

Manila Women's Forum

A Network of Women Professionals

November 2005

Life's Simple Guidelines: *12 Ways to Be Happy*

By Julia Holz

Around 30 members and guests turned out for our October meeting at Marty Plumley's spacious apartment to learn how to be happy

from our dynamic and colorful speaker, Bing Carrion Buck.* It is easy enough to relate those 12 Guidelines here. But without Bing's jokes, expressions, and hilarious personal anecdotes as a guide, you'll be missing the laughter that went with the learning! Here is a brief summary of the highlights in Bing's own words:

Have a Sense of Purpose. Be happy and satisfied with who you are. Always be positive and be yourself. Don't let others be your judge.

Value the Most Important Relationships in Your Life. Invest time with family and friends. Don't put off doing nice things for those you love and show them you love them.

Count Your Blessings. Keep a gratitude notebook of the good things in your life to be able to remember and read them during "bad hair days." (Bing recounted here a hilarious story about her trials as one of only 6 women in the masters program at the National Defense College of the Philippines. She graduated top of the class and is now a full colonel in the army reserve!)

Respect Others. No matter if it's your boss or your maid, treat people with respect and apply the golden rule to treat others as you would want to be treated.

Savor Life's Joys. Make a mental image of things that make you happy. Think of beautiful smells, sounds, sights that can settle your mind if you

are angry or under stress. Live each day fully, then move on and don't dwell in the past.

Thank the Mentors in your Life. Don't put it off! If you're thinking nice things, write them, say them. Everyone loves to be acknowledged!

Learn to Forgive. Don't keep grudges. Fight then forget about it and have great sex. Don't keep anger inside. Give people a second chance (but not a 3rd 'cause we're not stupid!)

Love Yourself. Negativity is what kills you. Try to be positive. Don't take life too seriously. Laugh a lot and never, NEVER, burn bridges behind you! The world is too small.

Choose Your Life Mate Carefully. Even if you are devastated by a bad first marriage (as I was), do a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), and move on!

Sustain a Lifelong Love for Learning. Read, read, read. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask others what you don't know.

Be True to Yourself. Have integrity and strong core values. Stick to your convictions. If there's something someone does or says that troubles you, say it, share it. Don't gossip and talk behind people's backs.

Develop a Sense of Solitude. Find a corner to "fill back in" what you've given of yourself to others. Time for yourself. Anything from 10 minutes to 2 hours a day.

In summary, Bing left us with the thought that by loving and living life fully, being positive, laughing, dancing, and sharing this with others, we end up transforming others' lives. "That is a wonderful legacy, a way to live forever!" Thanks, Bing! □



*Bing's corporate career spanned 20 years, starting with San Miguel Corporation in public relations, then as Sales and Marketing Director of the Peninsula Hotel, and finally as the first woman Vice President of Coca-Philippines. She is now the author of 10 books, including "Wives are Lovers Too," and president and publisher of Seagull Philippines, Inc. She will shortly be publishing the 12 guidelines as a book.

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Next MWF Meeting

When: 6:30 p.m., Monday November 14, 2005.

What: Jocelyn Reyes-Pick, Executive Vice President for Profiles Asia Pacific, will speak about a recent project to help high school students make the right decision in their career choice. It is the first nationwide project to use customized assessment tests for career guidance to facilitate training and eventual absorption of public and private high school graduates into the labor market.

Where: Cecilia Leung's home, 25 McKinley Road, Makati
Bring: Something to share for the pot-luck dinner.

December meeting: 6:30 p.m., Monday December 5, 2005

Voice of the Chair

By Lisa Kircher Lumbao



Who Wants to be an Employer of Choice

By Jocelyn R. Pick

Even as we complain as never before about the difficulty of attracting and retaining the sort of people essential to our organizations' success, there are some employers who seem able to do so as easily as they ever did. What's the secret of these "Employers of Choice"?

It's not really a secret as such, they simply know what's important to their prospective and current employees and they work hard to ensure they provide it.

Before you can look at the whole area of attracting and retaining people in any realistic manner you must first look at the dark side - at what drives people from their jobs. Profiles International recently completed a survey on why people leave their jobs. The results were fascinating. The following were the six main reasons cited by the respondents for their job change.

