Adjusting to Workplace/Industrial Attachment

presented by

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Study → Work

People
Environment
Culture
Expectations
Administrative procedure
Transition Phase

• May be undergoing a variety of intense, new experiences

Exciting/New environment and people
Missing familiar patterns of life, study, people, etc.
No more books & lectures or cramming for exams
Finally get to apply what I’ve learnt
Get to earn some money
And much more…
Transition Phase

- **Emotional:**
  - Excitement, frustration, anxiety or sadness

- **Physical:**
  - sleeping disturbances, appetite changes, fatigue, stress

- **Thinking:**
  - motivated, loss of concentration, difficulty making decision

- **Behaviour:**
  - enthusiastic, avoid people, lose interest in people or hobbies, etc.
Adaptation Phase

- Understanding the nature of your work/IA
- Coping with your work / IA
- More confident and relaxed in new situations
- New friends and activities
- Managing the requirements of IA
Possible Challenges

• Expectations of the workplace &/or supervisor

• Your expectation vs reality:
  – Nature of work
  – Goals & objectives
  – Low pay (stipend/allowance)

• Working with colleagues
  – Diversified workforce: different cultures, languages, beliefs, values, styles (difficult people?)
Suggestions to Help You to Adjust to IA/Workplace
Openness

• Open to learning
  – Comfort zone

• Open to feedback
  – Awareness of your feeling: defensiveness?
Work Attitude

• **Attitude:**
  – Expectation vs reality

• **Change perspective:**
  – E.g. Opportunity to learn to be patient, acquire skills to work with difficult people, establish network for future prospect (supervisor/colleagues may be your referee, etc.)
Work Conduct

• Professional conduct:
  – Punctuality
  – Dress code
  – Speech (words, titles used)
  – Actions/behaviour (appropriateness)
Relationships

- Manage relationships at workplace:
  - Differences in:
    - Gender
    - Race
    - Age
    - Education
    - Culture (multi-nationals)
The new competitive edge

Cultural intelligence is the most important trait required by modern executives

Imagine operating in China and not knowing that in Chinese culture, it is considered disrespectful if you accept someone’s business card and immediately put it in your pocket without looking at it.

Imagine working with Indians and not knowing that a handshake between a man and an Indian woman is uncommon and may result in hesitation and awkwardness.

And, imagine doing business with Japanese and not knowing that looking at them directly in the eye is considered disrespectful.

Not a big deal, you may say, but these very issues can be the seeds of misunderstanding between you and your Chinese, Indian and Japanese counterparts.

To survive in today’s globalised world, young executives not only need intelligence and emotional quotients (commonly referred to as IQ and EQ), but also a new kind of quotient: CQ.

What is CQ?

Mr David Livermore, author of the book Leading With Cultural Intelligence, defines cultural intelligence (CQ) as the capability to function effectively across national, ethnic and organisational cultures.

Having CQ enables a person to connect, communicate and work effectively with people from different cultures and in unfamiliar cultural settings, which is not an easy feat to achieve.

According to an April 2010 article in The Economist magazine, 16 to 40 per cent of executives and their overseas assignments earlier than the stipulated period.

If you want to do business successfully with the Japanese, be savvy in not just their business behaviour but their values and philosophies as well. PHOTO: AP

The reason? In most cases, it is cultural problems rather than job skills. The economic impact for each early termination of an overseas assignment is estimated to be between US$250,000 (S$324,000) and US$1.25 million.

Look below the water

Normally, we associate culture with what can be observed about a nation’s people, such as their behaviour in meetings, punctuality, appearance, working and eating habits, and so on.

But as Mr Brooks Peterson points out in his book Cultural Intelligence: A Guide To Working With People From Other Cultures, culture is like an iceberg.

Below all the visible symbols of a culture – food, clothes, architecture, colours and behaviour – lies the invisible part: its history, values, convictions, attitudes, philosophies and myths.

Understanding this invisible part is the key to raising your CQ about a particular culture.

Raising CQ

Acquiring CQ is a never-ending journey involving three steps:

1. Accept differences

The foundational step towards CQ is to accept and accept the cultural diversity around you and not resist it. Cultures have deep historic roots that condition people from their childhood and evolve over generations.

When the cultural traditions of other countries do not make sense to you, remember that is precisely the point.

By nature, we tend to resist what is unfamiliar and different, but the intelligence lies in adapting to it.

2. Acquire CQ knowledge

Knowing that “bonjour” means “good morning” in French can help you to cross communication barriers between you and your French counterparts.

CQ demands cultural knowledge, which can be acquired by all traditional means like books, Internet, training and so forth.

Being curious about people’s religious practices, watching movies of different origins and having holidays in other countries are also useful exposures to foreign cultures.

3. Practise CQ

International conferences, exhibitions and routine overseas visits are great opportunities to interact with people of different cultures and sharpen your CQ.

Similarly, consciously network with foreign colleagues in your organisation, meet them more often over lunch and recreational events — and turn every interaction into an opportunity to boost your CQ.

