



MINORITIES & SUCCESS

Spring 2017

**Diversity -Smart Business Practice
Managing Change
The Last Six Weeks of School**

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Diversity - Smart Business Practice

By: Emer Lavin

What is the difference between equal employment opportunity and affirmative action programmes on the one hand and diversity on the other? What are the benefits for business in embracing Diversity?

The equality perspective is about fairness and justice and is based upon the belief that there should be equal access for all regardless of biological or cultural background. In some countries there are already regulations and requirements that

minorities should be hired in organisations. Kanter said in 1977 that the structures of the organisations are believed to be of utmost importance to the advancement of minorities. Often people from a minority background find it difficult to get promoted within organisations because they lack network contacts and they generally lack the same level of opportunity as their co-workers. They may also face prejudice and negative stereotypes.

Diversity on the other hand is about

maximum utilisation of resources within an organisation regardless of gender, age or ethnicity. A larger reservoir with bright and motivated people will make society and organisations function better (Adler 1986). The primary goal is not equal opportunity but the organisation's possibility of using diversity in relation to how it markets itself and its service.

The meritocracy perspective puts forward the theory that

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organisations should mirror their surroundings in order to get access to different markets, by recruiting more broadly. Unlike the equal opportunity perspective which centres around justice, the meritocratic perspective is driven by a profits and efficiency motive. Ethnicity does not matter, the full utilisation of human resources regardless of background does. This perspective does not rely on legislation to take care of patterns of discrimination but assumes instead that organisations have much to gain by recruiting competent individuals from different genders, ages, races etc.

Wrench put it thus in 2002 “diversity is a positive concept signalling efficiency and profits while equality and affirmative actions associate with fairness and costs”. Diversity represents smart business practice because of the changing composition of people in post-industrial societies where the majority will soon be older people and we will rely more on immigrants to do these jobs. Diversity is also good for image reasons.

Another argument in favour of diversity is the special contribution perspective ie different others might be able to contribute to organisations with their different values, experiences, ways of thinking. For example women have different socialisation and experiences and they have the potential of making important contributions to the workplace. Women could become the necessary oil to make organisations function better (Billing and Alvesson 1989). This reasoning could also be applied to ethnic minorities and older people.

Lastly there is the alternative values perspective which highlights the substantial difference between women and men. The key assumption is that in general women and men do not share the same interests, priorities and basic attitudes to life. Traditionally women have been socialised to live by the values of the private sphere, to be nurturing, to serve others, to be emotional etc., whereas men have been socialised to live by the values of the public sphere, to deny vulnerability, to compete, to take risks etc. Women are believed to be marginalised in a capitalist society based upon masculine values (Yvonne due Billing and Elisabeth Sundin - From Managing Equality to Managing Diversity A Critical Scandinavian Perspective on Gender and Workplace Diversity). If different ethnic groups are constructed (stereotypically) as being culturally different and this alternative culture is also seen as in opposition to the dominant masculinity they will “suffer” the same exclusion problems as women. Whose values are the important values?

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Fast Track International Market Entry Through Government Contracting

By: Gloria Berthold Larkin

Opening doors to international business opportunities can work well for businesses who are currently involved in federal government contracting. The complications involved in selling products or services internationally can be lessened if the business person can leverage current relationships to help open the doors to world-wide business opportunities with customers who know and trust the vendor.

While a business person may take many paths to the international

market, if you are currently involved in or pursuing federal contracts in the “Continental United States” (CONUS), let’s take a look at how you can leverage the existing relationships you are developing in this market to help open doors to international opportunities, known in the federal market as “Other than the Continental United States” or OCONUS.

Being a federal contractor has distinct advantages for businesses looking to enter the international market: a ready-made market with both federal civilian agencies and the Department of

Defense, an active referral base with current federal customers, and an experienced group of potential prime contractors and teaming partners.

In a recent report to the Small Business Administration, Chad Moutray of the SBA’s Office of Advocacy stated that “...239,287 small businesses are known to have been involved in the export business in 2006, the most recent year that data by firm size was reported by the U.S.

Census Bureau. These companies constituted 97.3 percent of all known

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exporters, and they engaged in \$260 billion in known export transactions-28.9 percent of the total.”

These figures can be heartening to small business owners who want to enter the world of international business. But if you are less than enthused about learning new policies, procedures and languages, a savvy business person may possibly reduce the learning curve and market entry timeline by leveraging existing relationships with current federal customers, current prime contractor and existing teaming partners in the federal contracting market.

International Business: You as a Prime Contractor

Many federal agencies offer international business opportunities including the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Department of State, and of course, the Department of Defense.

