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NEXT STEP

THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

When we were children, we read about the greatest discoveries and inventions as individual brilliant revelations and insights of remarkable (sometimes crazy) individuals, working on their own, such as the Eureka moment of Archimedes, the apple falling on Newton's head (though when we all we grew up we know that this one was not true), or the kite and lightning story of Benjamin Franklin. At least, for my part, the books I read, most of them, gave me this impression. We were led to believe in the individualism of these ideas.

But recently, I read two books—The Upright Thinkers by Leonard Mlodinow, which details the history of scientific development, and Against the Odds: The Remarkable Story of Risk by Peter L. Bernstein, which is about the history of risk management—and ended up getting an interesting insight from both: much of the advancement of human history was not through individual effort, but through crossovers of great ideas and remarkable people, who decided to discuss and improve on each others' concepts.

"Innovations in today's world are not results of lone geniuses toiling away in secret laboratories, but the fruits of intellectual debate and sharing of ideas."

Newton's law of universal gravitation was the result of a problem given to him by Edmund Halley (of Halley's Comet), who in turn found out about it through the works of Galileo and Copernicus. This is why Newton was known to remark: "If I had seen further than anyone, it was because I stood on the shoulder of giants". The structure of the atom was refined by Niels Bohr after an interaction with Ernest Rutherford, while Einstein and Heisenberg were working on the works of Max Plank.

Similarly, in the arena of risk management, it was the popularity of coffee and setting up of coffee houses in London that triggered the formation of financial and leasing societies and also the first insurance company. Even the reason the Renaissance changed the landscape of Europe was not because great people were born, but thanks to the printing press and better means of communication, intellectual capacities across borders got connected, and the debates led to the spawning of what we now call modern science and education.

And this is something that I want to ask the reader to ponder on. The primary and the secondary education we have had, no matter how good and up-to-date, still relies heavily on individual effort, individual skills. We designed educational curricula to train knowledgeable "individuals". We talk about role models, innovators and scientists as individual geniuses, which contradicts most of the real stories. This makes a student independent, but such a curriculum fails to instill a key skill needed in tertiary education and life thereafter: the value of group work, the value of sharing.

One of the keys to success, as I can see around me, is collaboration. Innovations in today's world are not results of lone geniuses toiling away in secret laboratories, but the fruits of intellectual debate and sharing of ideas. This message is championed by Steven Johnson in his popular book Where Good Ideas Come from: The Natural History of Innovation, and also in many messages of Elon Musk. And this is something I believe we should teach our children. Instead of just being protective about their own notes and

solutions, they should be encouraged to be in a discussion with fellow classmates. Instead of individual assignments, children should be motivated to work in groups. If we don't instill the value of group work early on, in later stages, this becomes increasingly difficult. In my career as a university lecturer, I have seen many instances where students are very good at exams and on individual assignments, but fail to perform in groups, and the excuses are pretty silly, e.g. my group mates don't listen/don't co-operate/don't pick up their phone. I believe if we can instill the importance of collaboration and free flow of information from early on, such problems will be rare.

Human science and knowledge have developed exponentially over the last decades. What we have learnt in the last 50 years is more than what we had discovered 500 years before those 50. At such crucial turns, I believe the key to intellectual growth of any youngster should not be limited to books and online self-study materials. It should expand to discussions, gatherings of the like-minded and sharing of ideas. As I keep saying, at least to anyone who will heed my words: Share and grow.

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5 STEPS TO FINDING THE JOB OF YOUR DREAMS



Being employed in a reputed organisation is the long cherished dream of every graduate. But finding a suitable position in the job market right after graduating is no less than a battle. The battle is easier for some than for others, for whom it becomes a year-long process or worse. Many of the job seekers suffer due to a lack of knowledge regarding how to present themselves to the organisations they are applying to. Strategies to up your job hunting games become indispensable in this case.

Prepare a person-job fit

Before applying to any organisation, the probable candidate must envision how he or she would fit in the prospective organisation as an individual. You must be clear about own strengths, skills and aspirations first, and only then select companies that match those elements and offer career growth opportunities in accordance with your vision.

