both a **danger and a missed opportunity** to stand out and contribute more value. Sort it out on your own and make a recommendation.

Here are some questions that will help you figure out how to evolve your job over time to make sure you **are staying relevant and adding enough value to the business.**



1. WHO USES MY WORK AND WHAT DO THEY NEED MOST?

- Who are the consumers of each piece of work that I do?
- Do they still use it? Do they still need it?
- Do they pass it on to others? Do those other people, have needs I should understand?

- Can the content I deliver, be modified, to be more useful or relevant?
- Can the manner in which I deliver it, be improved, to be more useful or relevant?

Note: *Stop producing work no one cares about. Ask.*

I know so many organizations that are over-busy producing reports, analysis or sales and marketing that no one uses. Don't burn up your time on things that no one cares about. Do actively learn what they find most useful, and tune what you produce to be more valuable.



2. WHAT BUSINESS OUTCOMES DOES MY WORK DRIVE?

What is the business outcome that happens as a result of my producing this work?

How does my work impact profit?

Does my work impact quality, innovation, efficiency, competitiveness, cost reduction, process improvement and sales effectiveness?

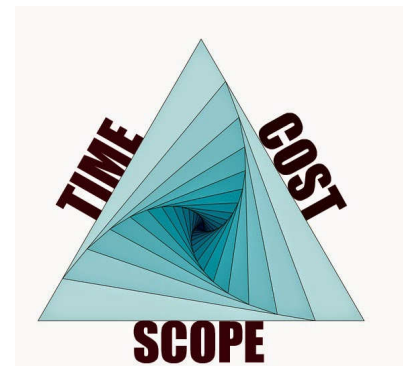
Can I tune my work to create a better or different business outcome?

Note: *If you can't connect your work to a business outcome, maybe it doesn't need to be done.*

You need to stay educated on the most important outcomes the business is driving and stay connected with them. **Even if you are a cost centre providing an internal service, you need to find ways to improve efficiency or usefulness.**

3. WHAT DOES MY WORK COST?

- How much does it cost the company for me to do this work?
- Can it be done for less?
- What are the downstream costs of the things that I do?
- Who else does my work cause work or costs for?
- Is there a way to make my work more efficient for others?



Note: *Improve the outcomes your work causes, don't just deliver the work.*

Always look for and find ways **to take cost out**. If you produce a 50-page document quarterly, maybe the right, improved 20-page document would be even better. It would be hard to find someone who didn't prefer the shorter version!

If you do things manually or in a chaotic reactive mode, how many people are impacted by this? How can you create a process to streamline the work, make it less complicated, and require fewer touch points, questions or follow-ups?

4. WHAT HAS CHANGED?

- What has changed in the market since I started this job?
- What has changed in our customers' business since I started this job?
- What has changed in our competitors' business since I started this job?



What has changed inside our company since I started this job?

Do these changes require a change in the way my job is done?

Note: If you are not evolving your job, you will no longer be qualified when the market and business changes.

Or, you will be doing the wrong job, and your job will get eliminated. Be the one to recommend changing your job to meet the evolving business needs.

5. WHERE DO YOU SEE GROWTH AND ABILITY TO SCALE?

- How much has the company grown since I started this job?
- How much does the company plan to grow in the future?
- What still works in the way I do my job if the company is much bigger?
- Which things about how I do my job don't work if the company is bigger?



Note: When companies get bigger, all the jobs change.

You can't keep using the same way of working. It doesn't scale. You can be the one to build a new process that will scale, or you can be the one who gets pushed aside by someone with experience at a bigger company.



6. HOW CAN I HELP OTHERS?

What can I do to communicate better?

How can I share more knowledge?

How can I teach someone to be more effective?

How can I help someone step into a bigger role?

How can I help someone believe that something bigger is possible for them?

Note: If you are not helping others, you are not adding enough value.

Another upside: If you are feeling unsatisfied about being in a corporate role that doesn't make enough difference in the world, help someone. It feels meaningful—**when you help someone else, you change the world for that person.**

Don't wait. I see a lot of people thinking that answering these questions is not part of their job. They wait for others to answer them, and await new instructions from their manager.

It's dangerous to rely on your job description to tell you what to do, or to wait for your manager to fine-tune your job along the way. **It's much safer, more valuable to your company, and more satisfying when you do it yourself.**

SELF DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR



The TOPIC for September, 2016

Learn Partnership Frameworks For Working Together

Date: 7th September 2016

VENUE (MALAYSIA)

**Banker's Club Kuala Lumpur (Amoda Building) Jalan Imbi
(Opposite Berjaya Times Square)**

Time : 6pm – 8pm

Timely Inspiration

“Self Management with Dr. Venga”

You may want to use what is commonly known as the **OATS formula** to assist you to manage your activities well.