A quick keyword search of “OCONUS” (meaning “other than the continental United States”) in the federal government’s online bidding system, FedBizOpps

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(www.fbo.gov) lists more than 270 bidding opportunities including everything from a wide range of products to services such as administrative assistance, IT consulting, video recording, training and engineering. Values of these opportunities range from \$25,000 to hundreds of millions of dollars, all with a client that is bound by law to pay their bills: the U.S. Federal Government.

Many of these opportunities are also in the “Sources Sought” process where the contracting officers are actively performing market research to identify small businesses that are capable of providing the specific product and services required. Why would this be an advantage to you if you are a small business owner? You may think of it as reducing the numbers of competitors. How? A recent check of the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) where all government

contractors must register, showed that out of 596,239 active large and small business registrants, only 11,126 small businesses are listed as exporters of products or services. This is a much smaller competitor pool than the 239,287 small exporting businesses mentioned earlier.

When you also take into account that only a small portion of those businesses listed in CCR will see and be interested in the same international opportunity that you want to pursue, the pool becomes much smaller; in some cases, just a handful of businesses will participate in the full bidding process.

Because each opportunity listed in FedBizOpps has an “Interested Party” registration capability, you can register your firm and also check to see the registered firms and contact them to build relationships and possible teaming or subcontracting

opportunities.

Your Firm as an International Business Subcontractor

Because the international opportunities with the federal government can be massive and very complex, your best chance of participating may be as a subcontractor instead of a prime contractor.

The prime contractor bears a huge burden in being 100% responsible for every aspect of the contract, from the “back-office” issues involving legal, human resource and accounting, as well as the services and products comprising the entire Statement of Work. In a multi-million dollar contract, this can be overwhelming to a small business, especially one that is inexperienced in the international market.

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Instead of tackling the entire contract, a small business person may find the opportunity as a subcontractor much more viable, where he is responsible for just his “slice” of the work, leaving the rest of the burden to the prime contractor. This strategy also gives the small business the opportunity to learn the processes and procedures involved in producing international work, and will build the past performance necessary to help win future contracts. Prime contractors are also required to meet small business subcontracting goals with all federal contracts, including international work, thereby opening doors to you as a potential subcontractor.

Your Firm as an International Business Teaming Partner

The “Source Sought” process

mentioned earlier is a market research process that the government uses to determine if there are capable small businesses available and interested in performing the work. If two or more capable small businesses respond, then the contracting officer will “set-aside” the contract for small business where a small business must be the prime, or in the case of a team, the team lead.

These opportunities may be multi-million dollar opportunities that would be virtually impossible for one small business to perform alone. The business person may be unable to financially support the up-front costs involved in performing the contract before the payments begin, or she may not have the entire range of expertise needed in her existing staff structure. In these cases, the small business may team up with other small or large businesses to win and perform the contract.

The teaming process is widely accepted in the federal government market, and many small businesses have used this strategy to pursue and win contracts that help catapult them into the international marketplace.

You now have additional options in breaking into or becoming more successful in the international market if you are involved in government contracting. If this is an attractive strategy for you in growing your business, check the agencies and resources noted here for assistance.

Federal Agencies Offering International Trade Assistance

U.S. Department of Commerce

A “must” starting point for international trade information and statistics.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

The USDA operates a wide range of national and international programs dealing with food and food safety, farming, regulatory programs and natural resources.

U.S. Department of State

DOS purchases in excess of \$2 billion annually in goods and services to support its global mission of creating a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community.

U.S. Department of Treasury/Office of Foreign Assets Control

The Office of Foreign Assets Control administers and enforces economic and trade sanctions based on U.S. foreign policy and national security goals.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

CBP is one of the Department of Homeland Security's largest and most complex components, with a priority mission of keeping terrorists and their weapons out of the U.S. It also has a responsibility for securing and facilitating trade and travel while enforcing hundreds of U.S. regulations, including immigration and drug laws

International Trade Administration

The ITA works to improve the global business environment and helps U.S. organization compete at home and abroad.

U.S. Trade and Development Agency

The USTDA assists U.S. companies pursue overseas business opportunities.

Trade Compliance Center

The TCC is your one-stop shop for getting U.S. government assistance in resolving the trade barriers or unfair situations you encounter in foreign markets.

United States International Trade Commission

The USITC is an independent federal agency that provides objective trade expertise to both the legislative and executive branches of government, determines the impact of imports on U.S. industries, and directs actions

against certain unfair trade practices, such as patent, trademark, and copyright infringement.

Overseas Private Investment Corporation

The OPIC is an independent U.S. Government agency that sells investment services to assist U.S. companies investing in some 140 emerging economies around the world.

United States Trade Representative

The USTR is responsible for developing and coordinating U.S. international trade and commodity and trade-related investment policy.

U.S. Patent Office: International Intellectual Property

The USPTO is for those who wish to seek protection for their intellectual property beyond the borders of the United States of America.

