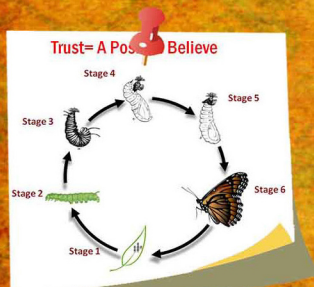
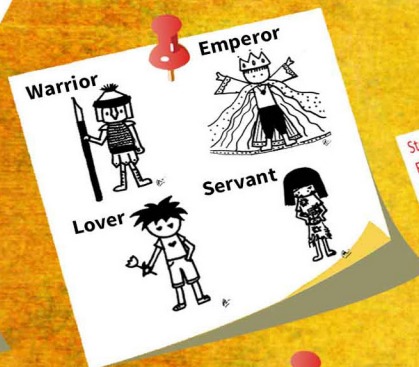
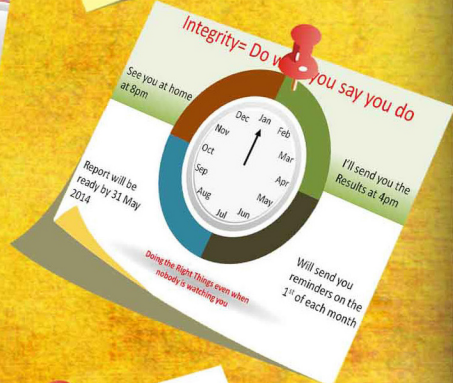


SECRETS OF ENHANCING PRODUCTIVITY

(A collection of small IDEAS to gain BIG)



GETSMART PRODUCTIVITY SYSTEM (GPS)

Enhancing Productivity The GetSmart Way

(A collection of small IDEAS to gain BIG)

Published
By
Ong Hong Him
Founder and Master Trainer/Facilitator
Of
GetSmart Productivity System (GPS)
(Copyrights reserved)

(www.goldworth.com.sg)

Ong Hong Him – Founder & Master Trainer for GetSmart Productivity System (GPS)



Ong Hong Him is a Practicing Management Consultant (PMC) in Human Resource Management (HRM), and a professional trainer/facilitator who specializes in process facilitation and behavioral-based training. He is the founder and master trainer for GetSmart Productivity System (GPS), which helps managers and supervisors to achieve work excellence. He is an Approved MOM WorkPro Work-Life Trainer. His passion in adult education started in the early 70's when he assisted the Ministry of Labor, Singapore in conducting evening classes for business owners, managers, and supervisors to equip them with the essential skills in handling employees "On-The-Job".

He played a part in supporting the growth of Singapore in the mid 70's and early 80's when he was an honorary member of the Board of Directors in Adult Education Board, and the Vocational and Industrial Training Board. He is a Fellow Member of the Singapore Human Resource Institute (SHRI), with more than 25 years of working experience in HR at senior management level. In addition, he spent 13 years in business as a CEO and Managing Director (7 years in a manufacturing company, and 6 years in real estate).

Hong Him is the co-author of "The Psychology in Recruiting the Right Employee", and the author of "Secrets of Enhancing Productivity", and the Master Trainer for the GetSmart series of courses comprising – Skill in Leading; Skill in Communication and Giving Instructions; Skill in Work Improvement; and Effective Workplace Performance and Review; and GetSmart TTT which are approved courses under the SkillsFuture Credit Scheme. (www.skillsfuture.sg)

He has vast experience in training and consulting in all aspects of Human Resource Management, Life Skills, Leadership Development, GetSmart Productivity System (GPS), and the related Train-The-Trainers Program. He is a certified practitioner for DISC, CBCI, and has qualification in MBA, Specialist Diploma in Advanced Facilitation (SDAF), Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education (DACE), Advance Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA), Diploma in Industrial Engineering, Diploma in Marketing, Diploma in Works Management, DMS, and others.

His passion for training and employee development brought him to places to conduct workshops, lectures, and tutorials in countries such as Vietnam, China, India, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, UK, Cambodia, Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. Since the early 70's he has conducted training for more than 5,000 people.

CONTENTS

A.	Introduction.....	4
B.	Reflection (1).....	5
C.	Purpose & Intention.....	6
D.	People are our most important Assets.....	7
E.	Reflection (2).....	8
F.	The Fruit Tree Analogy.....	9
G.	Foundation of GetSmart Productivity System (GPS).....	10
H.	GetSmart Productivity System (GPS).....	14
I.	GetSmart Way to enhance Productivity.....	16
J.	Creating a conducive work environment with TRIAL + (4).....	19
K.	Reflection (3).....	20
L.	Benefits of TRIAL + (4).....	22
M.	GetSmart “5-Step” Plans.....	23
N.	Reflection (4).....	25
O.	Benefits of GetSmart “5-Step” Plans.....	27
P.	Smart Goals.....	28
Q.	Reflection (5).....	30
R.	Job Overview.....	31
S.	Competencies of super performers and successful organizations...	37
T.	Interview with Ong Hong Him.....	38
U.	Collection of Ideas and Stories.....	39

(A) INTRODUCTION

“Enhancing Productivity – The GetSmart Way”

The Chinese Calligraphy below was a gift from my late father *Mr. Ong Kian Chiok* before his demise on 3 March 1987.

Verses in the Calligraphy are from Poet *Lu You* from Southern Song Dynasty (AD 1127 – 1279).



A simple translation of the Verses in the Calligraphy:

“Ancient scholars spent time and efforts to put the knowledge they learned into practice. They worked hard to develop the skills they acquired, and doggedly strived towards achieving mastery in what they did”

(B) REFLECTION (1)

1. What do you learn from the ancient Poet Lu You?
2. Do you remember what you learned in school/college/university?
3. Do you practice the “Knowledge” that you learned?
4. When was the last time you attended a training session?
5. What did you learn from that training session?
6. Did you practise what you learned?
7. What makes one organization more successful than another?
8. How can an organization enhance productivity?
9. What can you do to help your organization enhance productivity?
10. Do you want to know the secrets of enhancing productivity the GetSmart Way?

(C) PURPOSE & INTENTION

The purpose of publishing this book is to tap the talents of supervisors and managers in enhancing Productivity at the workplace, which is a critical success factor for organizational growth and sustainability.

For adult learning to be effective there must be full commitment of the parties involved, including - The Learner (Participant); The Boss (Learner's immediate supervisor); and the Trainer/Coach (Workshop Facilitator).

Serious minded Adult Educators aim to achieve success in training by measuring the results of how the Learner (Participant) performs his/her work after acquiring the "Knowledge/Skill" at the Training/Workshop.

Adult learning takes place in many forms, including Lectures, Workshops, On-The-Job Training, Web-based Learning, Blended Learning, Tutorials, Town-Hall Meetings, etc. For any training/learning to be effective the "Boss" should be responsible to ensure that the Learner (Participant) makes full use of the "Knowledge/Skill" acquired from the Lecturer, Trainer, Coach, or Facilitator.

Learning can be FUN when the Trainer/Facilitator/Coach understands the principles of adult learning and applies the techniques and methodologies of "Process Facilitation" to engage maximum participation from the learners.

Techniques of "Process Facilitation" would include visioning exercises, use of affinity diagrams, group presentations, games, role-plays, gallery-walks, world-cafe's, debates, use of stories, metaphors, and audio video aids, etc.

The GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) covered in the GetSmart Essential Skills training which would be discussed later in this workbook is designed to provide learners the "hands-on" Approach in Learning. It is "Behavioral-based" and "Results-oriented" adopting "Process Facilitation" training techniques and methodologies, to ensure that Learners are equipped with the relevant skills and work behaviors to excel on the Job.

The GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) which is geared to help supervisors and managers to excel in whatever they do at the workplace will benefit organizations - large, medium, or small across different industries.

Supervisors/Managers are the catalysts of change in an organization.

(D) PEOPLE ARE OUR MOST IMPORTANT ASSETS

The above statement is often quoted in company year books, corporate publications, brochures, and employee handbooks.

1. How many of our supervisors and managers spend time to nurture the employees reporting to them?
2. How many are trained to maximize the potential of people at work?
3. How many are aware that successful companies achieve success because their employees are productive?
4. Do you know the secrets of enhancing productivity at the workplace?
5. Do you want to know the secrets of enhancing productivity the “GetSmart Way”?

(E) REFLECTION (2)

(1) "TO ENHANCE PRDUCTIVITY IN AN ORGANIZATION YOU NEED PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS, THE RIGHT BEHAVIOR, THE RIGHT SYSTEM, AND TAKE ACTION BASED ON SMART GOALS"

(2) "IF YOU CONTINUE TO DO WHAT YOU ARE DOING THE WAY YOU ARE DOING, YOU WILL CONTINUE TO GET THE RESULTS OF WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN GETTING"

1. Do you agree with the above two statements?
2. Are you happy with the results that you have achieved in the past?
3. What would you do to achieve more?
4. Who do you think can help you to achieve more?
5. What are the Top-3 activities you would do to achieve better results in your workplace?

