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SUCCESS

Winter 2019

**8 Illegal Questions and Other
Interview Practices to Avoid
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Education and Healthcare**

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10 Tips For Leaders On Company Culture

By: Kevin Dee

Most companies would like to think everyone is aligned with the mission, vision and goals of the company.

“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.” Henry Ford

The simplicity of Ford’s quote is powerful, and it is a true statement. The tough part is to actually get everyone on the same page!

Culture is driven from the top, and needs to be embraced throughout

the organization. Yet people have their own ideas about what they like or dislike, what they will “buy in to” and what they feel is being rammed down their throats.

This individuality is both a blessing and a curse.

You don’t want to have people working for you that fundamentally don’t agree with your culture, your philosophies or your way of doing business.

You also don’t want a bunch of “followers” who mindlessly do what

they are told.

The only way that I know to tackle this conundrum is to create a culture that works for the kind of people you want to attract. People that fit your culture will feel comfortable working there and those that don’t fit likely won’t last very long. Over time you develop ways to hire that will better eliminate those that don’t fit, reducing the number of hiring mistakes.

“Customers will never love a company until the employees love it

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first.” Simon Sinek

This is of course a simplistic 30,000 foot view because of course the reality is much more difficult.

Culture should be a conscious choice, not just a byproduct of local leaders and influential hires. The slightly longer version (maybe the 10,000 foot version) of how to achieve that would include:

- Decide what values are important to your company... and communicate them regularly.
- Understand what your company does, and does NOT do... and communicate it, regularly.
- Have a direction for the company that is clear... THIS is where we are going! AND

communicate it regularly.

- Make sure that your business direction and values are aligned.
- Make sure that any business decisions support your values and business direction.
- Do not be swayed from your company objectives unless it is through a conscious strategic decision, certainly not a local ad-hoc business call!
- Hire people that can buy into the company culture.
- Do not hang onto people that are not a fit... the longer they are there, the more they damage your culture.
- Communicate your values, vision and mission with passion...

demonstrating how important it is.

- Most importantly... LIVE those values.

Leaders have a responsibility to their company and to the people who work there, to embody the values of the corporation. Leaders who expect people to “Do what I say, not what I do” are fooling themselves if they think anyone buys that act in 2014!

“No company, large or small, can succeed over the long run without energized employees who believe in the mission and understand how to achieve it.” Jack Welch

If you can have a company where everyone is pulling in the same direction, then you can achieve anything!

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Why Selling to the Government Is Very Different From Selling to the Private Sector

By: Gloria Berthold Larkin

One of the biggest, and often fatal, mistakes a business person makes when entering the government market is to treat it just as they would when entering the private sector market. This is true especially when a company has been successful selling its products or services to consumers or other businesses and tries to apply similar tactics in the federal market. After all, is it not just common sense that if the strategies and tactics work elsewhere, why would they not work in the government market?

This is flawed logic because the government market is dramatically different from the private sector due to not just the two thousand pages of rules and regulations called the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) and the ever-changing accounting and financial requirements. There are also unique government-specific terminology and very specific purchasing/procurement processes that differ greatly from the private sector.

To better understand the processes and differences, let's take a look at the

two tracks newcomers generally follow when entering the federal marketplace: The Top Down or the Bottom Up tracks.

Bottom Up Track

Many business people enter the government market by following all the clearly stated processes: they register in CCR.gov, fill out every form and enter every database possible. They check and apply for all possible certifications and attend every meeting, conference and

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outreach session possible. They essentially start at the bottom rung of the business development ladder and start to work their way up.

Good News Bad News

The good news about the Bottom Up approach is that it is clearly defined and for those who find filling out forms and following a process, it is relatively easy and, it seems like it is very straightforward. The bad news about this approach is that one may follow every direction to the letter, have every “i” dotted and “t” crossed, and never win any contracts or sell anything at all.

Top Down Track

The companies that have been successful selling big-ticket services or products to the consumer or business market generally use the sales process of starting at the top, just as they would in the private sector. They have learned that if they get the buy-in of the top decision-maker, the subordinates will follow his/her lead, right?

Sales people have spent countless hours identifying the “top” person, perhaps a General or an agency Director, fought their way through the gatekeepers for a meeting and made stunning PowerPoint presentations. They see the VIP nodding his (or her) head in agreement about what a wonderful product or service they have, may even give the VIP a standard contract that they use all the time and fully expect it to be signed and want to plan the celebration as the next step.

Dead Air

They are sadly disappointed when nothing happens. Nothing, no responses, not a call, no contract, no email or even a “we made a decision to take another path” polite turn down. They have no idea what went wrong, because all of the typical “buying signals” told them they had full agreement and the VIP loved them and their wonderful service or product.