Export-Import Bank of the United States

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10 Tips For Companies That Truly Value The Impact Of Their People

By: Kevin Dee

Through observing business people who have been successful, and how they achieved their success, I have concluded that there are a number of factors that must be present for business success to occur. As I like to keep things simple, these success factors can be condensed into a formula. It is:

Success = Startup Business Person + Product/Service + Market

Let us look at this formula in a little more detail. Firstly, what is success?

The definition of success depends on what you want to get out of the venture, that is, what your goals are. Business success usually means creating a viable entity (business) that returns its investment and earns a profit.

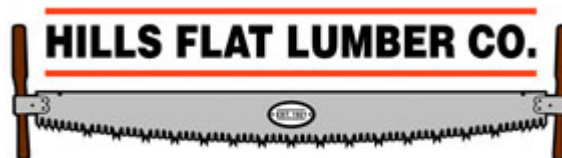
Appropriate and realistic goals include to be challenged, to achieve, and to build something good. For example, your definition of success could be to earn \$100,000 a year from your home business so that you can replace your full time job income.

The most crucial element of the above formula is the “Startup Business Person”. This element decides all the others.

Ultimately, a successful startup business person is someone who opens, manages and runs a successful startup business and can repeat the process. This is someone who has accepted the responsibility and learned how the job is done.

Successful startup business people usually always start small and grow

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the business. They do not have too many irons in the fire at once so that their efforts are not diffused. They give it everything they have and believe that hard work counts. They try repeatedly until they achieve the success they are looking for. Moreover, most of all, they possess a positive mental attitude.

They have learned to emulate success. Do you know what emulate means? To emulate means to attempt to equal or surpass. In other words, if you were to attempt to emulate someone else's success, you would imitate them and as you gained further knowledge and skill, you would attempt to do better than them. Remember that emulation takes things one step further than imitate.

The next part of the formula is "Product/Service". Without something to sell, there can be no business. Generally, the product or service needs to be of a high quality. It also needs to be something that people are prepared to pay for.

The last component of the formula is "Market". A successful business person knows who their market is and how to reach it in the most cost effective manner. The market is defined as the people who want and are prepared to pay for the product or service.

I would now like to run through with you what I consider are the basic principles of home, small or online business success.

Believe in Your Product or Service

First, you need to believe in your product or service. If you do not believe in it, you will have a great deal of difficulty selling your product or service to other people. You also need to have confidence in your ability to provide and promote your product or service. An old saying sums this up best: "All things are possible to he who believes".

Aptitude for the Business

Secondly, you need to have an aptitude for the business. You will also need the motivation to acquire at the very least basic skills and experience before you start your business. If you were to set yourself up as a home electrician but did not have any skills or training in this area, then you will almost certainly fail. However, if you are employed as a bookkeeper and you enjoy the job, then

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setting up your own bookkeeping service would be a sensible choice with a greater chance of success.

Be Responsible

Thirdly, you need to be responsible to your customers. This is achieved by only making commitments you can keep and by not engaging in misleading or dishonest advertising. If you want to build long term success in your home business, then you need to develop long term satisfied customers. When their needs are being satisfied, customers are at their happiest.

Aim for High Quality

The next principle is that you need to have a high quality product or service. This will be your best advertisement. Inferior quality products usually generate poor customer satisfaction. A dissatisfied customer can be very dangerous for your business. Usually they tell on average about fourteen other people who will then be disinclined to buy your product or service based on the experience of that one dissatisfied person. Therefore, always aim for a top quality product or service.

Make a Profit

However, it is not enough to have a top quality product or service. You also need to have a product or service that will generate enough income to cover all your business expenses and give you a satisfactory wage. A friend of mine once said that business is only about two things: satisfying customers and making a profit. A simple statement but very true.

Sufficient Startup Capital

You also need to have access to enough cash to set up and run your business, and enough income to meet your private expenses during the startup phase. A major problem with many home and small businesses is that they fail to have enough money available to ensure their success. There is nothing more discouraging than having a great idea, getting it started on a shoestring, not being

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able to expand due to cash shortages and seeing a competitor come along and steal your market.

Start Small

Another fundamental principle of home business success is that you start small. This will enable you to minimize your overheads until you are confident of your success in the marketplace. For many of you, this would mean starting part-time while retaining your full-time income source. When you can, expand your business into a full-time venture. This is a great way of minimizing the risk of failure.

Be Well Organized

Successful home businesses are well organized. They have a system for keeping track of expenditure and earnings. This level of organization in your business will help to ensure that you are providing your customers or clients with a top quality product or service. It will also ensure that you have enough information available to maximize your profitability and to satisfy your legal requirements for record keeping.