(F) THE FRUIT TREE ANALOGY

(Part 1)

1. What is your favorite fruit?
2. Whatever your favorite fruit is, is it possible that some fruits of the similar species are better than others?
3. What are the possible reasons for the difference/s?
4. Give at least 10 reasons why the fruits from one tree can taste different from those of another tree, bearing in mind that they are of the same kind?
5. Please share the 10 reasons with someone you know. It is possible that you would end up with more than 10 reasons.

(Part 2)

1. Imagine if the fruits are the products/services of your organization, what are the products/services?
2. Whatever the products or services is it possible that the products/services from your organization could be better or worse than similar products/services from other organizations?
3. What are the possible reasons for the difference/s?
4. Give at least 10 reasons why similar “products or services” coming from one organization could be different from another organization?
5. Please share the 10 reasons with someone you know. It is possible that you would end up with more than 10 reasons.

(G) FOUNDATION OF GETSMART PRODUCTIVITY SYSTEM (GPS)

GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) comprises the 3-Legged Model of Success – also known as the “3-Legged Stool”. Each leg of the stool represents a pillar of success which complements the other two. The three pillars of success for an organization are as follows:

1. Presence of a **conductive work environment** where the workforce can work in peace and harmony and support each other to achieve the Vision, Mission, and Goals of the Organization
2. Work activities are handled with proper **Systems and Processes** in place, bearing in mind the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM)
3. The workforce understands the values and benefits of setting **Smart Goals and Take Action** to achieve Results, in whatever they do at the workplace

The Roots of GetSmart Productivity System (GPS)

GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) has its roots from three great authors/philosophers’ viz. Buckminster Fuller (The Law of Attraction, and Precession), Edwards Deming (Total Quality Management -TQM), and Paul J Meyer (Set Goals and Take Action). (More about the GetSmart Productivity System – the “3-Legged Model of Success” will be discussed in the later segments)

The acronym for GetSmart Productivity System “GPS” has the same acronym of the Global Positioning System (GPS).

The following is a description of the Global Position System (GPS) summarized from articles taken from the Internet – Google search.

(Quote) The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite-based navigation system made up of a network of satellites placed in orbit.

GPS devices may have capabilities such as:

1. *Maps, including streets maps, displayed in human readable format via text or in a graphical format,*
2. *Turn-by-turn navigation directions to a human in charge of a vehicle or vessel via text or speech,*
3. *Directions fed directly to an autonomous vehicle such as a robotic probe,*

4. *Traffic congestion maps (depicting either historical or real time data) and suggested alternative directions,*
5. *Information on nearby amenities such as restaurants, fueling stations, and tourist attractions.*

GPS devices may be able to indicate:

1. *The roads or paths available,*
2. *Traffic congestion and alternative routes,*
3. *Roads or paths that might be taken to get to the destination,*
4. *If some roads are busy (now or historically) the best route to take,*
5. *The location of food, banks, hotels, fuel, airports or other places of interests,*
6. *The shortest route between the two locations,*
7. *The different options to drive on highway or back roads. (Unquote)*

GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) is designed with the ideas and benefits of the Global Positioning System (GPS) in mind.

The Secrets of GetSmart (Spelt in Reverse)

Do you know the Secrets in the word "GetSmart.

If you spell the word GETSMART in reverse, you will have two words, viz. TRAM and STEG

The word TRAM is "a transport vehicle to bring you from Point A, to Point B".

The word STEG is a short Form of the word STEGANOGRAPHY which simply means "hidden messages".

An interpretation of the word "Steganography" taken from Google search is summarized in the following paragraph for your easy reference:

(Quote) Steganography (from Greek steganos, or "covered," and graphie, or "writing") is the hiding of a secret message within an ordinary message and the extraction of it at its destination. Steganography takes cryptography a step farther by hiding an encrypted message so that no one suspects it exists. Ideally, anyone scanning your data will fail to know it contains encrypted data. (Unquote)

The GetSmart “3-Legged Model” of Success

The foundation of the “3-Legged Model” of Success – to enhance Productivity came from the teachings of the three great authors/philosophers whose names are mentioned below.

Not in any order of priority, they are Buckminster Fuller, Edwards Deming, and Paul J Meyer.

- (a) In Buckminster Fuller’s philosophy the lesson learned is in “The Law of Attraction, and Precession” which are about “Abundance, and the Ripple Effect”. There are potentials for “**creating a conducive work environment**” at the workplace with “Abundance and the Ripple Effect”. Individuals in the workforce could start the “ripple effect” to bring about a conducive work environment if “each of them could play his/her part”. e.g. To practice GetSmart TRIAL + (4) to create a conducive work environment – TRIAL + (4) which is one of the legs in the “3-Legged Model” of Success in the GetSmart Productivity System (GPS), helps supervisors and managers to enhance productivity the “GetSmart Way”.
- (b) In Edwards Deming’s philosophy the lesson learned is to develop “**a process/system**” to help individuals in the workplace to handle their work duties and responsibilities in a systematic and productive manner. Successful organizations have appropriate systems and processes (e.g. Standard Operating Systems –SOP’s) in place to achieve good results consistently. - “Doing the right things right the first time and every time”. The GetSmart “5-Step Plan” which is one of the legs in the “3-Legged Model” of Success in the GetSmart Productivity System (GPS), helps supervisors and managers to enhance productivity the “GetSmart Way”.
- (c) In Paul J Meyer’s philosophy the lesson learned is “**Take action to do what you are supposed to do**” which is in one of the legs in the “3-Legged Model” of Success in the GetSmart Productivity System (GPS), helps supervisors and managers to enhance productivity the “GetSmart Way”. Goal setting is the critical success factor to enhance productivity. Supervisors and managers will excel in whatever they do, if they regularly set Smart Goals and Take Action to fulfill them.

Below is the picture of the “3-Legged Stool” which represents the “3-Legged Model” of Success:



(H) GETSMART PRODUCTIVITY SYSTEM (GPS)

GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) contains the “Secrets” to bring you from the present situation/position (whatever Job you are doing/from wherever you are) to the next higher level (for better results, better performance, and higher productivity in whatever you do, and wherever you are).

GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) applies the 3-Legged Model of Success mentioned earlier in each of the Essential Skills identified to raise productivity and help supervisory and managerial employees to excel in whatever they do at the workplace.

The GetSmart Essential Skills are:

1. Skill in Leading
2. Skill in Communication and Giving Instructions
3. Skill in Work Improvement
4. Effective Workplace Performance and Review.

The learning outcomes for each of the Essential Skills are stated below:

Learning Outcomes for Skill in Leading:

1. Able to identify the critical success factors of a supervisor
2. Able to understand the benefits of good employee relations
3. Able to identify and handle the people related problems at the workplace
4. Able to apply the Foundation for Good Human Relations at the workplace to minimize the people related problems through specific approaches depending on the situation
5. Able to administer and resolve the people related problems in a systematic order using the GetSmart “5-Step Plan” for Skill in Leading

Learning Outcomes for Skill in Communication and Giving Instructions:

1. Able to Identify the Critical Success Factors of a Supervisor
2. Able to understand the benefits of Good Employee Relations
3. Able to Identify the types of communication and instructions, and the related problems which commonly exist at the workplace
4. Able to identify the systematic approach to effective communication and giving instructions to minimize miscommunication and eliminate related problems
5. Able to administer and communicate effectively by applying the GetSmart “5-Step Plan” for Skill in Effective Communication and Giving Instructions

Learning Outcomes for Skill in Work Improvement

1. Able to Identify the Critical Success Factors of a Supervisor
2. Able to understand the benefits of Good Employee Relation
3. Able to Identify and prioritize areas of work where there are potential for work improvement
4. Able to identify the systematic approach to work improvement to maximize the use of resources and minimize wastages and losses
5. Able to administer and apply the GetSmart “5-Step Plan” for Skill in Work Improvement

Learning Outcomes for Effective Workplace Performance and Review

1. Able to Identify the Critical Success Factors of a Supervisor
2. Able to understand the top three key activities of your Job and those of your subordinates
3. Able to Identify at least 12 Competencies which are critical to perform your Job well, as well as the Competencies which are required by your subordinates to excel in their jobs
4. Able to set at least 3 GetSmart Action Plans for yourself and your team members, and to apply a "behavior-based" Approach towards work excellence
5. Able to lead your team and facilitate the GetSmart “5-Step Plan” for Effective Workplace Performance and Review

(I) THE GETSMART WAY TO ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY

The “3-Legged Stool” (Secrets Revealed)

Imagine if the 3 Legs of the stool represent the three Factors of Success viz.

- (a) Presence of a **conductive work environment**
- (b) Possession of a winning **Process/System**
- (c) Implementation of **Smart Goals and Taking Action** on Winning Projects

1. Can you visualize what will happen if the stool has only one leg:

Would the 1-Legged Stool be stable?

2. How about if the stool has only two legs:

Would the 2-Legged Stool be stable?

3. How about if the stool has all the three legs:

Would the 3-Legged Stool be stable to stand on its own?

The point is if you want sustainable success in the workplace, you need to have the presence of the three Factors, viz. A Conducive Environment, The Winning System/Process, and the ability to Take Action on Smart Goals.