- * Bored with the job
- * Inadequate salary & benefits
- * Limited opportunities for advancement
- * No recognition
- * Unhappy with management and the way they managed
- * Other reasons

Before we reveal relative importance of each give yourself a test. Consider which ones you'd expect would get the largest percentage hit rate. In other words, if you wanted to retain your people which ones would you address first? When you've thought about it turn to the text box at the end of this article and see how you fared before you carry on reading the rest of the article.

Welcome back. Were you surprised? Most employers are. The message is

simple - if you want to attract and retain your key people these are the key items for consideration.

Follow these six steps and you too could become an Employer of Choice:

Step 1: Look at Your Managers

The numbers don't lie. People leave people, not jobs. Look at the results - 30% of people didn't leave their jobs - they left their managers. Poor managers can completely cancel out the positive effects of your heavy investment in recruitment advertising and PR, in killer remuneration packages, in your outstanding share option scheme, and all of the other good things you do to attract and retain the right people. Your HR people sweat blood to bring in a sufficient number of these right people and, in 30% of cases, poor managers shred them and send them back out of the company before you've even recovered the cost of hiring them. Crazy.

So what do you do? First, start measuring your staff turnover by manager - find out where the real problems are. It'll frighten but enlighten you. Unless you know which managers are haemorrhaging people you can't do anything about it. To help these managers improve their game you first have to identify them.

Second, review all of your managers in terms of their leadership and management skills - that way you'll find out what exactly is driving your people away. Use 360 Degree Feedback to give each manager, his/her boss, his/her direct reports, and his/her fellow managers an opportunity to provide feedback on what they are doing well - and what they could do better. Then act upon what you discover. Provide training, coaching and support to those managers who struggle to manage their people in a way that encourages productivity and retention.

Good management is key to good retention.

Step 2: Create a Recognition Culture

25% of all people leaving their jobs do so because they don't get sufficient recognition for the contribution they make. Fix this or learn to live with the attrition. Task your managers with the responsibility for seeking out the many ways in which their people perform above and beyond the call of duty. Have them consciously seek out opportunities for positive recognition. Institute award schemes for exemplary performance and give everyone an

opportunity to bask in the glow of positive recognition for a job well done. But be aware that a recognition culture cannot be created from nothing - it requires a healthy working environment to thrive.

Step 3: Create a Healthy Working Environment

To encourage development of a genuine recognition culture you'll need to create a healthy working environment. Not healthy in the sense of lots of fresh air and few toxic chemicals knocking around (although that's always a good start), but a healthy psychological working environment - one where providing recognition for exemplary performance seems normal.

There are a number of key elements in achieving this. First: Open Up Communications. There are too many old economy attitudes abroad in our businesses. In the old economy scarcity was the driving force - information was power, and those that had information hoarded it and kept it scarce. That way they amassed great power, privilege and wealth. Look around, the world has changed dramatically. Our modern economy is based on abundance - those who prosper are those who share information with everyone and anyone who can make use of it effectively. This is the information age, and any environment where the workforce is not tapped in to all that's going on in their organisations is toxic. Suspicion, mistrust and resentment grow - and key people go.

Let all of your people know where the organisation is going, how it plans to get there; how their jobs play a part in the grand scheme of things; and why they are key to your success. Their contribution is just as valuable as the CEO's, and they know it. Let them know that you know it too. Spread information liberally throughout your organisation; give your people an "I'm on the inside!" feeling - it's hard to leave something that has you on the inside.

Next Develop an Attitude of Cooperation. Give and take is the order of the day. Be prepared to consider anything that makes it easier and more practical to work for you than anyone else. Look at flexible hours, compassionate leave, sabbaticals, teleworking, crèche facilities - anything you can afford to do that shows that you are prepared to meet your people half way (or more) in balancing their