First of all, **objectives** – write down what results you want to see by the end of the week. Rank them.

Activities – what do you have to do to achieve these objectives? List the activities and put them in sequence.

Time – determines how much time each activity will require and allow yourself a little more time that you think you will need. Any extra time can easily be used on the next task at hand.

Schedule – determine when you can get into each activity. If you do not, you probably will not get it done. You must understand that every completion deadline invokes a related string of datelines. Proceed to the next activity without delay. Always remember that what the person accomplishes depends to a considerable extent on how much and on why they want to ACT.

When it comes to controlling your time, you should establish a time frame for the activity which you wish to keep under control. Fix your goals in your mind and enter them on a calendar or appointment book. If your activity is a part of a larger organisational plan, the deadline may also be displayed.

Next, measure the progress towards the goal or deadline. Keep track of time, check the appointment calendar or examine a production control chart. Take steps to keep progress moving. Change your approach to speed up progress. Add resources, use faster equipment or delegate work to a subordinate. If corrective action is needed, you will need to know how to make one activity a higher priority. As Fred Brooks said, “How does a project get to be a year behind schedule? One day at a time!”

(Extracts from “How long can you wait for results”)



THE SELF DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

The Self Development Seminar has been run by Dr Venga on a monthly basis for the past 30 years. The sessions are non chargeable and runs for 2 hours currently at the Bankers Club at the Amoda Building, along Jalan Imbi. In the earlier days, when he was much younger, Dr Venga used to run these free sessions at Kota Kinabalu and in Singapore as well. Dr Venga's philosophy that knowledge should be acquired for free is reflected in running these sessions.

The session addresses numerous aspects of self management which focuses on topics such as time management, people management, business management, general management and many others. The audience consists of people from all walks of life and some have made this session a following for 15 years or more.

The subject for this August seminar was "Behavior Change Going Back to Basics – Small Change Big Impact", which was held on the 3rd of this month. We had an audience of close to thirty people attending the session this time. Dr Venga addressed the little behavior change that one decides to make, that actually brings a great impact in one's life.

The major part of the session addressed the behavior of people and how people in general have become unconscious in the manner in how they behave. People take behavior for granted, whether or not social norms are broken.

The session ended with many people asking Dr Venga about living healthy. They were asking for suggestions with regards to the small behavior changes that they will have to adapt in order for them to stay healthy.

Dr Venga's tips for the evening were as follows:-

- i. Eat in small portions
- ii. Make it a point to exercise as this activity keeps us feeling positive all day long
- iii. Drink loads of water

10 REASONS TO DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Throughout your lifetime you may have heard the phrases “dress for success” or “dress for the job you want, not the one you have”, but how can donning on a suit or smart attire make you successful? Well, science says if you want to be smarter, dress better. And it's not just superficial. Slip on a tailored suit, fine shoes and perhaps a bespoke shirt and it will transform you - it just feels good.

Recently, scientists from Columbia University and Cal State Northridge published a study that examines how clothing may affect one's thoughts. The results found wearing formal clothes can free people from concrete thinking while boosting their ability to think more practically.

With that in mind, let's look at the 10 important reasons to dress for success:



1 - Science Says So

As already stated, there is science behind the term “dress for success”. A study by Lefkowitz, Blake, and Mouton (1955) proved that business suits portray a form of authority. In an experiment they had someone in a city cross the street against the traffic. When he was dressed in a suit, three-and-a-half times as many people followed him as when he was wearing a work shirt and trousers.

2 - First Impressions count

There's an old saying “don't judge a book by its cover” which is technically true. However, product designers create packaging with the mind-set that people do judge and they're not wrong. This also applies to how someone dresses. The visual aesthetic we present to others through our appearance and apparel is extremely important.

We live in a judgmental world; we are quick to make assumptions and to categorise individuals based on what we see.



3 - Promotes self-respect

Following on from the last point - If you take the time, effort and pride into ***dressing sharp***, you will undoubtedly radiate an image of self-respect and self-worth. People will see you and think positively of you as it's clear you respect yourself. Furthermore, a sharply dressed man will radiate a sense of worth. People will see you in your clean, fitted clothing and they will start to think that you are worthy of their time and company.

4 - Boosts self-confidence

How does dressing for success boost self-confidence? Well, your self-perception has a great impact on how others perceive you. When we feel good on the outside, we are more likely to feel good on the inside, which boosts our attitudes and self-confidence leading us to trying our best which in turns brings results.



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5 - It draws the right kind of attention

There is a term known as “peacocking”. It’s a practice that involves dressing up in order to get noticed. A sharply dressed young man stands out from the crowd. Dressing sharply is the first step to attracting and keeping wanted attention. A well-dressed man with a good style will look nicely put together.