The three Factors of Success are applicable to all organizations, be it manufacturing, trading, or the Public Service. It is equally applicable to MNC's, or a SME's.

Motivational Theories and Psychometric Tools

There are motivation theories out there to help supervisors and managers to better understand their employees at the workplace. The favorites are Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg Hygiene Factors/2-Factor Theory, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory.

There are also Psychometric and Personality Profiling Tools available to help supervisors and managers understand their employees better. e.g. DISC, CBI, and others.

These motivation theories, and psychometric tools are to help supervisors and managers to better understand the behaviors of their employees in order to better manage them.

In general, "people do not want to be managed", and the alternative/proactive route is to "create" a conducive work environment and help people to enhance productivity and achieve work excellence by guiding them with the GetSmart Productivity System (GPS)

Criteria for developing the GetSmart Productivity System (GPS)

GetSmart Productivity System is based on the three key criteria:

1. Simple
2. Meaningful
3. Self-managed

GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) is designed to be practical, action-based, and easily applicable, at all times, anywhere, any situation, and can be carried out independently by the individual.

GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) adopts the "3-Legged Model" of Success. It is simple, meaningful, and self-managed.

- (a) TRIAL + (4) is simple to apply, meaningful, and is self-manageable.
- (b) GetSmart "5-Step Plan" for the Essential Skills are simple, meaningful, and self-manageable.
- (c) GetSmart Action Plans based on Smart Goals and Taking Action, are simple, meaningful, and self-managed

When I was looking at how to develop the GetSmart Productivity System (GPS), with knowledge of the "Law of Attraction and Precession" and in particular on how to "create" a conducive work environment, I thought of the values of champion performers at the workplace, and the values of successful companies. I noted that champion performers and successful companies have similar values. I saw "TRIAL" i.e. Trust, Respect, Integrity, Accountability, and Levelling (Fair Play) as the common values shared by majority of the champion performers and the successful companies.

The Plus Four “+ (4)” factors to create a conducive work environment are as stated below:

1. Frequency in communication – to have frequent “face-to-face” discussions with the people you work with
2. Tell people in advance about things that would affect them – to inform the people you work with on things (changes to work routines) that would affect them
3. Give credit when due – to look for the small things people do well at work, and give them credit for their achievements
4. Make the best use of each person’s strengths – to look for strengths of individuals and make best use of their strengths in “teamwork and team-building”

The Plus (4) factors which could improve relationship and develop rapport between one individual and another, one individual and a group of people, would include:

1. Supervisor/Manager to Employee/s
2. Employee to Employee
3. Peer to Peer
4. Buyer to Supplier
5. Vendor to Client, etc.

TRIAL + (4) is simple, meaningful, and self-manageable.

It has the potential to “create” a conducive work environment to support of the continuing growth and success of an organization.

(J) CREATING A CONDUCTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT WITH TRIAL + (4)

Do you know why it is important to have a conducive work environment at the workplace to enhance productivity?

The answer lies in the Analogy of the Fruit Tree, which we had discussed earlier.

GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) provides an easy way to create a conducive environment in the workplace. i.e. The GetSmart Way which suggests the use of TRIAL + (4) - to create the “Ripple Effect” with impact, to create a conducive work environment.

The acronym “TRIAL” comprises of the following words:

Trust,

Respect,

Integrity,

Accountability, and

Levelling (Fair Play)

The plus (4) factors are:

1. Frequency in communication
2. Tell people in advance about things that would affect them
3. Give credit when due
4. Make the best use of each person's strengths

(K) REFLECTION (3)

1. Would **Trust** help to improve relationship and rapport at the workplace?
2. What is an example that you could use to support the above?
3. Would **Respect** help to improve relationship and rapport at the workplace?
4. What is an example that you could use to support the above?
5. Would **Integrity** help to improve relationship and rapport at the workplace?
6. What is an example that you could use to support the above?
7. Would **Accountability** help to improve relationship and rapport at the workplace?
8. What is an example that you could use to support the above?
9. Would **Levelling (Fair Play)** help to improve relationship and rapport at the workplace?
10. What is an example that you could use to support the above?
11. Would frequency in communication help to improve relationship and rapport at the workplace?
12. What is an example that you could use to support the above?
13. Would telling people in advance about things that would affect them help to improve relationship and rapport at the workplace?
14. What is an example that you could use to support the above?
15. Would giving credit when due help to improve relationship and rapport in the workplace?
16. What is an example that you could use to support the above?

17. Would making the best use of each person's strengths help to improve relationship and rapport at the workplace?
18. What is an example that you could use to "make the best use to support the above?"

(L) Benefits of TRIAL + (4)

1. Would TRIAL + (4) help to build teamwork and team-building?
2. Would TRIAL + (4) help to get things done through people?
3. Would TRIAL + (4) help to create a conducive environment at the workplace?
4. Would TRIAL + (4) help to enhance productivity at the workplace?
5. Would TRIAL + (4) help the Organization to become the Employer of Choice?

(M) GetSmart “5-Step” Plans

The gurus of Total Quality Management (TQM) had/have their unique ways to promote their branding on Total Quality Management (TQM).

One area they all have in common is that they all have their own “SYSTEMS” and “PROCESSES” to achieve TQM

Research showed that successful organizations are successful because they have good systems and processes in place.

Similarly, GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) has the “5-Step Plans” in place for the respective Essential Skills, viz. Skill in Leading, Skill in Communication and Giving Instructions, Skill in Work Improvement, and Effective Workplace Performance and Review.

The “5-Step” Plans for the GetSmart Essential Skills are there to provide the “Systems/Processes” to assist supervisory and managerial employees to enhance productivity in their respective roles, duties, and responsibilities.

The following are the 5-Step Plans for the respective Essential Skills:

1. 5-Step Plan for “Skill in Leading”

Step 1: Identify the Problem

Step 2: Get the Facts and set Objectives

Step 3: Provide Possible Solutions

Step 4: Take Action

Step 5: Check Results

2. 5-Step Plan for “Skill in Communication and Giving Instructions”:

Step 1: State the Purpose and/or Objective

Step 2: Prepare the setting

Step 3: Perform the activity – Show, Tell, Do

Step 4: Practice, Practice, Practice

Step 5: Check Results and Follow-Up

3. 5-Step Plan for “Skill in Work Improvement”

Step 1: State the Purpose and/or Objective

Step 2: Breakdown the Work Activities

Step 3: Ask questions - What? Why? When? Who? Where? And How?

Step 4: Identify possible Improvements and develop new approaches

Step 5: Take Action and Follow-Up

4. 5-Step Plan for “Effective Workplace Performance and Review”

Step 1: State the Job Title and Job Description

Step 2: Identify Top 5 Key Job Responsibilities/Job Activities

Step 3: Identify at least 10 Behavioral Competencies to excel on the Job

Step 4: Set 5 Smart Goals applying the Selected Behavioral Competencies

Step 5: Take Action, Check Results, and Follow-Up

(N) REFLECTION (4)

1. Would **Skill in Leading** be considered an essential skill to you as a supervisor or manager in your organization?
2. Can you recall an incident when you had an employee related problem at the workplace, and what was the problem?
3. Was the problem solved and how did you solve the problem?
4. Consider the 5-Step Plan for Skill in Leading and tell us if the Plan could be used to solve the problem you just mentioned?
5. What are the benefits of using the 5-Step Plan in solving people related problems?
6. Would **Skill in Communication and Giving Instructions** be considered an essential skill to you as a supervisor or manager in your organization?
7. Can you recall an incident when you had an employee communication related problem at the workplace, and what was the Problem?
8. Was the problem solved and how did you solve the problem?
9. Consider the 5-Step Plan for Skill in Communication and Giving Instructions and tell us if the Plan could be used to solve the communication related problem you just mentioned?
10. What are the benefits of using the 5-Step Plan in solving communication related problems?
11. Would **Skill in Work Improvement** be considered an essential skill to you as a supervisor or manager in your organization?
12. Can you recall the last time you had done a work improvement exercise?
13. Was the work improvement exercise well done and what did you achieve from the improvement?
14. Consider the 5-Step Plan for Skill in Work Improvement and tell us if the Plan could be used to handle the work improvement exercise you just mentioned?

15. What are the benefits of using the 5-Step Plan in handling Work Improvement?
16. Would **Effective Workplace Performance and Review** be considered an essential skill to you as a supervisor or manager in your organization?
17. Can you recall an incident when you had to conduct a performance appraisal exercise with one of your subordinates?
18. How did you handle the performance appraisal exercise and was it well conducted?
19. Consider the 5-Step Plan for Effective Workplace Performance and Review, and tell us if the Plan could be used to handle employee performance appraisals?
20. What are the benefits of using the 5-Step Plan in Effective Workplace Performance and Review?

(O) BENEFITS OF GETSMART “5-STEP” PLANS

1. Would the GetSmart 5-Step Plans for the respective Essential Skills help to improve work related problems and issues?
2. Would the 5-Step Plans help to stream-line supervisory and managerial duties and responsibilities?
3. Would the 5-Step Plans help to increase your efficiency at the workplace?
4. Would the 5-Step Plans help to reduce your work load as a supervisor or manager?
5. Would the 5-Step Plans help to enhance productivity?