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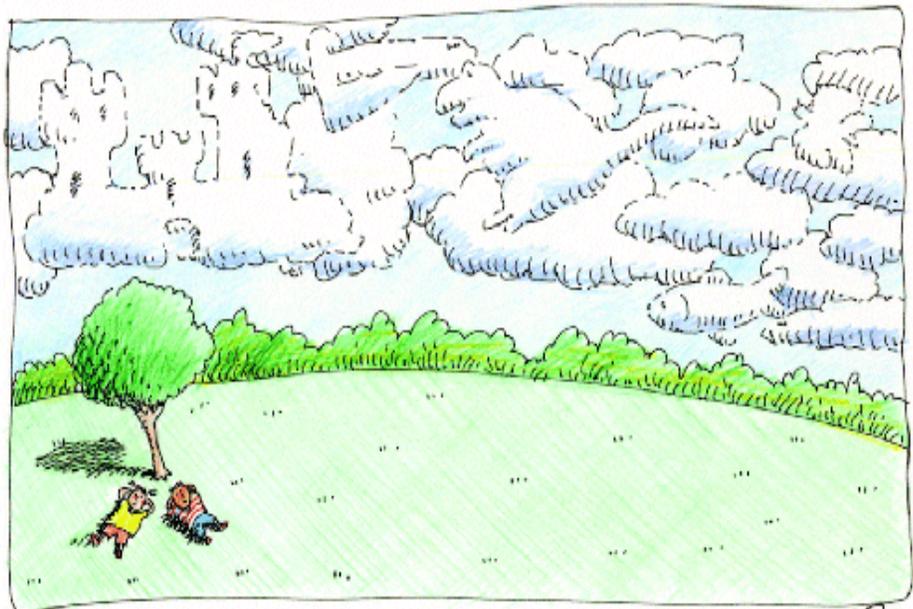
Speaking of ways
to be happy....
Remember when happiness
was simply lying down on
the grass,
under a
tree, and
looking at
the
clouds?



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Selected and Edited
by Beulah Pedregosa Taguiwalo



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(*Who Wants...* From page 2)
work / personal life commitments.

Finally, Develop an Atmosphere of Trust. If you want people to trust you (with their jobs, their careers, their development - their lives) then you have to trust them. Create an atmosphere where management automatically expect the best of their teams - they'll respond. Give people a good reputation to live up to - they won't let you down. This is one of the key sources of recognition - no one is more flattered than when they are trusted implicitly.

Step 4: Create an atmosphere of continual self-improvement

20% of people leave their jobs because they feel that they're not getting sufficient advancement to retain them. Not surprising, really. Our new flat structured organisations don't have the dizzying promotional heights that previous generations of workers could aspire to scaling. So there's really nothing we can do about this point unless we still have an old fashion multi-layer hierarchical organisation, right?

No! That thinking is about as wrong as you can get. The modern jobseeker wants the opportunity to develop themselves to be all that they possibly can be - to continually polish their skills, abilities and experience so that their potential market value continually rises - and if they can do this without the uncertainty of job-hopping then so much the better. So you don't necessarily have to have multiple

promotional opportunities to meet this demand. What you need is a clear ongoing development path - a way that each and every one of your people can advance their skills and value so that they become all that they can be. This means heavy investment in training and development.

Create an atmosphere of continual self-development - give everyone access to any training that will enhance their skills, their value, and their self-esteem. Don't be boxed in to limiting the training available to those skills specific to an individual's current job. Remember that you are not simply training for job effectiveness but also offering your people the development opportunities that make them feel good enough about the pace of their personal advancement that they don't feel the need to seek our greener grass elsewhere. Invest heavily in training and development and then actively encourage your people to take advantage of your programmes. Provide them with the means for success - train them on company time, give them study leave, have senior managers coach and support them. Engage them in their own ongoing, longer-term development. Show them how they can get all of this development from within your organisation; focus their minds on genuine development goals that extend far beyond the availability of the next recruitment supplement. This creates truly compelling and self-serving reasons to stay.

Well done! If you implement these first four steps then you've already eliminated 75% of the reasons that

people leave their jobs, and we haven't even mentioned money yet!

Step 5: Put your best foot forward

What about the 15% who leave for more money? Will more recognition, better management, and opportunities for continual self-development retain them? In many cases, yes (at least for a time). Sadly, however, you still have to pay the market rate or better to stay in the game. But when and how you pay this level is key.

If you're reading this article chances are that you're sitting down. Good. Because the next suggestion can topple some old style thinkers. When it comes to remuneration put your best foot forward immediately. Pay your people as much salary, give them as many benefits as you can afford - and do it from day one.

