

HOW TO STAY AHEAD AND KEEP ABREAST IN YOUR CAREER

SHARING FROM A SEASONED HR PRACTITIONER



By Dr Jaclyn Lee, PhD

This is a simple topic, and the sharing that I am going to give is really not “Rocket Science”. It is harnessed from my last 20 years of experience as a HR Practitioner, and also from my passion for learning and improving all the time. In this rapidly digitized world where technology is changing at an alarming speed and businesses are constantly under tremendous pressure to innovate and transform, we need to constantly re-invent ourselves. Here are some tips that I hope you find useful.

- 1 Adaptability** - In order to be adaptable, we must always be open to change. This means constantly challenging the status quo and trying to find better ways of doing things. To state this case in point, during my tenure with a large security company, we were once faced with the daunting task of recruiting thousands of security workers for a large project. I knew that the traditional way of recruiting was not going to work, as the volume was huge. I turned the problem into an opportunity by building a recruitment agency that was managed independently of HR. The agency worked like a commercial business built around a manpower supply chain, utilizing commercial recruiters who are incentivized through sales targets. The agency took off within six months and became so successful that we managed to recruit thousands of workers for the large project and in addition, provided a continuous stream of labor that gave the company a huge competitive advantage over its competitors.
- 2 Hunger For Knowledge** – We cannot become very good at our job or business if we are not constantly learning new things and harnessing knowledge. The world is changing at a rapid speed, and we need to know the latest technologies, methods, processes, systems or management theory that can help us become better in what we are doing. In particular, I advocate taking a course or degree program in a different domain area of expertise from what we are already good in. If you are trained in social sciences, go take an engineering program. If you are an engineer, go do a course in journalism. The cross training will help you tremendously.
- 3 Risk Taking** – I take what we call, “Calculated Risks”. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. When you are undertaking a new project or a challenging task, it might be useful to do a bit more research and try new methods that have not been done before. Of course, you have to ensure that you think through it thoroughly, and test it out in small bit sizes, before launching it full scale. When I was trying to develop a software that could improve the rate of culture change in my current job, I spoke to several developers and built a small prototype before launching it at an organizational level. The project proved to be very successful eventually.
- 4 Hard Work** – This is an age old saying, but nothing beats hard work. In order to stay ahead of the curve, you have to work doubly hard compared to others. Never rest on your laurels and think you are good enough. Always be humble and show your bosses that you are prepared to do more than your scope of work. This is an excellent attitude that no one can take away from you.
- 5 Being People Savvy** - Lastly, it is important that we get along well with our co-workers, bosses, customers, and the people who report to us. This includes trying to understand all generational types, from baby boomers to millennials and deciphering the way they work, the way they view life, as well as understanding what motivates them and make them behave the way they do. I always make a habit of adjusting and adapting my style to those around me, and staying genuine. If you show that you care, people will know it, and they will reciprocate. There will always be a small group of people who do not respond the same way, and it’s ok as long as you stay consistent.

I hope you find these tips useful, and feel free to connect with me if you have thoughts or ideas to share. Good luck in your career journey!