(P) SMART GOALS

Successful organizations are successful because the employees have Smart Goals which are aligned with the Organization's Vision, Mission, and Objectives, and they take action on the Smart Goals they set. GetSmart Action Plans are based on Smart Goals.

Smart Goals are Goals which are:

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Attainable

R = Realistic

T = Time-targeted

Goals that are not achieved are probably not SMART?

The example below illustrates possible reasons why Goals Failed:

Example of a Goal: "I want to lose weight"

1. Is that goal Specific? – No. No mention of important information?
2. Is that Goal Measurable? – No. No mention of how many kilos to lose, and by what time frame?
3. Is that Goal Attainable? – No. Whatever is not measurable, cannot be attained.
4. Is that Goal Realistic? – No. Not measurable. Not attainable. So not realistic
5. Is that Goal Time-targeted? – No. No mention of when to achieve the Goal.

An example of a **Smart Goal** is seen below:

“My weight today is 180 kg. I want to lose 5 kg by the end of 3 months”

If you subject that Goal in the same manner of checking as conducted earlier, you will conclude that the Goal is SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-targeted.

1. Is that Goal Specific? – Yes. Important information is available.
2. Is that Goal Measurable? – Yes. To lose 5 kg in 3 months.
3. Is that Goal Attainable? – Yes. Reducing 5 kg out of 180 kg is attainable.
4. Is that Goal Realistic? – Yes. Losing 1.3 kg a month is realistic. It's a fraction of 180 kg.
5. Is that Goal Time-targeted? – Yes. 3 months.

Goals would likely fail if they are not SMART.

There are times when SMART Goals failed because people involved did “not take action”.

It is important to have a tracking system to record the progress when goals are set.

Goals are set based on different time frames e.g. (6 months to 36 months). There are times when situations change and “deadlines” are not met. When that happens you need to adjust your Goals accordingly. You can only do that when you are keeping track of the progress of achieving results.

(Q) REFLECTION (5)

1. Can you recall a goal you set recently?
2. Did you know the benefits/losses if you did achieve/or did not achieve the goal?
3. Did you have a tracking system?
4. Did you achieve the results that you wanted?
5. What would you do differently if you had to repeat the same goal?
6. Would Smart Goals help?
7. What are the benefits to set Smart Goals?

(R) JOB OVERVIEW

A. Job Identification

Name: _____ Designation: _____

Department: _____ Position Reporting To: _____

The primary duties of this job are best classified as (please tick):

☐ Technical ☐ Administrative ☐ Supervisory/Managerial ☐ Professional

B. Job Summary

Describe the functions of the job in brief.

[illegible]

C. Major Duties/Responsibilities & Performance Standards

List the major duties and responsibilities of the job. Each task statement should be a clear description of the task and should start with a verb (action word).

Major Duties and Responsibilities (Major Activities)	Performance Standards Expected	Required Competencies (Select from the List of Competencies)

D. Other Duties/Responsibilities & Performance Standards

List the other duties and responsibilities of the job. Each task statement should be a clear description of the task and should start with a verb (action word).

Other Duties and Responsibilities	Performance Standards Expected	Required Competencies (Select from the List of Competencies)

E. Number of direct employees reporting to this job position (Refer to Organization Chart):

Number of employees:	Job Titles:

F. Number of indirect employees reporting to this job position (Refer – Organization Chart):

Number of employees:	Job Titles:

G. Provide a list of people who come into contact with the job holder. State their Job Titles and explain briefly the purpose of contact.

Internal (exclude own department)	External (outside the organization)

H. Personal Characteristics / Job Specifications

List below the physical characteristics the job requires. Give an example of what is done in the job to show the need for the physical characteristics.

Physical Characteristics (Physical attributes to handle activities):

I. What qualifications and / or skills training are required for the Job?

Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates, etc.	Special Skills Training

J. Working Conditions

Describe the physical conditions under which this job is performed

K. What are the working hours? Any shift requirements?

L. Other Matters relating to the job

EMPLOYEE'S CERTIFICATION

I certify that the answers to all questions are complete and to the best of my knowledge.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR'S CERTIFICATION

A. I agree with the employee's statement.

B. Remarks / Comments:

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

DEPARTMENT MANAGER'S and HR's CERTIFICATION

A. We agree with the above information provided

B. Remarks / Comments:

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

(S) COMPETENCIES OF SUPER PERFORMERS AND VALUES OF SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONS

List of Competencies of Superior Performers and Values of Successful Organizations:

1. Self Confidence	2. Intellectual Power
3. Trustworthiness (Trust)	4. Dealing with Ambiguity
5. Creative	6. Courage and Conviction
7. Composed	8. Action Oriented
9. Function/Technical Knowledge	10. Passion and Drive
11. Strategic Thinking	12. Innovative
13. Strategic Leadership	14. Managing Change
15. Developing People	16. Operational Agility
17. Open Communication	18. Negotiating Skill
19. Interpersonal Skill	20. Hiring and Staffing
21. Fostering Diversity (Leveling)	22. Teamwork (Accountability)
23. Communication Skills	24. Customer Focus
25. Decision Making	26. Self-Development
27. Providing Motivation	28. Empowering Others (Respect)
29. Managing Performance	30. Analytical Thinking
31. Forward Thinking	32. Conceptual Thinking
33. Technical Expertise	34. Initiative
35. Entrepreneurial Orientation	36. Thoroughness
37. Decisiveness	38. Business Acumen
39. Global Perspective	40. Stress Management
41. Personal Credibility (Integrity)	42. Flexibility

(T) INTERVIEW WITH ONG HONG HIM

Q1: What is your purpose in life?

A1: My purpose in life is to help people excel in what they do.

Q2: What are your Values?

A2: My top three Values are Trust, Respect, and Integrity

Q3: What services do you provide?

A3: At present I am focusing on adult education, zeroing on Supervisory/Managerial Skills Training, with emphasis on productivity enhancement.

Q4: Why is Supervisory/Managerial Skills Training important, and what are the benefits?

A4: Supervisory/Managerial Skills Training is important because Supervisors/Managers are the key to company's success. They get things done through people, and if they are well trained the Company will have higher productivity.

Q5: There are so many of such Courses which are readily available and how are your Courses different from the existing?

A5: I believe that the Courses are different because they are directly aiming at enhancing productivity with the GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) which I had developed, focusing on the Essential Skills comprising of - Skill in Leading, Skill in Communication & Giving Instructions, Skill in Work Improvement, and Effective Performance Management and Review. I am convinced that the Essential Skills will help supervisors/managers to excel in their roles. These skills are not taught in graduate schools, and the skills are not familiar to many of our younger supervisors/managers.

Q6: What are the Training Courses available?

A6: The courses available are (1) Secrets of Enhancing Productivity (2) Effective Performance Management and Review (3) Skill in Leading, (4) Skill in Communication & Giving Instructions, and (5) Skill in Work Improvement. Our Courses are customized to Company's needs, on a 1-Day Workshop for each Essential Skill, and a 2-Day Workshop for Secrets of Enhancing Productivity.

Q7: We heard that you are prepared to undertake a "Success-Guaranteed" service for running the Essential Skills Courses for Supervisors, can you please elaborate?

A7: I believe in the GetSmart Series of Training Courses and would commit to the "Success-Guarantee" based on terms and conditions, to be agreed.

(U) COLLECTION OF IDEAS & STORIES

1. Secrets of Attracting and Retaining Employees

What comes to your mind when you see the heading of this Blog? Do you look at it from the eyes of an employee, or from the eyes of an employer? Or, do you see it as one who is an academic on a research project?

My next question to you is would the type of “lenses” you wear make the difference to your answers?

My take is, the key to attract and retain employees is to be able to create a positive working environment for employees to feel comfortable, satisfied, and take pride to belong to the organization.

There are countless ways to make that happen. The experts in motivational theories and organizational development had given their recommendations in numerous publications over the years.

Consider the word/acronym “TRIAL” which stands for Trust, Respect, Integrity, Accountability, and Leveling (Fair Play).

I believe that if employees at all levels in an organization can observe and practice “TRIAL”, they will contribute to a positive working environment which will add value to attract and retain employees.

Of course, the intrinsic, and extrinsic factors are also important.

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. What are your views on “TRIAL”?
2. What would you do to observe and practice Trust, Respect, Integrity, Accountability, and Leveling in your organization?

2. Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA's)

What are flexible working arrangements (FWA's)? How can FWA's help to attract and retain employees?

The concept of flexible working arrangements (FWA's) can simply be explained as follows:

- a. Flexi-Time – different hours of work
- b. Flexi-Work – different work activities and responsibilities
- c. Flexi-Place – different locations of work

Flexi-Time would allow employees to have more time for their loved ones. Employees may prefer to start work at 9.30am and finish at 6.30pm; or start at 7.30am and finish at 4.30pm.

Flexi-Work would allow employees to have “job-enlargement” which could enrich themselves and provide them with more opportunities for upgrading.

