

JUICY WORK NEWS

Updates from The Learning Advantage

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Are You an Expert, Dabbler, or Generalist?

What is the difference in an expert, a dabbler, and someone whose desire to learn has resulted in a generalized skill set?

A friend of mine serves as an expert witness at trials. He told me that being an expert witness requires him to maintain a thorough subject matter knowledge and participate in trials several times a month so he can answer in-depth questions quickly, clearly, and confidently. In his case being an expert is essential; if he only dabbled, he could put a case at risk.

Some people like to go deep when they're assigned a role. For example, they may love coding and want to learn everything about it. But at some point, their career can stall when they achieve the highest coding position below manager. Then they must decide if they want to be an expert in coding or develop new skills that will allow them to manage coders.

Some organizations have formal programs that encourage dabbling by allowing managers to rotate through different roles. An HR manager might rotate into a marketing function for a year or take on project management responsibilities on a technical team. These programs allow employees to experience the many facets of the organization, giving them insights that can benefit the organization as a whole.



Don't Believe Everything You Hear

What makes people believe negative things they hear about others? When I hear someone spreading harmful stories about someone else, I tend to question their motives. And it makes me distrust that person and wonder what they are saying about me.

Too many careers have been damaged by people eagerly sharing false rumors — or true accounts — intended to make someone else look bad. The maligned person, understandably wanting to correct the record, finds it difficult to disprove a negative, and they come off looking defensive and weak.

Instead of stirring the pot, I try to see the best in people and realize that we all make mistakes. I extend grace when people mess up.

As a manager, if someone comes to me bad-mouthing a

Other people are constantly curious, eager to learn a lot about many different things. As a generalist, their skills accumulate over time and their varied experience allows them to lead complex projects. They often have a number of experts working for them, and they enjoy learning from their expertise. A generalist's talent is in blending different skills to complete a task.

Where you are in your career can affect whether you're currently an expert, dabbler, or generalist. And where you want to take your career can determine whether you should transition from one role to another. The key is to recognize that each choice has benefits and liabilities and each can be suitable at different times in your career.



colleague, I refuse to get pulled into a he-said/she-said spat and be expected to take a position without hearing all sides of the story. I have both parties meet with me to surface issues and resolve problems. I find that when people have to confront the person they are talking about face to face, they realize they aren't going to get anywhere..

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