Top Down Topples

What they did not realize is that in the government, rarely are the VIPs the real decision-makers. What worked flawlessly in the private sector not only did not work in the

government, it may have also damaged their reputation so severely that they have little if any chance of winning contracts in the future.

Who Are the Decision-Makers

Real decision-makers are the people who have the legal authority to spend our tax dollars, negotiate, purchase, and sign their name on the government's behalf on the contract. In the federal government this is rarely, if ever, just one person. For contracts worth over \$25,000, most often there are layers of people from the small business representatives, the contracting officers and specialists to the technical representatives and program managers who will be involved in the decision-making process.

When Neither Top Down or Bottom Up Works

To be successful selling to the government, a business person will invest the time and energy to learn the decision-making process, identify the various levels of people and make every effort to actually get to meet them and build relationships with them. The process involves following all of the steps of the "bottom-up" approach, but adding a very important sales step: identifying the real decision-makers and spending the time to build strong relationships so that they feel comfortable doing business with a firm.

Risk-Adverse

The people with the authority to spend government funds are risk-adverse. They are taught not to take risks with government funds. If a business person makes every effort to mitigate the risks in doing business by having a past performance record, references, a good credit rating, a clear understanding of the legal and accounting requirements that firm looks much more attractive than one who has not done so.

Purchase Vehicle

When the federal government buys something it uses some sort of purchase vehicle. This vehicle could be as simple as a government credit card, it could be as complicated as a 200 page response to a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a pre-approved contract called a GSA Schedule. In any case, it is always a document or process that the government originates. If a vendor puts their own contract on the desk

and says "sign here" that is a huge red flag to the government representative that the vendor has no idea how the process really works, and that they are a risky choice.

Relationship Building

The most successful firms have invested the time and effort in learning who all the people are that will be involved in making purchasing decisions is their targeted agencies. They go to conferences, vendor outreach sessions, one-on-one meetings, speed-matching sessions, every place that they have the chance to meet, shake hands with and look eye-to-eye with the people who buy what they sell. These targeted people may have various titles such as contracting officer or specialist, technical specialist or program manager. Successful business people are prepared with a great Capability Statement, have done their homework and researched upcoming opportunities and are ready to discuss how they fit into specific needs of that agency. And they also know what purchase vehicles that agency uses to buy services and products. In summary, a successful business person will know the decision-makers (and the decision-makers know them!), make it easy to do business with them and have the right purchase vehicles lined up so that there is no risk for the government.

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Procrastination - Follow the Flow and Leave Procrastination To History!

By: Michala Storm

How does flow work and how can you use flow to improve your results?

These were some of the questions that popped into my mind one Monday Morning as I was facing the increasing workload at my desk. Don't get me wrong - I'm passionate about my work.

But sometimes it can be overwhelming which could lead to procrastination.

So I decided it was time to deepen in

on how to make the most of flow and talk to other people, whom I consider "flow-masters", about their best kept strategies for how to use flow to increase your productivity.

What I found was that there is a lot to learn about the dynamics of flow before you can actually begin to fully benefit from "Follow the flow" as a strategy that will leave procrastination to history and produce real and rewarding results.

So what did I learn about flow so far?

To be honest, first of all I learned that "flow" is such a huge and interesting subject that in order to better understand it, I prefer to break it down into smaller elements that are all part of the bigger "flow-puzzle".

Following skills are all important elements of how to make the most of flow:

1. Focus
2. Technique
3. Flexibility
4. Patience

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In other words, if I was a baker my recipe for a how to “go with the flow-cake” would have to include all of the above ingredients - then I would put the “flow-cake” in the oven and be very focused on the timing.

Because regardless of how great of a “flow-master” you become by fine-tuning all of the above skills, “timing” and the ability to take pauses are both crucial to real and rewarding results.

No matter what, flow cannot get accomplished if the timing isn’t right.

I saw this first hand as I was watching the surfers at Ocean Beach in San Diego. These surfers were definitely all very skillful as far as their techniques went. But more important, they were all “beyond patient” while they were lying flat on their boards waiting for the next wave to show up.

No skills will ever make the waves

come in any faster than they do.

My conclusion was that timing and the ability to pause (when there are no waves) seems to be a very big part of what make the surfers successful in making the most of the flow.

There is no time to procrastinate when the wave arrives; you’ve got to act at the precise right time and make the most of the wave while it is at its highest.

The same principles apply when you want to make the most of flow and apply it to your every life to make the most of you time. For example, haven’t you ever noticed how much easier it seem to clean up your house when you are in the flow, not to mention getting your day-to-day work done?

This process of making the most of the flow, all requires that you begin by being very alert and pay close

attention to the flow in your everyday life. Then you got to be flexible and know enough about the dynamics of flow to be able to go with it.

