

Learn & Perform E-News from Palan - November 2006

Hope the month of October was a meaningful one for you. After a long time, I travelled over 50,000 miles to visit five countries. The weather was extreme heat in India to extreme cold in Canada and USA. The learning and working trip motivated me particularly because it gave me an opportunity to benchmark us with the thought leaders. We will look at the following key ideas in the November Learn & Perform E-News.

- What it takes to be great - lessons from peak performers
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What it takes to be great - lessons from peak performers

Geoffrey Colvin writing in the Fortune magazine about 'What it takes to be great', says research now shows that the lack of natural talent is irrelevant to great success. The secret to great success comes from demanding practice and hard work. He cites the example from every field: sports, business, economics and philosophy. Talent doesn't mean intelligence, motivation, or personality traits. The interesting link to us in the learn and performance field is the comment that in virtually every field of endeavour, most people learn quickly at first, then move slowly, and then stop developing completely. Yet, a few develop over the years and decades and move on to greatness. The fundamental challenge according to researchers such as Professor K. Anders Ericsson is the question WHY. The major conclusions are that peak performance only happens with practice and hard work. The tip sheet for peak performance is perfect practice with:

1. Approach each critical task with an explicit goal of getting better at it.
2. As you do the task, focus on what is happening and why you are doing it the way you are.
3. After the task, get feedback from multiple sources and act on it.
4. Build mental models of your situation on a continuous basis. Enlarge the models to include more factors.
5. Do these steps regularly and consistently.

For more details, look at the article in FORTUNE November 6th issue.

New Technologies

In the October E-News, I had described four of the ten coolest technologies described by the PC magazine - Stretchable Silicon, Chaos Computing, Unreal tele presence and Nano crystal displays. In this E-News, we will review the remaining six technologies such as:

1. **Multitouch technologies** - Though the touch screen on the computer has been on roll lately with the ATM to the PDA, it still has the frustration of being able to process with only a single touch in one place at a given time. A multi touch interface could turbo charge how we are using the PC.
2. **Transparent transistors** - HP has licensed Oregon State U electronics engineer John Wager's transparent integrated circuit. It could drive the emergence of displays everywhere from automotives to medical devices.
3. **Silicon Brains** - Scary but true. IBM in conjunction with scientists at the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne in Switzerland is working on the first complete computer based model of a human brain.
4. **Bacterial Photography** - Assistant Professor Christopher Voigt of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, and his research team at the University of California have developed a biological light sensor. They envision a toolbox of genetically engineered sensors. A bacterial camera: a microorganism that can produce energy; or a bacterium that can find a tumour, bond to it, and release a drug.
5. **Tritium Batteries** - Battery technology despite all the advances still have major issues. Now, with betabatteries, the powerhouse could provide power for years.
6. **Viral Fashion** - Researchers at MIT labs are developing fashion accessories on which patterns and accessories can change according to the wearer's whim, and fashion prints can be shared wirelessly.

The Informed Future and Super learners

The purpose of talking about the coolest technologies is to discuss how we can relate that to learning and performance at the workplace. Mark Anderson, Chairman of Future in Review and Project Inkwell are focusing on massive collaboration among students around the globe. They are evaluating how some of the new technologies will affect schools, students and the way we live and learn. A list of 167 items has been prepared by the project team to create a new generation of super learners. I will provide more information on Project Inkwell later.

YouTube and Google

YouTube founders Chad Hurley and Steve Chen sold their company to Google for US\$ 1.65 billion. For two young entrepreneurs, yet to finish college and working through capital initially raised on credit cards, it is not a bad deal by any means. Google has positioned itself very well in the event of the demise of network TV. If network TV lives, Google will still continue to prosper by extending its auction driven ad sales model into the old media.

Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness

The long flights gave me an opportunity to read several books but one that made me sit up and reflect was the book by Sri Lankan Bhante Henepola Gunaratana. The trap of unhappiness described as an endless cycle of cause and effect, attraction and aversion has been explained in a simple way with lots of examples. The eight steps focussing on understanding, thinking, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration were powerful. The message in the book resembled many leadership books out from the US recently; the only issue is this work has been published ages ago.

The original message in its authentic form seems to have been hijacked by academics and new writers who have packaged the old message into sleek best sellers. For more information on the book, please visit

www.wisdompubs.org.

Freebies for Learn & Perform E-News subscribers

The article - 'Does Employee Training & Development Lead to Attrition' has been placed in the freebies section together with many other free articles in the Freebies section of www.palan.org.

The Learn and Perform E-News subscriber base now at about 9000 and is continuing to grow; yet I would like to see it grow beyond 10,000. For the month of November, I am launching a promotion drive.

All I ask of you is to provide to my executive assistant gaik@smrhrd.com the name and email details of five of your colleagues. And, you will receive a free copy of my E-Book on **Frame Jokes & Anecdotes**. You can be assured we will only send them the E-News if we get their permission as we practice a strong no spam policy.

SMR News

1. **HRDPower™** has developed a competency model for the HR domain. For more details, please contact grace@hrdpower.com.
2. For more details of the tele seminars and the opportunity to participate in the **HRDPower™** Competency based TNA on line and on site programme, please contact krishnan@hrdpower.com.
3. The training division is launching an international **CTP Fast Track** programme for trainers, for more details please contact karen@smrhrd.com.
4. For details of **Asia HRD Congress** 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and 2008 in Vietnam, please contact khiem@hrdcongress.com.

Have a great month ahead and will be in touch in December.

Regards,
Palan