Be Prepared

Preparation is another important ingredient in your business success. This preparation will include being aware of the regulations and laws affecting small, home or online business in your area or country. Armed with this knowledge, you should not have any nasty surprises from unintentional violations of the law.

Have a Business Plan

Finally, successful home businesses have developed a comprehensive business plan. This is their road map to success. It tells them where they are going and how they are going to get there. It is very useful for comparing actual performance against what you planned and enabling you to make adjustments to lead to greater success. There are many useful software packages available to assist you with your business plan preparation.

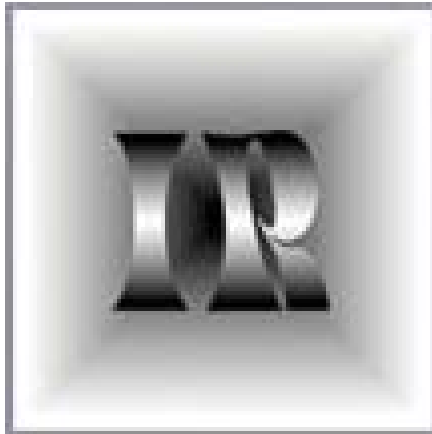
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Building a Successful Business - The Secret Success Strategy That Will Boost Your Energy

By: Michala Storm

Did you ever notice how challenging it can be to keep your energy high when you have so much work to do not knowing where to start or to end?

Overwhelm is one of the most common complaints that I hear from entrepreneurs who are starting up their business. The good news is that there are ways to get out of the trap and get your energy going.

Let me tell you about the secret

success strategy that you need while building a successful business. First of all, the secret really is that “there is no free lunch” - you may have heard that it is possible to work only 4 hours a week and to enjoy the life of your dreams. Although that is certainly a powerful vision that could be within reach let me tell you that the highly successful entrepreneurs that I know has worked a considerable amount of hours before they were able to harvest the fruit of their efforts.

Following is a very simple success structure that is easy to follow:

- o Get clear on what it is that you really want to achieve
- o Set clear and tangible goals that awakens your passion
- o Find a success structure that works for you
- o Get into daily action habits

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Getting clear on your vision:

Do you have a vision for your business that feels so compelling to you that it gets you jump out of bed in the morning all excited about the work that you do?

If not, you may want to spent some time alone using every imagination that you have got to create this vision. If you are right brained it may work for you to do a mind map. If you are more of a left brained person you may want to do a PowerPoint presentation of ideas.

Setting goals that are clear and tangible:

Once you are clear on you vision you will be ready to set tangible goals. You probably have heard that the way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time. The same analogy applies when you are setting goals. Do break your goals down into doable goals that will make it easy for you to follow though and feel successful. Remember that even small goals has the potential to create big differences in your life. Could be that urgent phone call you need to make or the resource you need to find.

Find a success structure that works for you:

We do not all work the same way as far as energy goes. Some people do their most creative work at night others early in the morning. What works best for you? Plan your work around your energy pattern and make sure to do the most important work (the work that is moving you towards your goal) when your energy is at its highest. Also do make sure to exercise and get plenty of fresh air, water and a well balanced diet.

Get into action:

If you study the people that are highly successful you will notice that they all share a common trait and that is "Integrity". Integrity really is a subject on its own. For now all I will say is that "Integrity" could be about something as simple as getting into action and doing the things that you planned to do. All too often in reality we sabotage our own goals by not doing the things that we said we would.

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Managing Change:

6 Ways to Keep Employees Committed

By: Richard Lepsinger

Change initiatives often start off well, but during the first month after the big kickoff, momentum begins to wane, sapping the initiative of its power.

Early on, managers build support for the change by promoting the initiative and making sure everyone is on board. However, when these change managers return to their day-to-day jobs, employees frequently lose focus and enthusiasm sometimes referred to as the

“commitment dip.” It’s where employees’ support for, clarity about, and commitment to change falls off, sometimes dramatically. If an organization does not take corrective action in the first one to three months, there is little likelihood that the initiative will achieve its objectives.

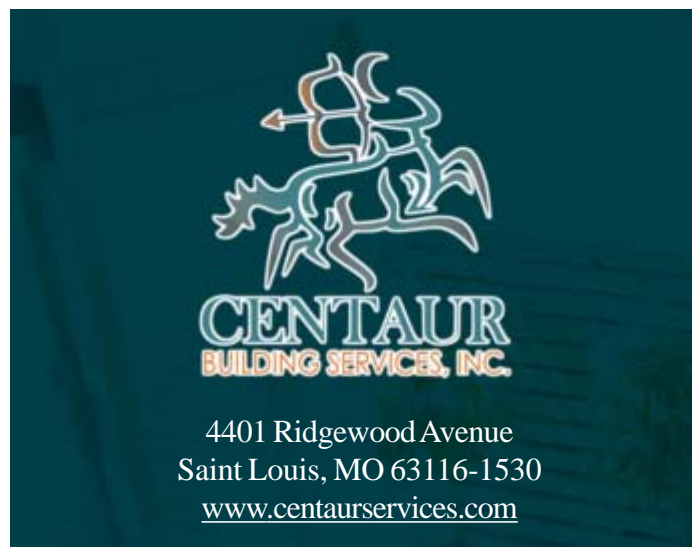
Fortunately, research shows it is possible to avoid the commitment dip when managing change. Here are six key steps leaders can take to keep employees highly committed and

focused.