6 - It’s a step to overall self-improvement

Putting the effort into what your wear and how you look will have ***positive effects on your overall lifestyle***. As your confidence grows along with the self-perception, you may just open a gateway to some lifestyle changes. People may start treating you differently, because they’ll notice something about you has changed. It might inspire you to eat better, work out more or pursue the kind of job and life you really want.

7 - It will keep you productive

It’s easy to become comfortable wearing sport trousers and a t-shirt, however, once you are in your comfort zone that is when you’re the laziest. But when you are dressed to impress, you look well, feel good and you’ll be more motivated to get things done and in turn be more productive. If there’s a big day ahead of you, then why not dress sharply, you won’t be able to help yourself from getting out and showing off.



8 - It shows your attention to detail

By putting time and effort into how you’re dressed with matching accessories it can show potential or current employers your attention to detail. How can this be an advantage? If you take pride in how you look then you will also take pride in the work you do. It also demonstrates that you can stand behind your work, which could give you an edge in any job opportunity.



9 - Competitive edge

Dressing to impress gives you a competitive edge. Not just for finding a job, it can also help you drum up new business or help close a potential sale. A strong first impression leaves a lasting impression. When you dress well, it shows that you are taking care of yourself and now, you are ready to take care of your customers.

10 - It's fun

Can you remember a time when you got dressed up; it may have been for a costume party or when you were younger dressing like one of your ideals? Do you remember how much fun it was? Well dressing for success can also be fun. Experiment with different styles and colours, see what is comfortable and engage the different types of reactions received. Go with what's most suited for you and never be afraid to change things up every now and again to ensure excitement.



5 WAYS TO HAVE GREAT CONVERSATIONS

Is conversation a lost art? Here's how to bring it back—from placing yourself in the right environment to listening the right way.

Have you ever wished that you had an ability to talk to strangers and have them instantly warm up to you?

Think about the people you know who seem to bring out the best in you whenever you talk to them: You feel comfortable talking to them and could go on talking forever. They could be old friends or someone you just met, but the conversation just seems to flow smoothly and naturally.

If you wish you had the natural ability to make conversation that the people you admire have, don't despair. Having meaningful conversations is something that can be learned and with focus and practice, we can all become better at it.

Here are five key things that will put us on the right track:



1. GET OUT OF YOURSELF AND MAKE IT ABOUT THE OTHER PERSON

Have you ever had someone talk endlessly about something that you didn't have the slightest interest in? It probably felt like they were having a conversation with themselves and you just happened to be there. These people seem to be oblivious to the idea that you may not share their interest.

The best conversations begin with showing an interest in the other person, their world and what they might be interested in. Most people love to talk about themselves. Ask them an open-ended question about something that you notice about them. If you can give them a sincere compliment or give them positive feedback, you've made a great start. Great conversationalists have a sincere interest in others, notice things about them and use these things to start and fuel their conversations.

2. PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING

Most people are thinking about what they want to say next while someone else is speaking. Become aware of this during your conversations and when you find your mind going to a response, stop and try to force yourself to listen. This is not easy, especially if you are highly extroverted. You can practice by spending time with your partner or a friend and repeating back to them what they just said. This exercise helps create awareness of the amount of time we actually spend active listening to others.



3. MOVE THE CONVERSATION TO A DEEPER LEVEL

Think of the people that you are willing to open up to and share things with. What is it about them that make you so comfortable disclosing things that you wouldn't normally with others?

Likely they are good at making eye contact with you and making you feel like you are receiving their full and undivided attention. Pay attention to their expressions. Notice that they are with

you not only in the tone of their words but in their expressions. Their faces light up when you are sharing something you are happy or excited about, and they take on a solemn, sad look when you are sharing bad news. You sense and feel that they are totally engrossed in what you are telling them.

If emulating what they are doing seems unnatural to you, practice and push yourself to do so. Notice that people will start to react differently to you.

4. ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

We can get others to share more by showing an interest and asking open-ended questions to help them get deeper into the conversation. Good questions are asking someone how they think or feel about something that they are talking about. If you have talked to someone before, ask them about things that they volunteered in the conversation before. Likely, if they brought up something on their own, it is of interest and some importance to them. Ask yourself what other areas that are related to their interests that they would love to talk about.



5. CONSIDER TIME AND SPACE

Never start a conversation beyond exchanging quick pleasantries unless you have the time to hear the other person out. Places that are noisy with a lot of people around are not the best places to engage in great conversation. Good conversation requires a slow, relaxed pace and a pressure-free atmosphere free of distractions. Coffee shops are great for this purpose. Sport bars - not so much.

reflections

Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough.

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.”

— Mahatma Gandhi