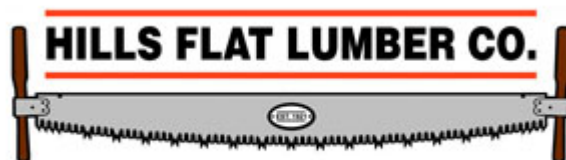
Someone wise once said that, “real power has no force”.

And if there is one thing that I learned about flow, then that would be that there is absolutely no way that you can force flow to happen. However, you can learn to fine-tune your skills (the ingredients that you need to make the “flow-cake”) and this will enable you to make the most of flow.

Although I believe that being in the flow actually is a natural state, it is important to accept that there will be times when the waves are low and it seems like there isn’t any flow to follow.

And there could be a very good

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reason for that; you simply need to pause!

As human beings, I don't believe that we are designed to act all of the time - there is definitely a time and a place for everything. In other words, pauses are actually legitimate, even though there seems to be a tendency to feel a certain degree of guilt whenever we actually do take a pause.

But you don't have to be passive during the pause.

Pauses can be very productive. You could prepare yourself for the next wave and fine-tune your techniques simply by reflecting upon what has worked for you and what has not, or you could simply relax.

Be patient, pay close attention, and watch out for the next portion of flow.

If you watch a group of surfers, you will see, first hand, how much time they actually spend simply waiting for the next wave to arrive. The surfers definitely know that they cannot create the waves - all they can do is to prepare for it.

The ability to be patient is a big part of learning to go with the flow and to make the most of "go with the flow" as a strategy to leave procrastination to history.

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Developing Leaders in the Pharmaceutical Industry

By: Richard Lepsinger

The future success of pharmaceutical companies depends on quality leaders with the knowledge of what it takes to bring new products to a heavily regulated global market.

Unfortunately, many pharmaceutical employees find themselves moving up the ranks in narrow roles that fail to give them the depth and breadth of experience they need to succeed. Their highly technical training and specialized expertise does not necessarily equip them with the

skills they need to be an effective leader, particularly one who can influence others across organizational boundaries

Recognizing this gap, companies are putting more emphasis on preparing future leaders to advance in their careers. In fact, healthcare and pharmaceutical organizations spent nearly \$1,400 on training per employee in 2013, providing each with 24 hours of training on average, according to a study by the Association of Talent Development. That's more than twice the investment in training made by

similarly sized organizations in other industries, such as manufacturing.

Given the enhanced importance of training and development in the pharmaceutical industry, here are three trends we're seeing in this area.

More Companies Seek Formal Development Programs For Future Leaders

GlaxoSmithKline employs nearly 100,000 people across the globe and

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puts special emphasis on training aspiring second line leaders with the potential to grow into future leadership positions. The program is tailored to those who demonstrate the desire and potential for leadership across departments, from sales and manufacturing to information technology. Each year, 30 aspiring leaders are selected to participate in a combination of self-directed, classroom-based and hands-on learning programs.

Aspiring leaders also assess their ability to influence others across organizational boundaries and learn tactics for influencing more effectively.

The culmination of this training is a capstone project where participants are challenged to find an opportunity for improvement within the company and work with others to propose and implement a solution. Participants present their completed projects to GSK's senior managers.

Though GSK is just beginning to establish formal metrics for this program, it has significantly increased engagement among employees who participate and among those who hope to be selected for the competitive program, GSK Global Learning Manager Ginny Hobson said.

Measuring ROI of Leadership Development Is Essential

As the pharmaceutical industry follows others in adopting a leaner approach to operations, it's becoming more critical for learning managers and human resource professionals to demonstrate a real, measurable impact from leadership programs.

Simply conducting a post-training evaluation survey is no longer enough.

To demonstrate the ROI of leadership development, managers need to collect feedback from the leaders' peers, direct reports and supervisors to determine the extent to which behaviors have changed.

It's also important to evaluate retention and succession over time, which allows managers to estimate the costs saved in recruiting, onboarding and training external talent. That can range from half the cost of an employee's annual salary to as much as four times that amount,

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depending on the level of the employee.

More Companies Prioritize Leadership Development for Millennials

In five years, nearly half the global workforce will be comprised of Millennials, or those born in 1980 or later. While Millennials bring many strengths to the workplace, some research has shown they are more likely to lack essential leadership skills, such as diplomacy and communication, according to a study by the Association for Talent Development. They are also less likely to respond well to a traditional approach to learning methods and tend to respond better to training that is shorter, more relevant and offers frequent feedback.