Flexi-Place would allow employees to work from home or “off-site” – from anywhere outside the office.

Companies should keep the Options of FWA's options opened, if there are no disruptions to their business operations.

The benefits of FWA's would include: higher employee satisfaction, higher productivity, and higher profits.

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the above:

- 1. If you are an employee what would you be looking for in FWA's?
- 2. If you are an employer, what are your “benefits” and/or “losses” if you are to introduce FWA's in your organization?

3. The significance of a “3-Legged Stool” for a successful organization

A 3-legged stool has many connotations to many people.

For many, the 3-legged stool would mean the three critical success factors for an organization's success which would include Knowledge, Skill, and Attitude (KSA).

I subscribe to that, and as I see the “3-legged stool” from a practical stand-point I see that for an organization to be successful, the organization should have:

- (1) A conducive working environment where people would feel comfortable to be there;
- (2) A simple work process to help employees achieve results, e.g. 5-Step Plan; and
- (3) An Action Plan for success, e.g. take action, measure results, and follow-up.

The types of knowledge and skills required for an organization's success would differ from one company to another depending on the nature of business.

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the above:

- 1. What do you want to see as a conducive working environment?
- 2. What is the work process in your present job, and what is your success plan?

4. Time Management

“Time” and “Tide” waits for no man!

You and I have 24 hours a day no matter where we live, how poor or rich we are, or what kind of work we do for a living.

The difference is that some of us spend time wisely doing the things which are in line with our Smart Goals, whilst others spend more time doing work which are not related to their goals.

Time management is about managing activities on a daily basis. If we can identify the top 20% of work activities which are critical to achieving Goals, and that we enthusiastically take actions to achieve them, success is inevitable!

Some of us work 8 hours a day, some work more. If you can spend enough time on your working days on the important activities/chores you will be achieving “more with less”.

Productivity is about doing the right things right. i.e. the top 20% of activities which are the important activities to do, in order to do a good job.

Two Questions came to mind when I reflect on the above:

1. What are the top 20% of the activities you are required to do on your job, in order to achieve great results?
2. What are the core competencies required for your job?

5. HRM Story in a Nutshell (Part 1)

This is the first episode of the story of Jonathan and Rachel to review the key issues of HRM in a Nutshell

In this story I will share my views on HRM in a Nutshell - to make a complex topic, so simple so as to enable an ordinary person on the street to apply some of the learnings, if he/she deems fit.

The information shared in this story is personal and I respect all differing opinions and feelings. No apologies required.

The story begins with a married couple with a son and a daughter. The children grew up in a competitive environment/society where honor, money, and prestige are important. The children went to reputable schools, and they both did well in school, and graduated with Bachelor's degrees.

Jonathan the son obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Arts, and Rachel gained a Bachelor's Degree in Science. Both of them started work soon after their graduation.

One month after Jonathan and Rachel joined the workforce, I had conversations with both of them and captured the following:

OHH: Jonathan, how's work?

Jonathan: Ok. But, I would expect to be given more attention from my immediate supervisor who seemed to be very busy all the time.

OHH: What is your experience Rachel?

Rachel: Um! I kind of felt that the only thing that was happening in the office was work, work, and work. Nobody seemed interested to know what I have been doing and none shared with me about their work, also. How are we going to work together as a team? (Rachel was obviously disappointed).

OHH: I can empathize with the both of you. What would you like to see, happen?

Jonathan: I would like to see more efforts done to new employees like me, at least in the first 4 weeks of employment. I would like to know what others in the company do, and how their work are related to mine so that we can help each other to meet the department's goals and the company's goals and objectives. I would like to be given more directions on what to expect on the short-term and long-term, as well as to discuss with my immediate supervisor on what I could do to achieve the requirements.

OHH: Thank you Jonathan, I know you have more things to share and we'll get back to you later, after we talk to Rachel.

Rachel: I agree with what Jonathan said and would share my wish list, too. I wish my boss could ask me how I could contribute to make improvements on my job. I know it may be too early as I just joined the company, but the least my boss could do is to start the ball rolling. I joined the company thinking that I would be an asset, and after 4 weeks on the job, I felt that I am a liability. My boss was busy, my colleagues were busy, and I was left very much to do my own things, so I spent my time reading old records, checking documents, and some routine and mundane activities including answering phone calls when no one seemed interested to pick up the phone.

I want to pause here and reflect on what we could learn from this episode.

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. What does your company do on Employee Orientation and Induction?
2. What would you do if you were the HR Director of the company?

6. HRM Story in a Nutshell (Part 2)

This is the second episode of HRM in the Nutshell

We heard what Jonathan and Rachel had to say about the topic of Employee Orientation and Induction which is one of the Core functions of HRM.

You could have already added your own views about the topic on Employee Orientation and Induction.

In this blog, I would share some of the secrets of what other companies do with regards to Employee Orientation and Induction.

I need to clarify the Objective of Employee Orientation and Induction, which in the Nutshell are as follows:

1. To create a “great employee experience” for the new employee
2. To ensure that the new employee has a good start at the workplace, and be properly equipped to excel on the Job

The following are random examples of what some companies do for Employee Orientation and Induction. There are companies that adopt a combination of the practices as indicated below:

- a. The new employee spends the first four weeks moving around from one department to another to observe what goes on in each department, to be introduced to the key persons in each department, to understand what each employee can do in the best interests of the company, to feel as a part of one big family, to feel the spirit of camaraderie, to feel that the company cares “by actions and deeds”, etc. The arrangements are coordinated and carefully planned and structured by the HR Department.
- b. The new employee is allocated a buddy for one to three months from the date he/she joins the company. The appointed buddy is usually from another department. The role of the buddy is to ensure that the employee is taken care of in the first one to three months, which would include frequent communication throughout the day, to be initiated by the new employee’s buddy, to answer whatever questions the new employee has, as well as to ensure that the new employee learns the right things about the company, and has the chance to have ample knowledge and facts about the company, his/her work, etc. to enable the new employee to make better decisions.
- c. The new employee is treated with full attention by the immediate supervisor who would go out of the way to have frequent discussions with him/her to inculcate

the team spirit and support needed. The supervisor would set specific tasks for the new employee and make efforts to assist the employee to meet the targets set.

- d. The new employee has a scheduled plan to move from one department to another in the first two weeks of work to talk to the HOD's on a "one-on-one" basis. Discussions are structured and prepared, aimed to share knowledge of what each department is doing and how the new employee can help to support the department in the interests of teamwork and to achieve the desires of the Company.
- e. The new employee is personally attended to by the HR representative for the first three days upon joining the company. HR representative who would show the employee as much of the company as required, as well as to spend time with the new employee to go through the HR related programs, including employee handbook, terms and conditions of employment, do's and don'ts, procedures and relevant information pertaining to employee grievances, salary administration, performance appraisals and performance management, employee training and development, employee communication and feedback, company's newsletters, industrial relations (whenever applicable), etc. The HR representative would spend time to show the employees whatever available information about the company on PPS slides, corporate videos, and other printed media.
- f. The new employee would attend the Meet the People's Session headed by the CEO of the company. In such session the CEO would share the company's Vision, Mission, and Goals, to be followed by all HOD's who would also share their departmental goals and objectives as well as to formally welcome the new employee. Such an activity needs time to organize and usually would be carried out on a routine basis once a month. Usually to gather together a group of new employees.

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the above:

- 1. What is your opinion on Employee Orientation and Induction?
- 2. Regardless of what your company's Policies may be concerning Employee Orientation and Induction, if you are the person in charge, what are the Top-3 Items you would include in the Orientation Program?

7. HRM Story in a Nutshell (Part 3)

This is the third episode of HRM in the Nutshell

In this episode I will share the findings from the rank and file employees, and PMET's I dealt with on matters relating to Employee Welfare.

Not in any order of importance, the following are the findings:

1. Freedom to take Annual Leave, subject to entitlement and work exigency
2. Flexible work hours as long as the total required hours for the week are met, and provided that there is no disruption to work
3. Flexible work place as long as the work responsibilities are achieved
4. Job enrichment and rotation in order to acquire knowledge and skills that are beneficial to the employee, and the company.
5. Flexible benefits, to satisfy varying needs of employees e.g. when employee's children have started working. Such employees may prefer to have more medical benefits for old age, rather than to attend children's parties.
6. Company should provide childcare center facilities and/or to provide childcare allowance in exchange for some benefits which are less useful to the employee e.g. Hospitalization Benefits
7. Company should provide better cafeteria facilities including subsidized meals, in place of Annual Dinner and Dance.
8. Company should provide opportunities for employees' continuing education, e.g. provide scholarships for employees to attend graduate schools outside working hours.
9. Company should develop their supervisors to be more people oriented, and send supervisors and managers for training on essential skills viz. Skill in Leading, Skill in Communication and Giving Instructions, Skill Work Improvement, and Effective Workplace performance and review.
10. Companies should provide interest-free Loans for house renovation, school fees to send employees' children to universities and colleges, purchase of residential property for employee and the immediate family.

The above list is not exhaustive. There are many other ways which the companies could enhance their employee welfare program.