On survival in nature, Charles Darwin said: “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.”

The change that executives are facing today is an increasingly globalised world and a rapidly diversifying workforce. And the only way to survive career-wise is to adapt and become culturally intelligent.
Emotional Quotient (EQ)

- **Self awareness**
  - Feelings
  - Thinking
  - Actions and impact on others

- **Self regulation**
  - Clarity of focus: goal
  - Self-reminder: “I have the ability to learn.” – be open to new ideas
  - Being able to be adaptable and flexible to change

- **Motivation**
  - Positive drive towards achievement
  - To be committed to the work
  - Be optimistic

- **Empathy**
  - Recognising the needs of others eg co-workers or clients
  - Understanding the feelings behind others expectations or needs
  - Embracing diversity and working with such opportunities

- **Social skills**
  - Clear & effective communication
  - Building bonds and relationships
  - Collaborate & cooperate with colleagues & clients alike
Communication Skills

• Passive, Aggressive, Passive Aggressive
• Assertive
  – Describe the situation
  – State your feeling
  – Specify the change you want
  – How you say it: your TONE

E.g. “When you say ..., I feel ... Please stop doing that.”
Awareness Towards Workplace Sexual Harassment

• Workplace sexual harassment

“Sexual harassment means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex, affecting the dignity of women and men at work. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct”.

(European Commission’s Council Resolution, 1990)

• Approach CAO
P.E.A.R.L

• Preparation:
  – plan & prepare early

• Experience & Observe:
  – the working environment & culture

• Adapt & Adjust:
  – make small changes, where necessary
  – try new ways of doing things, where appropriate

• Reflect:
  – think through the day’s or week’s events at the workplace

• Learn:
  – be open to new ways and new skills/techniques
Know Your Resources

• Supervisor/colleagues at your workplace
• NTU: NTU tutor, CAO staff, School, Doctor, Counsellor
CONTACT US

• Telephone: 6790 4462

• Email: studentwellbeing@ntu.edu.sg
  – Provide your mobile number
  – State convenient date/time during office hours to call you
  – SWC will call you for a brief chat and make a counselling appointment with you

• Location: #05-07 Student Services Centre

• Website: http://www.ntu.edu.sg/studentwellbeing
“Academic ability must be matched by people skills, the capacity to adapt and change with changing circumstances, and to keep on learning.”

MM Lee (RI Gryphon Award Gala Dinner)
My Paper, 14 Jan 2011
The Straits Times
2 July 12 (Monday)

Enjoy the journey

Savour the process while working towards achieving your goals

I WAS talking to a friend recently about how we sometimes “spoil” the moment by being too focused on the destination—we do not stop to enjoy the process.

Let’s think about work for a moment, since you spend a lot of time at work. You set goals and you manage performance by measuring it against your goals.

This can be enjoyable if you are meeting or exceeding goals. But if you are starting out on a goal, it may be useful to focus more on the journey towards the goal instead of just the goal itself.

Managers, especially high achievers, sometimes make the mistake of wanting to get to the end goal so fast that they forget to think about what it is like for the team to be working towards that goal.

It can sometimes feel like never-ending drudgery and when the team finally gets there, the manager sets another stretch goal! It can be tiring and demoralising.

Here are some ways that leaders can achieve goals while ensuring that the process of doing it is also enjoyable:

Encourage your staff by setting them a series of reachable goals leading towards the ultimate goal you want them to get to.

Set mini goals

When you set stretch goals, you can set people up for failure. Everybody likes some encouragement along the way. If people have to wait too long to feel a sense of accomplishment or completion, they tend to get discouraged.

If you believe that someone can do more, set them a series of reachable goals leading towards the ultimate goal. Even better, influence them to set the next milestone for themselves.

Make time to celebrate

The good thing about setting mini goals is that you have an excuse to have many mini celebrations. When you mark out a successful milestone, you are, in effect, reinforcing that good behaviour.

“Success attracts success” and this is true when it comes to behaviour. Every time someone gets in touch with success, it not only spurs that individual to do more, it also anchors him into that feeling of accomplishment; that feeling of doing something meaningful or useful.

All of us look for this sense of meaning in our work and the more often we get in touch with this, the better.

Measuring to reinforce and give feedback

People have many types of measurements at work, for example, lagging indicators — looking at what was done — and leading indicators — looking at current behaviours and actions that the team is performing.

Many businesses measure to track, because they want to get a pulse on things and use this data to take action when things are not on track.

But there is another purpose for measurement and this is to use the data to reinforce or mark out the good things that are happening.

By saying something like “I like what you are doing here as it has ‘X’ impact on our overall performance—please do that again!” leaders can give specific feedback that is relevant to the people doing the work. It helps when performers get to see the impact of their work and the progress they are making towards their goals.

Tomorrow: Practising good habits is part of the learning curve in achieving goals

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...enjoy the journey!