Be Forthright About the Change and its Impact

Sixty-four percent of the 655 respondents to a recent surveyed said open and honest communication from leaders makes change easier, even when they don’t have all the answers. Employees want leaders to be accessible and to engage in “change talk.”

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Model Behaviors that Support the Change

If employees perceive there are two sets of rules and behaviors—one for them and one for senior leaders—the change initiative will lose credibility. It is not enough to just say the right thing or even enthusiastically communicate the benefits and the business case for the change. Employees want to see those words backed up with behavior.

Be Realistic about Milestones and Resources

Reaching realistic goals makes team members more positive about the change initiative. Keep in mind that employees have regular jobs aside from the work they'll do to make the change a success, and ensure they have the resources they need to do

both jobs well. Eighty-two percent of the people at top-performing organizations surveyed said that the availability of adequate resources is a key element in successfully achieving change objectives.

Don't Put Your Plan on Automatic Pilot

Many companies do a lot of work to put a plan in place that clearly communicates and prioritizes the objectives, but mistakenly assume all they need to do is say, "Go," and employees will stay committed and carry out the change. When you're making your plan, you know what you would like to happen and you can predict some of the problems and obstacles that might pop up, but once you're in it, you discover the plan will have to be adjusted. That's why you must treat your plan as a living

document—one that you keep coming back to and revising as you learn and discover unanticipated problems and opportunities.

Maintain Enthusiasm Among Employees for the Duration of the Change

You have to keep the change in front of your employees at all times—not only during that first month. It's another reason why you can't put your plan on automatic pilot and why leaders need to model behaviors that support the change for the duration of the initiative, not just at the kickoff.

Get Middle Managers on Board

Conventional wisdom emphasizes

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the importance of getting the senior team on board. But one big difference between top companies and less successful ones seems to be the extent to which middle managers feel involved in and integral to the change process. Research shows that the involvement level of middle managers in the top performing and the less successful organizations is similar at the initiation of change. However, top performing companies are more effective at maintaining and increasing mid-level manager involvement in the first three months than are the less successful organizations.

Taking the Next Step

Managing change comes up on almost every list of organizational and leadership success factors. OnPoint's change readiness survey provides the first step in showing companies where the problem is and what they can do to make their changes more successful. We've also developed a number of programs designed to help leaders overcome their biggest change management challenges. These programs can help your employees remain highly committed and focused on successfully implementing change.

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Scholarships and Grants For Minority Mothers

By: Cynthia Cooper

Mothers are the source of true happiness in everybody's life. But, we never even look into the life of a mother who struggles at every instance of her life to provide a proper living to her family and kids.

The condition of a minority mother is worse. They are provided very few opportunities of growth and are not given proper status in societies. It is for this reason that different scholarships and grants for minority mothers have been initiated.

It is interesting to note that even

though the groups have been named as minority, most of these groups have a very high population. The minority groups usually include the Hispanics, African-American and others. It is surprising to note that mothers belonging to different ethnicities will be qualified for many of these programs based on their eligibility. There are certain scholarship programs which are only for the members of the underrepresented.

A brief look into the various scholarships and grants available to

minority mothers has been provided below:

1) AICPA Minority Accounting Students Scholarships - This is a special scholarship program for only the accounting students in the minority groups of black, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American or Asian American. The scholarship has been started by the American Institute of certified Public Accountants and has been controlled by the Centre for Scholarship Administration and goes out to the deserving students.

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2) AXA Foundation Fund Achievement Scholarship - This grant is awarded to the African American undergraduates studying business. The scholarship amount is for \$2,000 to \$5,000 awarded.

3) Breakthrough to Nursing Scholarships for Racial/Ethnic Minorities - This scholarship is given out every year to five African Americans and other minority groups. The grant is for \$1000 to \$2000.

4) Gates Millennium Scholars Program (Gates Foundation) - In this program the scholarship amount is not specified. This is a huge scholarship program granted every year to 1000 African-American undergraduate or graduate students.

5) ASA Minority Fellowship

Program - This program is for new students and for the graduating students. Students qualifying for MFP must compulsorily be students studying sociology and who are also currently involved in research activities on mental health issues. Scholarships for MFP are granted on the basis of academic scores, writing skills and ethnicity.

