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Newsletter
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History is replete with instances where a single idea changed our lives. Right from Edison's effort to light up an electric bulb to the more recent efforts of using air waves to transmit signals from a hand-held device to another device thousands of miles away. Behind each of these path-breaking inventions was the inventor's conscious effort to stop and think about the future.

As career professionals, our natural inclination is to race ahead on our chosen paths, performing to the best of our abilities and reaping the rewards in terms of more money and better positions. We seldom stop to think about the impact our work has on our ecosystems. As a journalist, I considered it my bounden duty to inform my readers while ensuring complete objectivity, a factor that was drilled into my DNA as a pre-requisite for good journalism.

After a decade-and-a-half in the media, I sat back one day to introspect. And one critical question popped up in my head making me feel quite uncomfortable. Have the goals that brought me to this profession been met? It was a shocking realization that I had actually forgotten my targets in the 15 years that I worked for India's premier wire agency. The daily grind was giving me my bread and butter, but where was the adrenalin rush that I experienced as a cub reporter? Why was the Union Budget coverage appearing more mundane with each passing year? And what about my love for sports?

These are questions that most of us face in what is often described as mid-career crisis. Our work keeps us going, but seldom takes us where we had initially set out to reach. **Life is about finding our niche; it helps bring out the best in us!**

In this edition of our Newsletter, we attempt to tackle the issue of workplace ennui and how a coach can help us get the fizz back into our lives. Read on and write in with your thoughts to us at editor@isecindia.in

Mentor's Musings – The Path to Extinction

By Krishna Kumar

Monday morning blues are passé! For, executives seldom get bogged down early in the week. It is only by Wednesday evening that they run out of juice; when the energy built over the previous weekend depletes and rejuvenation is still some distance away. That's also when their career goals and prospects seem to become distant dreams.

It was on a Thursday evening that I received a call from a good friend, a high performing senior executive working for a large corporation. The topic of discussion was not totally unexpected as he sought me out for a discussion on his future. Having mentored my friend for a while, I readily agreed to this unscheduled coaching session.

His problem was simple enough. Having worked at the company for over seven years (the longest time he worked for an enterprise in his career), he feels completely engaged, has a great team and is reasonably well rewarded. But, there is "something missing", he quips indicating that he was not quite reaching his full potential.

During our conversation, I ascertain that his sense of dissatisfaction stems largely from the work he is doing. The company has an aggressive work culture with new product introductions, tight delivery schedules and periodic reorganizations keeping employees fully engaged. The hectic schedules create an impression of constant motion for the employee who gets little time to stop and think. This gradually leads to a situation that my friend was faced

with.

"Incrementalization leads to fossilization" I tell him. Quite understandably he is confused at the jargon and I hasten to explain. "It is a question of periodically reinventing yourself," I tell him. "Over the past few years you have largely been doing the same work with minor tweaks but the impression you get and, which you propagate in turn, is that these changes are exciting and innovative. By continuing to work on these incremental improvements you are gradually being driven to a fossil-like situation." I illustrate with an example. A car manufacturer releases a new model every year but the latest models have only small or incremental design changes, say a superior seat or aesthetically pleasing rear lamps. In time, the model stops generating excitement in the market and is fossilized by the company.



"Yes, I do see what you are trying to convey but can you go further and link it to my present situation," says my friend, who is now pushing the envelope.

I refuse to be drawn into giving him specific advice. Instead I stick to my earlier illustration by saying that for a company that innovated incrementally the solution is to consider an innovation paradigm shift. Thus, he too should look inwards and seek his own paradigm shift. Perhaps, he can start by asking himself a few key questions.

- Is the work I am doing now meeting both my personal goals AND long-term vision - the vision with which I originally started my career?
- What am I not doing to realize my full potential?
- What more can I do? Where should I expand and grow towards realizing my dreams?

My friend suddenly went silent. I could feel that he was introspecting. He closes our conversation by saying, "I hope that you won't mind my talking to you again on this situation."

If this situation has a familiar sound, do write in with your views and comments to kk@intradconsult.com

(This article is written in tribute to my teacher, one of India's foremost marketing guru's, IIM Bangalore Professor P.N. Thirunarayana, who passed away last month. During our last interaction, Professor Thiru spoke on the need for continuous marketing innovation by coining the phrase - "Incrementalization leads to fossilization" - and I have taken the liberty to extend the analogy to human talent management).

Coaching Notes

By Alberto Calderón

ISEC is a licensed school for teaching the seven IAC Masteries that form the basis of the coaching curriculum. This month IAC Board of Governors Member, Alberto Calderón, shares his thoughts on Mastery Two: Perceiving, affirming and expanding the client's potential.

As I work with Mastery Two I ask myself "How might my life be different if...I perceived, affirmed and expanded my own potential... if I did that for others...and if they did it for me?"

I find myself facing a variety of new ways to improve my life and to help others to achieve the best of themselves. This turns out to be an extraordinarily beneficial and powerful experience for me, because I live in a culture where people are valued and acknowledged for their political, economical, social and/or professional achievements.

Since my childhood I have felt that I have huge potential inside me. When I have had the support of others, I have been able to be outstanding in my academic and sporting activities as well as in relationships with my family. I was invited to participate in the football selection at school, I won trophies for chess and participated in and lead youth groups. I have other memories too, of getting bad marks, of letting a lot of goals past as goalkeeper, of my parents being asked to go to school because of my bad conduct, and also being fired from a job.

When I think about these life experiences, I see that many of my actions were strongly influenced by the opinions and support of others. When I was supported, I got to be my best. When that didn't happen, I was sometimes a disaster. I remember asking myself the question: "Who or what is living my life?" because very often, I wanted to be able to act differently.

When I study this Mastery and experiment with it, I realize that the potential that I have is inside me. That my strengths and talents are there to be used by me to improve my life and to turn myself into a human being who is useful to the society in which I live. I can choose how to behave, what to think, how to educate myself, how to deepen and cultivate my values, how to make good use of my talents, and how to evolve my consciousness. Now I know that I can move, write, dance, play, create and teach courses, speak at a conference, do business or travel, help other people, and create a better world. I know that the wisdom and the potential I need are in me and that my life has infinite possibilities.

We are all here to give and to receive. Each one of us can participate as co-creator in our own life, in organizations, in society, and in that of humanity, as we are already part of these. I invite you to think about the question I asked myself: "Who or what is living your life?" I hope that the answers you find will help you to open up to your own potential.

Questions for self reflection:

- Am I already in touch with my full potential?
- What am I losing or wasting by not connecting with my potential?
- Can I begin to create a clear personal vision of what could be possible?



Alberto J. Calderón, MCS, PCC, OC, MBA, doctorate (Social Anthropology) is the President of MORE Global, CCS-Comunidad de Coaching Sistémico and the IAC Chapter of Mexico. Alberto is a coach, consultant, teacher, trainer, researcher and life learner, seeking to improve personal evolution, the productivity of organizations and quality of life. www.morecoach.com

Events @ ISEC:

ISEC will be conducting the following workshops during April and May 2011.

- (1) Mentor-Coach Workshop for persons interested in developing their coaching skills
- (2) Executive Coach Workshop for those who have completed the Mentor-Coach workshop and wish to start a career as a coach.

Specific dates for the workshops will be announced shortly.

The website of the Bangalore Chapter of the IAC will be launched later this month and will coincide with a meeting

of IAC members.

**With warm regards,
Krishna Kumar
Executive Coach & Founder-Director, ISEC**