Abandon the "what can I get her for?" thinking in favour of "how much is this position worth to me, and what can I afford to pay?" Then pay it. Let your people know that this is what you're doing, and you need their support and effort to help you maintain a situation where you can continue to do this in the long term - that you need them to engage with you in making the organisation successful.

Think about it sensibly, if you pare back the package at offer time by the 10 or 15% you can get away with, will this 10/15% be enough to retain these people in the face of an offer from another employer? Most likely not - it'll be too little, too late. So put your best

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foot forward - and let them know. Let everyone know that you are paying absolutely as much as you can and that, to continue to do so, everyone will have to pull together as a team to generate the productivity necessary for the organisation's success. We all respond to fair treatment.

Now, don't misunderstand the advice - pay as much as you can, not more than you can. Pay more than you can afford and you'll just become employer road kill. Know what each job is worth, and pay it early.

Step 6: Match People to Jobs

Having followed 360,000 people through their careers over a twenty-year period a major study by Harvard Business Review demonstrated that a key ingredient in retaining people is ensuring that they are matched to their jobs in terms of their abilities, interests, and personalities. They found that when you put people in jobs where the demands of the job matched their own abilities; where the stimulation offered by the job matched their particular interests, and where the cultural demands of the position matched their personalities, staff turnover went down dramatically, and productivity went up dramatically.

Use psychometric tools to determine the requirements of each of your positions in terms of abilities, interests and personality, and then use this information to match your jobs to people who will excel in them. Gut feeling cannot do this assessment for you - it needs to be undertaken using

properly validated tools designed for this purpose. Once you know what each job requires then you can more effectively match people to their jobs, providing any training, support, or coaching necessary for them to be successful. Put the right person in the right job and you eliminate a large amount of the 5% that leave simply because they "are bored with the job".

Sadly, there is no quick, easy and inexpensive "silver bullet" that will help you to win the war for quality people. But apply these six sensible steps and you eliminate over 95% of the reasons people defect - putting yourself well on track to be one of that envied class - the Employer of Choice.

How did you do? The study found that of the job leavers surveyed:

- * 30% were unhappy with management and the way they managed
- * 25% felt that got no recognition for good work
- * 20% complained of limited opportunities for advancement
- * 15% cited inadequate salary & benefits (low, isn't it?)
- * 5% were bored with the job
- * 5% cited other reasons (retirement, career change, sabbatical, travel)

So, if you want to attract and retain the people essential to your success, these are the key factors you have to consider - and the priorities are abundantly clear. Money, for example, is important - but not nearly as important as most employers seem to believe.

Return to where you were in the article to see what you can do to make practical use of this insight. ▢

About Jocelyn Reyes, The Author - Jocelyn Reyes is the Executive Director of Profiles Asia Pacific and a consultant for the Department of Education (DepEd), the University of Southern California (USC) and other corporations. She holds an MBA in International Business from the USC Marshall School of Business. She worked at the Presidential Management Staff and was a Manager at Philippine Ports Authority. You can contact her at 02 6378770 or email at jocelynr@usc.edu or at jocelynr@profilesasiapacific.com

The Manila Women's Forum

The Manila Women's Forum (MWF) is a cross-cultural network for women. It provides opportunities to build friendships, to talk to women of various cultures, and to share information about resources. Our meetings are intended to provide intellectual stimulation and lead to personal and professional development. All women are welcome to join. The current officers are **Lisa Lumbao**, Chair, Programs, Treasurer, and Newsletter. **Susan Nishihira**, Programs. **Beaulah P. Taguiwalo**, Newsletter, Website.

Cost of membership is P300 per year. Members receive a copy of the current mailing list in addition to the newsletter, which is also sent to non-members. A contribution is collected at each monthly meeting: P20 for members, and P40 for non-members. Please contact Lisa Lumbao at Tel. 812-3932, Tel/Fax 813-0168, or at lumbao@mozcom.com for more information about MWF.

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MWF Newsletter
c/o Lisa Kircher Lumbao
61 Cosmopolitan Condominium
134 Valero St., Salcedo Village
Makati City 1227