6) Fisher Broadcasting Minority Scholarship - Non-white sophomores studying for marketing or journalism careers are entitled for this grant.

7) Louie F. Cox Memorial AK Steel African-American Scholarships - This is granted only to two African-American freshmen undergraduates every year for \$16,000.

8) Minority Scholarship Awards for Incoming College Freshmen - This

program donates scholarships to 10 minority group students majoring in chemical engineering and the scholarship is for \$1000.

9) Sallie Mae Fund American Dream Scholarship - This grant goes out to a number of African-American undergraduates and the grant is between \$500 to \$5000.

Grants are extremely important for minority mothers to come out of the caves of poverty and lead respected lives. Scholarships and grants for minority mothers have a significant role in lighting the lamp of education in the lives of these special mothers.

Did you know you can get a \$10,000 scholarship for moms just for registering? Apply right now for free: Scholarships for Moms [<http://scholarship-for-mom.org>].

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There Is A Big Difference Between Landing A Job And Landing A Good Job

By: Bob Roth

College students and their parents know the difference between landing a job and landing a good job. College leaders know too, but some help more than others.

When college seniors and recent grads obtain a “good” job, it means that the job:

- Holds great interest for the student
- Has opportunities to learn and grow
- Has opportunities for advancement

- Has career potential
- Pays a salary that enables a student to live independently
- Pays well enough for students to meet their expenses and loan obligations
- Utilizes some of what has been learned in college
- Justifies the time and expense of obtaining a college degree

- Makes family members proud of the student

However, too often, a student may have little choice but to accept a job that:

- Holds little or no interest for them
- Has few or no opportunities to learn and grow
- Has few or no opportunities for advancement

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- Does not have career potential
- Does not pay a salary that enables them to live independently
- Doesn't pay well enough for them to meet their expenses and loan obligations
- Utilizes little or none of the information learned in college
- Does not justify the time and expense of obtaining a college degree
- Causes friction between family members

To prevent large numbers of new college graduates from being forced to accept jobs that hold no interest and/or career potential and do not pay a living rate, students and colleges must work together.

1. Issues for which Students Are Responsible:
- Understanding what it takes to succeed in a competitive job market
 - Knowing whether their Major leads to satisfactory employment opportunities
 - Researching what it takes to attract their target employers
 - Performing job search preparation activities during each semester of college
 - Gaining some job-related work experience during the college years
 - Building a list of impressive accomplishments by participating and getting results
 - Building strong references by demonstrating character and performance over time

- Creating an impressive Resumé with their list of accomplishments and successes
- Practicing and perfecting their interviewing skills
- Building an effective employment network
- Recognizing that the competition for good jobs is stiff
- Mounting and conducting a strong and serious job search campaign

2. Concerned Colleges Help Their Students:

- Receive career education information and training
- Understand the employment process
- Figure out what it takes to succeed in a competitive job market

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- Select majors that lead to satisfactory employment opportunities
- Prepare a personal plan of action for job search preparation activities
- Methodically gather the information and tools to be used for their job search
- Identify appropriate job-related work experience opportunities
- Identify activities that can result in impressive accomplishments
- Explain how to cultivate powerful and enthusiastic references
- Prepare an impressive resumé
- Gain and practice interviewing skills
- Learn how to network effectively
- Develop realistic expectations - Preparation, Hard Work & Disappointments, etc.
- Learn how to conduct an effective and comprehensive search for employment
- Realize that completing all of the steps above is four-year process that has

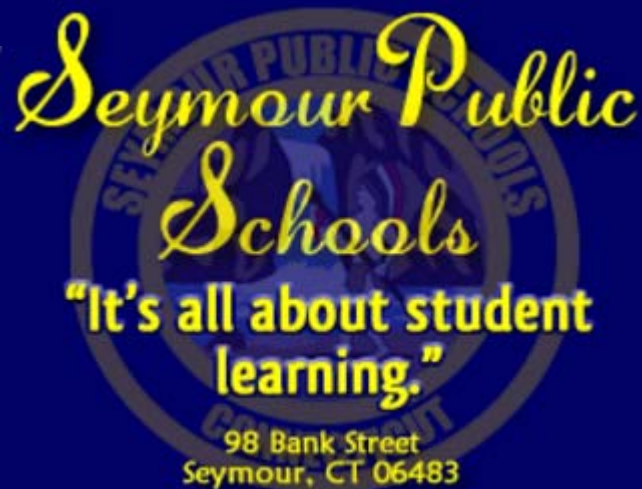
consequences, if it is ignored

“The job market for college students and recent graduates is seldom user friendly.”

