

[THE ART OF CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT]

In today's high-tech, fast-paced world there is a new truth. If you're not getting better, you're getting worse. This applies to people and businesses, no matter how big or small.

WORK WISE - A fortnightly column by Rahul Kapoor

Constantly updating your skills, your equipment, your office, and your team are vital if you want to stay in business because the guy down the street is improving, upgrading and training. Yes, it could be a while before your clients find out, but it won't be long. What this simply means is that you have to be on your toes and never get complacent and sit on the glory of past successes. Japan taught to the world a very powerful technique called Kaizen taken from words 'Kai' means continuous and 'Zen' means improvement. Commit yourself to constant improvement and you will never have a day of regret in life.

A job well done

The most defining moment of any task is when you get appreciated by people for your efforts. A feeling of satisfaction seeps in giving you that boost required to achieve more. Some people get motivated and go on to set higher benchmarks and keep growing, where as some get complacent about their work and begin to take success for granted.

One must be reminded that - past performance is no guarantee for future success. There are many reasons for that:

- a. The rules of the game may change
- b. A winning formula may have low repeat value
- c. Success is always in the context of time, space and scale

Thus, I suggest that one must keep learning from every experience. Postmortem your work when you succeed and when you fail. Find out what led you to success or why you failed. These findings will help you understand the science behind your performance. Never get complacent because it will slow down your learning curve and your urge to learn new things will diminish leading you to an ordinary life.

Never compromise

Some times knowing that you are in the last stage of a job and you learn a better way to do it without affecting the deadline or the cost, and you know that by implementing these ideas you will certainly improve the quality of your service, the only thing it needs is a little hard work, some extra time and effort on your end to see the job through, what would you do?

Perhaps, some people would get lazy and convince themselves that they will implement this learning on the next project, some will ignore the scope of improvement and there will be some who will go all out and get the job done by making personal sacrifices.

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JRD TATA once said "one must forever strive for excellence or even perfection, in any task however small and never be satisfied with second best." I believe 'good is not good, if better exists and the best is possible' so go ahead and make those simple sacrifices now and you will soon reap the benefits of it in the time to come. Never ever go for second best, if best is possible.

Things are imperfect?

That's not a problem. It is an opportunity. Meeting imperfections with small changes is the key to success. Small changes on a day to day basis add up to radical changes over a period of time.

Have a true desire for improvement to tackle whatever problems that you may have. Work on process improvement instead of firefighting small problems here and there. That's what will make a huge difference in the long run.

Technology and you

Technology is invading every industry, whether you are a doctor, engineer, teacher or a businessman. You must be quick in adapting to technology. The more you avoid addressing this issue the more obsolete you will become. Even if you do not agree with the latest techniques or gadgets in your business, your team needs to know how to handle questions about them. So take time once a month to discuss what's out there, what's worth trying and what's worth buying. Then take actions accordingly.

Parting thoughts

Get hooked on to an attitude of constant improvement both at work place and in personal life. Everyday strive to learn a little more than what you did the previous day, work on improving every relationship and learn the secrets of true happiness. This way you will stay refreshed in your thoughts and your mind will never age.