

JUICY WORK NEWS

Updates from The Learning Advantage

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How Networking Can Help You Out of a Hole

Some organizations seem to think all jobs are round holes and all their employees are round pegs.

This attitude makes it easy for the organization to move people around wherever their needs are without bothering to assess interest or fit. However, some employees are not round pegs; they are unique square pegs with specialized skills and abilities. When they are driven into round holes, their sharp edges are worn down and their special abilities are clipped, making them unhappy and underutilized.

As a coach, I help people assess the cost of having their square peg-ness smashed into round holes. Some see it as a temporary thing, expecting that over time they can move closer to work they like and are good at. For others, the pain of the bad fit is more than they can tolerate. For those clients, I help them clarify what they are good at and love to do. When they can easily articulate their gifts and the impact of that contribution, I suggest they start networking and meet people who can help them identify opportunities that might be a better fit. It may take a while to find the right fit so the more they can make the process enjoyable, the better.

Some people face networking with trepidation. I remind them that people usually love to help



Make the Journey the Reward

For some reason, we tend to evaluate a new skill after taking just a few cracks at it. That's silly of course: when have we ever gotten good at something in only a few attempts? Our inner critic does us no favors by expecting immediate mastery and discouraging continued practicing when we don't realize the rewards we expected.

Think about all the things you have learned in your lifetime. From the basics like reading, writing, and riding a bike to more advanced skills like driving, dancing, running spreadsheets, and singing. When an activity is enjoyable, we may not insist on a perfect outcome with each attempt.

Learning with others can also make the process more fun. I remember the first time I attended a "paint night" with friends. We had so much fun with the experience, and

others and if they ask questions that engage others, it will be interesting at least and could lead to new career opportunities. Asking people how they found their career encourages them to talk about the process they used, offering interesting and helpful information. By being an attentive and curious listener, you can start to build a relationship.

Rather than thinking of networking as a stressful attempt to sell yourself, think of meeting with people as a positive learning opportunity: you are getting to know the other person, learning about their career trajectory, hearing about their role and their company. Trust that by expressing your interest in others, they will want to know more about you. Remember that networking and relationship building are long-term processes. You wouldn't begin with "Hi, my name is ____ and I need a new job." Some of the relationships I build through networking have led to great work and projects. The goal was to build some friendships, and whether it led to work or not, the friendships remain rewarding.

Some clients find that after networking and considering other options, they conclude that the job they have is actually better than they realized. The process gave them more clarity about what they wanted. By exploring without expectations of a specific result, you may be surprised by what you might find.



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the quality of our paintings was less important.

None of us expected to produce masterpieces. Some of us were eager to attend another paint night to continue practicing our skill.



Submit your ideas for subjects for Sandy to: Sandy@learningadvantageinc.com



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