The best college leaders recognize that landing a good job at graduation is of critical importance to students and their parents. They aggressively identify and implement systems and techniques that will make their students more successful in the job market.

It should be obvious to everyone that there is a big difference between landing a job and landing a good job. That is why prospective students and their parents should do their research and choose a college that is dedicated to helping (all) students do the things that will get them better prepared to succeed in the job market, as they move through each semester of college.

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The Last Six Weeks of School

By: Marlynn Clayton

The school year is drawing to a close. It's been a year filled with many learning experiences for the children and for you. Though learning doesn't end just because school does, it's good to help children bring a sense of closure to the year of classroom learning. This article highlights the benefits of doing so and offers some suggestions that you can easily adapt for children of different ages.

Closure activities help wrap up the year on a positive note and provide

children with many benefits:

- A sense of accomplishment and pride in themselves, their class, and their school.
- A sense of belonging and an affirmation of their significance within the group.
- An opportunity to reflect upon their own learning process and to know themselves as learners:

Here is where I (or we) began and here is where I (or we) have gotten to. This was easy for me to do; that was hard for me to do. This is enjoyable work for me; that is work I don't really like.

- A sense of satisfaction from having worked hard to learn something; a recognition that hard work can be a positive experience.
- A recognition of the fun and excitement that are part of learning.

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- A feeling of ownership of individual and group learning, which leads to a sense of empowerment.
- An opportunity to think about next year's work — to set goals as a reflective learner.

SOME SUGGESTIONS

In choosing closure activities, it's most helpful to provide children with opportunities to reflect both as members of a learning community and as individual learners. As a first step, lead the children in brainstorming their accomplishments as a class. Doing this will reinforce their sense of how they have helped one another learn and get them started thinking about their individual learning.

CLASS BRAINSTORMING SESSION

In a whole-class discussion, invite the children to list all the things they achieved together — their accomplishments, events, and even mistakes that they learned from. During the discussion, capture the children's thoughts on chart paper. You may want to sort the results into categories, such as Words We Can Spell, What We Learned About, Books We Read, Favorite Things We Studied, and Ways We Worked Together. These categories will be most meaningful to the children if you adapt them to reflect the class's personality and particular milestones in social and academic growth.

After the brainstorming session, lead the children in deciding how to make the charts beautiful and how to display them. For example, children might enjoy creating artwork to illustrate accomplishments and memories. They might want to display their charts on bulletin boards, or recreate them on smaller paper and bind them into books.

CHILDREN'S PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Following the class brainstorming, you may wish to lead the children in one or more of the following individual activities.

Each child takes charge of a personal display area. The goal here is for everyone in the class to have a chance to display individual work he or she feels proud of. On a section of bulletin board or a space on the classroom wall, each child puts up a piece of work he or she would like to

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display. The children can decide as a class on the categories of displayed work and the criteria for choosing pieces. For example, they may decide to display one piece of work from the beginning of the year and one from the end — an excellent opportunity for the children to see how much they have grown.

Besides displaying their work, children may also share with their class verbally or in writing the learning represented by their display piece. Songs, plays, poems, and speeches are just a few possibilities. In addition, the children can create a Class Museum of Proud Work for sharing with parents on a special night. The important thing is letting the children decide, within boundaries, what they will display and how, so that they'll feel a sense of ownership of the celebration.

Children make personal Reflections and Memories

books. First, devise a few questions to guide children's reflecting — for example, "What am I proud of having done in school this year?," "What did I learn in reading?," or "What were some things I enjoyed doing with my friends?" (Other possibilities are shown in the charts at the end of this article.) With your guidance, a class of older children might develop these questions collaboratively.

So that the children can best share their sense of accomplishment with one another, it's important that everyone answer the same question or questions — for example, everyone does Things I Remember, What I Learned in Reading, Math, and Writing, and My Hopes for Next Year. If they wish, children may choose additional questions to answer on their own.

Now the children are ready to work individually. Each child thinks about the questions, completes the reflection sheets, and assembles the sheets into a book.

Children share Reflections and Memories

books. Children can read their completed books aloud to the class or place them in the classroom library. These books are typically favorite choices during free reading time, giving children further opportunities to reflect on their own successes and those of their classmates.

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The class creates games based on their year's learnings. Children can use information from their class brainstorming session or their individual Reflections and Memories books to create games or riddles that might be used during Morning Meeting. For example, in a ball toss greeting, as each child catches the ball, he or she names a book the class read together, or a word the class studied in spelling.

The class creates an Information Book for next year's students. A book of Tips for First Grade or Things You'll Learn in Fourth Grade helps students reflect on their year's learning while being of genuine service to younger children. The class can brainstorm ideas for the book together. New first graders might want to know details such as what to do when they need to go to the bathroom or if they're hungry

before lunch time. Incoming fourth graders might be interested in what kinds of books they'll be reading and what fourth-grade field trips are like.