Managers and supervisors can make a major impact by being more caring, and have frequent discussions with their subordinates on things that would affect them, as well as to find out their needs. Employee welfare could be enhanced through practicing and observing TRIAL – Trust, Respect, Integrity, Accountability, and Leveling (Fair Play)

Employee welfare is a critical success factor to enhance productivity. It goes beyond the monetary benefits, and the tangible gains.

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. What are your top three employee welfare Items?
2. What are the existing “benefits” in your present organization which you would like to trade-off for other “benefits”?

8. GetSmart Way of Achieving Unity With Diversity

Many people asked me what is "The GetSmart Way"

The GetSmart Way is a sustainable approach to achieve work excellence through "Unity and Diversity"

It is a practical approach based on the fundamentals propounded by Management Gurus including Buckminster Fuller, Edwards Deming, and Paul J Meyer, to mention a few.

My desire to develop the "The GetSmart Way" also known as GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) was motivated by increasing demands for sustainable growth and productivity enhancement in organizations, as well as for families and individuals.

The GetSmart Way incorporates the "3-Legged Model" for Success, comprising of (a) Developing a conducive work environment with TRIAL + (4), (b) Having a winning process/system with GetSmart 5-Step Plan, and (c) Taking action with the GetSmart Action Plan.

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. How would you apply The GetSmart Way in your company, your home, and for your personal growth?
2. What are your benefits if you apply The GetSmart Way?

9. How to Get A Job Fast

In this episode I like to share with you how I had helped many job seekers find the Jobs they wanted, by simply complying with what the interviewers were looking for in the selection process.

Essentially there are two challenges for the job applicant to get the job fast.

Challenge 1: To write an interesting CV to ensure that the interviewer calls you for the job interview

Challenge 2: To ace the job interview and to get the job fast

Overcoming the two challenges:

1. When writing the CV, bear in mind the job requirements, including the qualifications, experience, and job competencies. Make sure that you meet with all the requirements stated in the job advertisement. Your CV must be so impactful and compelling that the Interviewer would feel guilty if he doesn't invite you for the job interview. Keep the CV short and sweet – no more than 2 pages.
2. When attending a job interview – play the role of the ideal person for the Job. Behave like you are the best candidate for the position. Speak purposefully and applying appropriate gestures/postures and voice intonation. Imagine that you are already employed by the company and that the interviewer is your colleague and team member talking to you on work-related matters.

The above sounds so simple and straight forward. With proper preparation, and mental awareness, getting a job fast is an easy task.

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. When was your last job interview, and what did you do to prepare yourself?
2. If you were to attend the next job interview, what would you do to ensure that you get the job?

10. Importance of Life-Long Learning

Singapore Government is taking the lead in promoting “life-long learning”. There are ample financial assistance schemes available for employees as well as for the organizations to tap on for Life-Long Learning.

Courses available for adults and matured employees range from Certificate Level, to PHD. Many of them are funded through the existing support systems through Workforce Development Agency (WDA), IAL, Life-Long Learning Institute, and other Approved Training Organizations (ATO's). For more information refer to www.mom.gov.sg; www.wda.gov.sg; and www.moe.gov.sg

The existing adult learning programs available are mostly geared towards knowledge-based, and/or skill-based learning. I am of the opinion that there should be more emphasis on developing individuals’ “Affective domain” for productivity growth and long-term sustenance.

The 3-Legged Model of my GetSmart Productivity System (GPS) is geared towards addressing the “Affective domain” in addition to the “Knowledge, and Skill Domains”. It focuses on the importance of developing a conducive work environment to support productivity growth and sustenance by practicing TRIAL + (4) at the workplace. The following paragraph briefly explains what is TRIAL + (4).

T=Trust; R=Respect; I=Integrity; A=Accountability; L=Leveling (Fair Play). The plus 4 factors are: Frequency in communication; Giving credit when due; Telling employees in advance about changes that would affect them; and Treating employees as individuals. I believe that I can change my work environment if I continue to practice TRIAL + (4). I also believe that there will be great teamwork and team-building when employees practice TRIAL + (4) at their respective work environments.

Effective teamwork and team-building will bring about sustainable productivity growth in organizations through life-long learning.
GPS works. It works all the time.

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. How do you measure the effectiveness of employee training?
2. When was the last time you attended a classroom training, and what did you learn?

11. Common Sense is Not Common Sense

The title sounds confusing and ironical, or at worst it sounds ridiculous.

Whilst tidying up some old documents which I kept in my drawer for many years, I came across a piece of paper with different shades and varying sizes of dots, within a circle. I began to reflect on what the picture represents, and almost instantly I recalled that the circle in the picture represents my journey in life, and the dots represent the knowledge, skills, and attitude (KSA) I accumulated over the years.

If I have the chance to update the picture the new dots which I would add could probably fill the circle, and the picture could look like one BIG dot from afar.

Each individual has a different size circle, and different shades of dots. The dots in your circle represent your knowledge, skills, and attitude. Likewise, the dots in my circle and no two persons' circle/dots would be the same.

When it comes to decision making, you will be using your KSA to process your solution, and I will be using my KSA to process my solution. Because there are differences in our KSA it is possible that our solutions could differ. Therefore, we must learn to respect each other's opinions and have frequency in communication to resolve the possible differences.

The problem of "common sense is not common sense" gets compounded and become more complex in modern times, arising from our diverse culture, race, age, religion, gender, upbringing, and of course the differences in KSA.

We could soften the blow and reduce the problem if we practice "TRIAL" at the workplace, i.e. observe and practice the behavioral traits of Trust, Respect, Integrity, Accountability, and Leveling (Fair play).

Two questions came to mind when I reflect on the above:

1. How do you describe "common sense"?
2. Give examples of specific actions you would take to maintain peace and harmony in a diverse community?

12. Employee Training

TQM gurus all over the world are saying “What you don’t measure, you don’t achieve”

Unfortunately most of the training programs conducted today do not measure the core “results” of training. At best they measure a small part, i.e. the “the understanding of what is taught”, which amounts to just “skimming the milk” and not drinking the milk to enhance growth. Imagine a child just leaking the milk without swallowing it.

Training should lead to one, or a combination of the following: skills improvement, productivity increase, behavioral change, and/or higher profits. The concept of “Cost and Effect” should apply. If I were to pay \$300 per day course Fee to attend training, I would ensure that my return of investment (ROI) is worth much more than \$300. Minimum of 7 times, depending on my expectation?

How can I measure ROI would depend on the purpose of attending the training, which would normally fall into one or a combination of the following: skills improvement, productivity increase, and behavioral change. I would at least assess myself over the next 30 days after training to see if I have achieved what I wanted, and to take stock after the 30 days to re-calibrate myself for future improvement.

If I were a supervisor or a manager of an organization I would ensure that the employee I recommend for training knows the purpose of the training, and I will follow-up with him/her for the next 30 days after the training to measure results, to ensure that the ROI is achieved.

Two questions came to mind when I reflect on the above:

1. What was the last training class (course) you attended, and what did you learn?
2. What are the three learning points which you had acquired in class that you are now applying at the workplace?

13. Results Based Learning

There are many reasons why companies send their employees for training.

Some companies would monitor the “results” of training and follow-up with the employee concerned for a period of time after the training.

Most companies would only conduct the “Happiness Survey” immediately after the training is ended.

GetSmart Results-based Training Method provides companies the opportunity to measure the results of the employee's training for 30 days after the training is completed.

Each employee at the workshop would pledge and fulfil “3 GetSmart Action Plans” by applying the knowledge and skills learned at the workshop.

The GetSmart Results-based Training Method ensures that employee training equals to employee learning, equals to productivity improvement, and better employee morale and teamwork.

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. As learners would you be happy to set “3 GetSmart Action Plans” for the next 30 after attending the workshop?
2. As Administrators (HR and/or Company Directors) for employee development do you have reasons to measure the training results? Why?

14. Facilitating Versus Lecturing

There are many ways to transfer knowledge, skills, and attitude to adult learners.

Some of the principles propounded by Malcolm Knowles the guru of adult learning are captured below:

1. Adults love to share their knowledge
2. Adults want to know WIIFM
3. Adults want to be respected
4. Adults want to participate
5. Adults want constructive feedback
6. Adults want to have “FUN” in learning
7. Adults want to be able to use what they learn immediately

GetSmart’s training methodology takes into consideration all the above principles of adult learning, including.....

- (a). Use of GetSmart Memory Cards and GetSmart Success Journals.
- (b). Games, case studies, stories, activities, music, etc. to provide “FUN” in the learning.
- (c). Process facilitation - focusing on the “Affective Domain” for better learning retention.
- (d). 5-Step Plans and Smart Goals – setting objectives, and measuring results.
- (e). GetSmart Essential Skills – focusing on enhancing productivity for “OJT”

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. As learners would you prefer to participate actively in class, or you would prefer to be “lectured upon”? Why?
2. As administrators in adult learning (HR Managers and/or Company Directors), do you need to measure the training results? Why?

15. What Makes A Good Life

An elderly millionaire was walking along a sandy beach one day and he saw a group of people having fun and enjoying themselves.