Check out the company website

It is the job seeker's ultimate aim to get attached to a reputed company, so the candidate has to look for avenues to make it happen.

Regularly checking out the websites of potential organisations, and staying updated with its recent news and projects will help boost your confidence. Try to get in touch with the HR department of the company via email or the company's website and make relevant queries to express your interest.

Attend workshops and seminars

Various job portals arrange workshops and seminars on a range of

job search topics. These workshops are usually conducted by reputed top level officials of different multinational and local companies.

Views and news on job market are shared here, and professionals from different fields appear offer motivation and guide candidates in how to connect to their desired companies. They are also hot spots for recruitment if you play your cards right and manage to leave an impression.

Meet the head of HR

For internships especially, students can meet the HR manager of the selected company by setting up an appointment. However, managers may be busy with their own work, files, and other people, so in such a situation, it is the duty of the student to make the most of this limited time and effectively express their desire and motivations to work in the company. If you can convince the manager, he/she will give it serious thought.

Connect via social media

Sometimes a line to the resource persons can be enough to convey

your interest, and it can most definitely end up in a formal interview.

Today it is not so difficult to get in touch with people as everyone's available on one or more social network. Knocking and expressing your opinion on a recent activity of the company may extract the response you need from recruiters. Further correspondence only increases your chances of getting attached with the company.

The job hunting process requires you to be conscientiousness, to select a fitting field, to gather key company-related information, and lastly, to approach your target employer at the right time. The job market might be narrow or broad, but there will always be jobs for candidates who project themselves confidently and make smart choices.

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Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

HOW TO MAKE CONNECTIONS WHEN YOU HATE NETWORKING EVENTS

Earlier this year I went to an international HR conference with thousands of people I didn't know. Oh the irony of being a hater of networking events at possibly the biggest networking event of the season! Seated alongside successful 40-somethings, if I wasn't making uncomfortable eye-contact with other people at the table, I was trying very hard to keep up a pointless conversation with the only two people I knew there.

By the end of the afternoon, I was thoroughly embarrassed and had only made a couple of contacts. Call it a missed opportunity, but there's no point of doing something if it's going to make you miserable. So if you're a little like me, here are a few ways to work your way around networking.

Bring a networking wingperson

That co-worker who can talk to anyone, or the friend who's connected to everyone who's worth knowing on social media? Invite them to the next big scary social thing you have to attend. If you don't have one lined up, ask them if you could tag along the next time they attend a conference or meet-up.

Having someone you know around will not only make you more comfortable, but a networking wingperson can introduce you to people and start conversations for you. Choose someone who knows exactly what it is you do and can talk about your work almost as well as you can. It would also help if he/she is more established in the industry than you are or has more contacts at the event than you do.

Make the most of the event anyway

So I might have not been a 100% honest when I said I didn't know anyone at the conference. Truth is there was a bunch of professionals I'd heard of or worked with indirectly. If you can, do some research beforehand—there's bound to be a speaker list if it's an event

with panels or sessions, and if there's a Facebook event page, you can always browse the attendee list. Roughly establish what you'd like to say these people, e.g. "I really love the work you did on XYZ," or "We haven't met before, but I've heard so much about you from so-and-so", and make your move.

Get on Facebook

Being the socially awkward potato you are, Facebook is probably the best place to ask for intros. So far, every time I've needed help with a contact, my already existing connections have never failed me. And if you don't have a specific person in mind, ask your friends who they think might be able to help you out.

Ask for an interview

This one's for the anti-social bloggers and writers who would do anything to avoid networking. Interviews are great because you can prep what you want to say in advance. A friend actually landed an interview with a British pop star over email. Even the busiest corporate will feel flattered by such a request.

Once you're done, you can send your interview over to the relevant page of a newspaper (hint: Next Step), or get it published on Medium or LinkedIn Pulse if you don't have your own blog.

Host your own networking party

A tight-knit group keeps things intimate and is the best setting to meet new people. Remember your networking wingperson? Have him/her help you arrange a meal with a small group of people he/she knows, but who don't know each other. Or as The Muse advises: "invite five people and ask that they each bring one person you've never met".

AMIYA HALDER