Once the class chooses the topics, children can work individually or in groups to create the pages of the class Information Book.

The teacher writes an end-of-the-year note to each child. Personally recognizing, affirming, and celebrating a child's successes is a wonderfully positive way to end the school year. By expressing your trust and belief in your students as learners, you help motivate and excite each child about the next year's learning. These notes needn't be long. What's important is to focus on a particular strength the child has shown. For example, a note celebrating a child's academic growth might look something like this:

Dear Iliana:

I saw you grow this year by using strategies to solve math problems. At the start of the year, math strategies weren't always easy for you to understand or use. But you practiced thinking slowly and carefully and keeping your attention on your work, and you memorized math facts. Now you have lots of new strategies for learning math next year — hooray for you!

And here's an example of a note commending a child's social growth:

Dear Misha:

This year you really practiced caring ways to work with your classmates. At first, listening to others was hard for you. Now, you listen with care and even help

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classmates work out their ideas, while still sharing your own good thoughts. This skill will help you learn and keep being a good friend next year. Your new community will be lucky to have you!

GOOD BEGINNINGS DESERVE GOOD ENDINGS

We spend considerable time preparing for the beginning of the school year. This makes sense, because good beginnings set the tone for the whole year's learning. It's equally important, though, to spend time planning for the end of the year. Good endings leave children with feelings of pride in their learning, and that prepares them for another good beginning the following fall.

3 SAMPLE CHARTS

Year-End Reflections

My proudest moment this year:

The part of the year that was most fun for me:

The hardest part of the year for me:

Something I've gotten better at this year:

Something I'd like to get better at next year:

Friends, Friends, Friends

These are some of my friends this year:

This is something we liked doing together:

My Favorite

My favorite reading book this year:

My favorite read-aloud book this year:

My favorite project this year:

My favorite learning in math this year:

My favorite juicy word:

It means:

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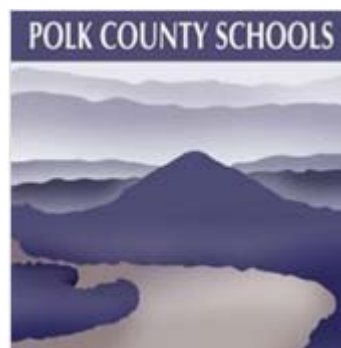
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How to Support Bilingual Literacy at School?

By: Gabriela Gotay

Families and communities should advocate for bilingual education as a source of personal and social empowerment.

For those families living within communities where a different language than the one being spoken at home is prevalent, the power to enrich the lives of our children with the mother tongue provides a valuable addition to the diversity of the schools and community as a whole.

A new bilingual mindset opens the following opportunities:

Parents as Teacher Aids:

- An opportunity for mom and dad to participate in the education of their child and support the family's cultural heritage and diversity.
- An opportunity for that parent to learn and strengthen her or his own language and communication skills.

- An opportunity for that parent to add value to the community.

Schools as Community Enhancers:

- An opportunity to host a variety of cultural activities.
- An opportunity to connect to other members of the community and gain from the value they bring.
- An opportunity to strengthen the diversity of the school staff and cultural awareness of its faculty.

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• An opportunity to provide communities with a variety of programs that support the transition to a new environment and a new language.

What's needed?

Schools must approach parents and develop mutually beneficial connections with them. To accomplish this task, schools should rely on its own bilingual staff, and look online and offline for services that provide advisory support and free resources to these experienced teachers on how to handle situations particular to immigrant families from South and Central America.

What are some of the major hurdles?

- Parents lacking the language skills and their own cultural and social insecurities.
- Resistance to change from parents and teachers alike. Based on the mistaken belief that what's currently been done is actually working.
- School budgeting and prioritizing which doesn't necessarily include the right investments in favor of greater resources to Hispanic students' academic success.

What are the main goals to target?

- Language skills development. Becoming fully bilingual.
- Living cultures. Developing cultural awareness and conscious participation in the acculturation process; a new physical and social environment.
- Mentors and advisers that speak your language and share your experience. Understanding there's a path to follow; listening and sharing success stories.

The type of social engagement and open conversation between school, teachers and parents is essential for the present and future success of our Hispanic children and their families, and that should be enough to consider possible proactive solutions.

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How are you addressing the issue of bilingual education in your classroom?

I highly recommend educators to find free resources and guidance to engage Hispanic children and their families. I encourage all educators and professionals working in an educational setting to be proactive and engage children in both English and Spanish. Bilingualism is an asset and a great way to offer scaffolding support to students, as well as a wider range of reading and writing materials and opportunities to express their identity and their heritage, while informing and expanding the knowledge of their fellow students.



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