He stood there watching the group for a while and reflected on his life.

Just then a young man in his late 30's came along and they both had a wonderful conversation on the subject of what makes a good life.

They asked themselves to reflect and evaluate on the 'score of 10' for each of the following questions:

1. Do I have lots of money?
2. Do I have good health?
3. Am I mentally alert and have a positive mindset?
4. Am I knowledgeable, do I practice life-long learning?
5. Am I righteous and ethical in my dealings with my fellow beings?
6. Do I have lots of friends, and do my friends like me?
7. Do I have a happy family life, with good relationship with my wife, children, and other members of the family?
8. Do I have a good spiritual well-being, and have faith in a greater being?

The two men spent 15 minutes reflecting on the eight questions and at the end of the 15 minutes, their eyes were wet.

They both agreed that there were issues they needed to work on for a better life.

Two questions came to mind on reflection of this episode:

1. What are your scores on the eight questions?
2. What are you going to do to improve your scores?

16. GetSmart OJT and Productivity Improvement

The GetSmart courses comprising of Skill in Leading, Skill in Communication & Giving Instructions, Skill in Work Improvement, and Effective Workplace Performance and Review are designed for Managers, Supervisors, Charge-Hands, as well as for the "rank-and-file" Employees.

I have received positive feedback from many people I spoke to on the teaching methodology, and the facilitation techniques, especially with the use of picture cards.

Many had also commented that the three pillars for success of an organization, viz. (1) "Foundation for Good Human Relations" to create a supportive working environment; (2) The "5-Step Plan" for problem solving and work improvement; and (3) The "GetSmart Action Plans" for setting Smart Goals, are indeed the pre-requisites for OJT, and productivity improvement.

The course contents are easy to understand, and the points mentioned in the three pillars for success of an organization are easy to apply at the workplace.

The courseware design and framework are specially developed to accommodate training for Managers, Supervisors, as well as for the rank-and-file Employees. Just like the "working tools" in a tool box that can be used for different people, for different purposes, at different situations, with different degrees of difficulty.

Two questions which came to mind on reflection of the above:

1. What are your views on OJT?
2. What must you do to improve productivity at your workplace?

17. Adult Learning Principles

Malcolm Knowles a well-known guru in adult learning, spoke about the behaviors and expectations of adults when they attend training. He said that they like

- 1.To share their knowledge and experience
- 2.To know what's in it for them (WIIFM)
- 3.To feel that they are able to contribute in the learning process
- 4.To be respected
- 5.To enjoy active learning, small group exercises and moving around
- 6.To be able to practice what they learn
- 7.To learn at different speeds, through different methods
- 8.To receive constructive feedback
- 9.To have fun in learning

You will benefit all of the above plus acquiring the essential skills required to excel in whatever you do at work, when you attend any of the GetSmart series of training workshops comprising of Skill in Leading, Skill in Communication & Giving Instructions, Skill in Work Improvement, and Effective Workplace Performance and Review.

Two questions which came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. Do you agree with what Malcolm Knowles said about adult learning?
2. How can you contribute to the success of adult learning?

18. HR Bringing Productivity to the Fore

My friends in HR will know that the HR Departments in most organizations are regarded as “Cost Centers” rather than “Profit Centers”.

It’s time for HR professionals to make the change and to stand up and be counted.

We know that employees are our most important assets, and yet how many of us are actively helping employees to excel in whatever they do at work.

HR professionals spend time in areas of employee recruitment, performance management, employee welfare, compensation and benefits, talent management, manpower planning, staff development, etc.

How many of us in HR would be looking at improving the workplace environment by getting all employees to adopt simple practices of good human relations such as "TRIAL": Trust, Respect, Integrity, Accountability, and Leveling (Fair Play).

What about spending time with employees to develop their essential skills to excel in whatever they do at work.

I have developed a set of employee training courses comprising of - Skill in Leading, Skill in Communication and Giving Instructions, Skill in Work Improvement, and Effective Workplace Performance and Review to serve the needs of companies to enhance workplace productivity.

“My dream is to help others to excel in whatever they do. If that’s also your dream, let’s work together to make out dreams come true”

Two questions which came to mind when I reflected on the above

1. Do you believe that employees are our most important assets, and that if employees practice Trust, Respect, Integrity, Accountability, and Leveling at the workplace, they would help to create a conducive working environment for all concerned? (Explain)
2. What are the benefits of GetSmart Training on the Essential Skills?

19. Winning Habits

There are many things which many of us do “automatically” or “subconsciously” on a daily basis that we may not be aware of, e.g. Go to the toilet to ease ourselves when we wake up in the morning, brush our teeth the way we did for umpteen years, drive our cars, and many more activities/tasks which we do on “auto-pilot” mode.

These are the “habits” which we had created over the years.

Wouldn't it be nice to program “winning habits” into our daily live.

For a start you could consider these “3 habits of thoughts”:

1. Appreciate what you already have, with gratitude
2. Forgive whoever had done you “wrong”
3. Regularly visualize your “Dream” and feel that you have already achieved your dream

At the same time you could consider the following actions:

1. Smile at all the people you come into contact with
2. Frequently communicate with people you work with
3. Do the things you said that you would do - to fulfil your dream

Two questions which came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. Do you know the “Law of Attraction”?
2. What other “habits of thoughts” that you are aware of?

20. Martial Arts Coaching

An adult student asked a renowned Grand Master from another school how long it would take him to learn two new movements.

The Grand Master replied, "2 years"

The adult student said, "Shifu, you are not kidding me are you? Do you know that I have more than 10 years of experience in martial arts?"

The Grand Master replied, "In that case you need 4 years - 2 years to unlearn the bad habits; and 2 years to learn the new movements"

Two questions which came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. Do you agree that the Grand Master need more time to coach an experienced learner?
2. How can you optimize coaching long-service employees at the workplace?

21. Power of Love

I was returning to Singapore from Johor Bahru at 7.30 pm about 5 years ago and was caught in a traffic jam at the JB side of the causeway.

All four lanes were congested with cars - bumper to bumper.

I was in my Toyota Fortuner along the outermost lane (Lane 4) which was supposed to be the preferred lane for frequent commuters to Malaysia as there were 3 check-out booths at the end of Lane 4, before the exit.

Cut the long story short, I was merrily following the traffic along Lane 4 listening to my car radio, patiently trailing along the stretch of cars in front of me.

A black Honda Accord on my left caught my attention as the driver was trying to cut into our lane. He attempted on 2 occasions to move from Lane 3 to Lane 4 but to no avail.

My car was next in line and before I could say "WTF" I heard the sound of metal-knocking-metal and I soon realized that the rear fender of my car had grazed the right front side mirror of his car.

Hell broke loose and there was this man - the driver of the Honda Accord, in his fifties yelling loudly at me, swearing obscenities in Hokien which sounded like "Constant Nervous Chivas X, X, X". His voice was so loud and his car was so close to my car that I could almost smell his breath.

He was obviously furious and he waved his hands/fists at me as though he was going to strangle me. The next thing he did was to bang the front door and the back door of my car with his clenched fist as though he was breaking the car doors.

Throughout the incident, I kept my cool with a "little glow" on my face focusing on what I had learnt from my guru who taught me the 2 principles in life, to be happy. He said, and I quote:

“(1) Every-thing happens for a reason. (2) Believe that whatever happens to you is the best that can happen at the particular point of time”

Two questions which came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. What do you learn from the above?
2. How could you apply the above “principle” at the workplace?

22. Pareto Principle of 80-20

In 1906, Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto, created a mathematical formula to describe the unequal distribution of wealth in his country, observing that twenty percent of the people owned eighty percent of the wealth.

The 80/20 Rule means that in anything a few (20 percent) are vital; and many (80 percent) are trivial.

Other examples are as follows:

1. 80% of your profits come from 20% of your customers
2. 80% of the value of stocks in the warehouse comes from 20% of the items in the warehouse
3. 80% of your complaints come from 20% of your customers
4. 80% of your time at work is spent on 20% of trivialities, unless you are focused and you know how to GetSmart
5. 80% of the time you wear 20% of the shoes you have
6. 80% of the time you wear 20% of the shirts and pants you have
7. 80% of the time we eat the same 20% of the choice of fruits or food

Pareto Principle of 80-20 teaches us to better understand what the “critical few” of our Job Activities are, so that we can focus on them to enhance productivity.

Two questions which came to mind when I looked at the Pareto’s Principle:

1. Does it apply at your workplace?
2. What are the 20% of the job activities which if you can do well, would contribute to 80% of your success on the Job?

23. What is Productivity

The dictionary defines productivity as a ratio of **Output** versus **Input**.

Example: If 10 employees can assemble 10 bicycles in 1 hour.....

Productivity increases when:

1. More Output with Same Input (12 bicycles produced by 10 employees in an hour)
2. Same Output with Less Input (10 bicycles produced by 8 employees in an hour, or 10 bicycles produced by 10 employees in 45 minutes)
3. Greater Output with More Input (16 bicycles produced by 12 employees in 1 hour)

Productivity increases can also come from savings on the use of materials required to produce goods or services. (Less Input).

Example: In the past you used five pieces of rubber mats measuring 3ft x 6ft to cut 200 pairs of beach flip flops.

Today, with the new design (pattern) of flip flops, you are able to produce 200 pairs from the four pieces of rubber mats of the same size, instead of using five pieces. Therefore, you have achieved a 20% increase in productivity.

Two questions which came to mind when I reflected on this topic-

1. When was the last time you thought about increasing productivity at the workplace?
2. What can you do to increase productivity at the workplace?

24. Story of the Old Monk and the Young Monk

An old monk and a young monk were walking home from town to the monastery which was approximately three hours away. When they were about half way near the monastery they came across a young lady on the banks of a little stream.

The lady was well dressed and obviously in a rush to cross the stream to attend a function in a small village located at the other side of the stream.

She asked the monks if one of them was kind enough to give her a piggy back ride across the stream. The old monk looked at the young monk and both said nothing. They were staring at each other for a while in silence.

The old monk felt sorry for the lady and finally volunteered to carry her across on piggy back to the other side of the stream. When they reached the other side, the young lady thanked the old monk and went on her way.

The two monks continued walking their way back to the monastery. For almost an hour and a half, the old monk did not talk to the young monk.

When they finally arrived at the monastery the young monk asked the old monk: "Sifu, Sifu, can I ask you a question?" The old monk said: "Yes, what is the question?"

The young monk asked: "We learned that as monks we are not allowed to come into contact with the opposite sex, and yet you volunteered to carry the lady across".

The old monk replied: "Son, I did that more than an hour ago, and I've already forgotten about the incident. Why are you talking about it now?"

Two questions which came to mind when I reflected on the above:

1. What did you learn from this story?
2. How can you practice that at the work place?

25. Story about my Grand Daughter

About 10 years ago, I was in my roadster convertible Miata MX5 with my granddaughter Rachel. She was about 3 years old at that time and she was a very shy girl.

She was playing with the gadgets on the dash-board, and I asked her if she liked my car.

She smiled and said nothing.

I asked her the second time if she liked my car.

She again smiled at me and remained silent.

I asked her the third time if she liked my car, and she finally spoke up and said "I like my mummy's car."

When I heard that, I thought it was interesting and I said "Rachel, you are not answering my question" and I asked again the fourth time if she liked my car.

She again replied: "I like my mummy's car"

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the scenario:

1. What can you learn from a 3 years old child?
2. How can you apply the learning at the workplace?

26. Story of Farmer Tan

Farmer Tan was a pious man. He lived in a village with his wife and six children. The village was rather flood prone as it was located near the sea. Each time there was a flood he would pray for the waters to recede and within a few hours the waters would recede to the sea and the village would return to normal again.

One day a huge storm hit the village and the sky opened and it rained cats and dogs. The village was flooded again and Farmer Tan prayed and prayed for the waters to recede.

The storm hit the village for several hours and at 4 pm the entire village was flooded and the water was knee deep. At that time most of the villagers had moved to higher grounds for refuge in make-shift shelters.

Farmer Tan, his wife and their six children remained in their house to protect their belongings.

At 5 pm the flood was up to the table top, and his wife and children left for shelter on higher grounds as advised by the village elders. Farmer Tan remained at his house and hoped that the floods would subside.

At 5.15 pm one of the elders came with a rescue team in a boat and asked Farmer Tan to hop on the boat as the waters continued rising. Farmer Tan declined and the boat left.

The flood got worse and worse and Farmer Tan had to move himself from the table top, to the top of his wardrobe and finally to the roof top to keep away from the flood waters.

At about 6 p.m. whilst he was still at the top of the roof he heard someone shouting at him on a loud hailer. He looked up and saw a helicopter with another group of people from the rescue team. One of them dropped a rope to Farmer Tan so that they could pull him up to the helicopter. They shouted at him and told him that he could drown if he refused to get out of the floods. Farmer Tan declined help and he was drowned shortly thereafter.

Two questions came to mind when I read the story:

1. What did you learn from the above?
2. Would Farmer Tan have survived the floods if he had accepted help?

27. Meet me at Farrer Park MRT Station

During a recent chit-chat session on effective communication Mr. Tan shared his personal experience on what happened on an occasion when he had to meet his friend Mr. Lim at Farrer Park MRT Station.

He said that they were supposed to meet at the entrance at 7pm to walk over to City Square Mall for a meal in one of the restaurants.

Mr. Tan arrived at the MRT Station at about 6.50pm, ahead of the scheduled time of the meeting. He waited for 15 minutes at the Entrance to City Square Mall and his friend Mr. Lim had not shown up. He waited for another 15 minutes and still his friend was not there.

At about 7.30pm he decided to call Mr. Lim on the cell phone. The conversation went on as follows:

Mr. Tan: Hi Lim, I've been waiting for you at Farrer Park MRT Station since 6.50pm. Where the XXXX are you?

Mr. Lim: I've also been waiting for you here at the Farrer Park MRT Station since 7pm., and where the XXXX are you?

Mr. Tan: I'm at the entrance leading to the City Square Mall. I thought that's where we were going to have our dinner.

Mr. Lim: I'm also at the entrance in front of the Mall along Serangoon Road. I thought that was where we were supposed to meet.

Mr. Tan: I'm not familiar with the place, where the XXXX are you?

Mr. Lim: I'm sorry about the "boo-boo", please stay where you are now and I'll come around to meet you.

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the story:

1. What do you learn from the above?
2. What would you do to avoid similar problems?

28. Dealing with people of Different Generations

I was asked by an adult learner in one of the classes I conducted recently to comment on how I would deal with people of different generations, in particular the Veterans (Born 1925 – 1945); Baby Boomers (Born 1946 – 1964); Gen X (Born 1965 – 1980), and Gen Y (Born 1981 and After).

As a facilitator, I redirected the question to the class and as anticipated, there were numerous comments, views and opinions which could be classified into three categories, viz.

- (a) People who believe that there is no difference in handling the different generations;
- (b) People who believe that employees of different generations should be treated differently; and
- (c) People who believe that employees need to be managed and be told to do what you want them to do, regardless of the generation they belong.

After hearing the explanations, debates, and lively discussions, the class came to a general consensus, as follows:

1. When dealing with people, the key factor is to know the purpose of what you want from the individual, or a group of individuals. (Knowledge of the “generation” is less important).
2. People should be treated as individuals (by implication, the “generation” does matter to a certain extent)
3. The other good practices to observe in order to enhance a better working relationship with your employees are as follows:
 - (a) Tell people in advance about things that would affect them
 - (b) Give credit when due
 - (c) Frequency in communication
 - (d) Make best use of each person’s ability
 - (e) Observe the values of trust, respect, integrity, accountability, and leveling

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on this episode:

1. What are the reasons for judging people by the "generation" they belonged?
2. Do you agree with the general consensus of the class? Why?

29. AWOL Case involving a Supervisor

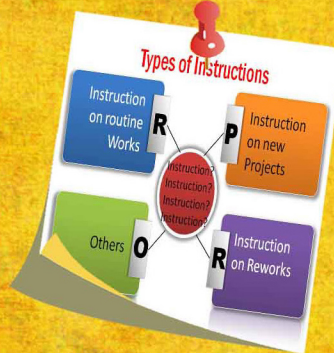
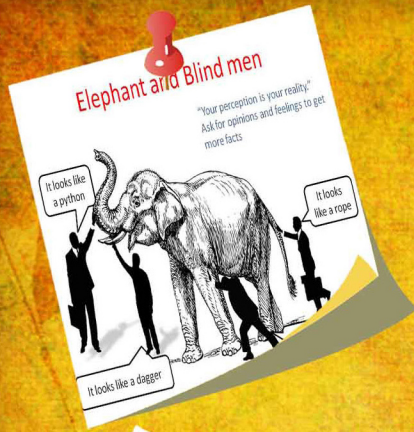
Back in the early 70's when I was the HR Manager of a manufacturing company, there was a case of an absenteeism of a Plant Supervisor. The Supervisor did not report for work for three days, and no one in his team knew of his whereabouts. His Superintendent came marching in my office early in the morning and demanded for his staff's termination of employment.

I asked the Superintendent if he had made efforts to contact the Supervisor either by himself or through his team members. I asked him if the incident was the Supervisor's first AWOL (Absent without Leave) case.

To cut the story short, I went to the company's dormitory to check if the Supervisor was around. I was surprised to find him on the ground in his room, groaning in pain complaining that he had a severe stomach ache. He appeared pale and was too weak to talk except to whisper in my ears that he was suffering from "cold turkey syndrome" because he was trying to get rid of his drug habits. He was a heroin addict for several years.

Two questions came to mind when I reflected on the Case:

1. Why did the Superintendent decide to terminate the Supervisor?
2. What would be the repercussions if the Supervisor was dismissed for his absenteeism?



PUBLISHED BY
ONG HONG HIM
Founder and Master Trainer/Facilitator
GetSmart Productivity System (GPS)

www.goldworth.com.sg

Copyrights Reserved © Ong Hong Him