Although many companies that responded to the ATD survey cited the importance of having specialized leadership development for Millennials, few actually have these programs in place. This is beginning to change, and we expect to see leadership development programs

As the pharmaceutical industry follows others in adopting a leaner approach to operations, it's becoming more critical for learning managers and human resource professionals to demonstrate a real, measurable impact from leadership programs.

tailored to the specific training needs and learning preferences of this generation.

Because these three trends appear to be prevalent in the pharmaceutical industry, many organizations would

benefit from focusing their efforts, as maintaining a steady pipeline of highly effective future leaders is an ongoing effort that requires a two-fold approach of assessing and developing high-potential employees.

OnPoint Consulting offers practical based solutions to help companies identify and develop leaders across industries, and we have done extensive work with pharmaceutical companies including GSK, Johnson and Johnson, Merck, Daiichi-Sankyo, Teva, Eisai and Bayer.

We use a rigorous methodology that includes behavioral interviews and assessments, situational judgment tests and seeking feedback from others within an employee's circle of influence. Once a company has identified its next leaders, we offer a variety of programs to accelerate their development.

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8 Illegal Interview Questions and Other Interview Practices to Avoid

By: Anne Shaw

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has strict laws in place to protect job candidates and employees from discrimination. You should avoid asking job interview questions about age, disability, genetic information, race or ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation, national origin, religion, marital status, having children, pregnancy, or planning to start a family.

You can stay in the EEOC's good graces by avoiding questions that can appear to be discriminatory —

ones that relate to where a candidate lives, their age, their arrest record, national origin, credit history, family status, financial status, marital status, pregnancy, race or color, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. Sometimes, though, you may need to cover some sensitive topics—like availability, legal convictions, physical health, and education — to decide if a candidate is fit for your job. When you do, be careful about how you discuss them. Specifically ask candidates about their ability to carry out exact tasks and responsibilities that relate to the job.

Here are some good rules of thumb to avoid the appearance of discrimination when hiring:

- Stay away from anything that isn't related directly to the job.
- Resist the temptation to delve into personal conversation.
- Don't ask about anything you can learn from another source or in another way.
- Be direct about what traits and skills they'd need for the role and ask the candidate to speak to those things.

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8 Illegal Interview Questions You DON'T Want to Ask

While some illegal questions like “How old are you?” are more obvious, others are less so. Some questions masquerade as “cultural fit” questions, and others simply pop up when you let the interview meander off into small talk. If you’d prefer never to deal with the EEOC, then remember the rules of thumb from above, and avoid letting your interview conversation head toward questions like these:

1. “What Part of Town Do You Live in?”

This seems like a harmless question — one that would be asked out of curiosity — but it could be interpreted as an attempt to figure out if a candidate lives in a part of town where mostly minorities live. It’s best to avoid it. If you want to know whether they live nearby because punctuality is important to you and traffic is heavy where you are, then ask candidates if there’s any reason they might not arrive to work on time each day.

2. “What Class Were You in at Rydell High?”

While you may ask a question like this simply because you found something in common with your candidate, it’s no longer innocent when you go in a direction that could help you figure out their age. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) prohibits any interview questions that could indicate age discrimination.

3. “Being a Start-Up, We Tend to Have Younger Managers. Would That Be a Problem?”

This is another indicator of potential age discrimination. While it may seem like a valid question about whether you and the candidate will work well together, by asking this question in this way, you imply that you’ve noticed the applicant’s age and see it as a potential reason not to hire them. A better way to ask this is by leaving out references to age altogether. You could say, “Would you be comfortable taking direction from someone who has less on-paper business experience than you do?”

4. “When Was The Last Time You Used Drugs?”

Businesses are not allowed to discriminate against recovering addicts or people who take prescription drugs for health conditions, so your questions must pertain to the current use of illegal drugs. Better yet, follow the rule

of thumb not to ask something you can learn from another source. Strike this question from your interview list altogether and simply ask candidates whether they are comfortable taking a drug test prior to and during their employment.

5. “Have You Ever Had a Brush With the Law?”

Asking candidates for information about their arrest record is a no-go zone. The EEOC notes that statistically some minorities are arrested more often, so a question like this could lead to underlying racial discrimination. If you need to assess whether your accounting candidate is trustworthy, you can ask if they’ve ever been convicted of fraud. Ask references whether the candidate was ever disciplined for violating company policy.

6. “I Hear An Accent. Where Are You From?”

You may just be curious, but when it comes to national origin discrimination, this question is a red flag. Asking it could hint that you might discriminate against a potential employee due to their accent or the fact that they may be from a different country. If language fluency is important in the role, ask candidates direct questions about which languages they are fluent in. You can also formally evaluate their communication skills as part of your interview process. Just don’t ask them if they’re native speakers or whether English is their first language.

7. “How Many Kids Do You Have?”

Even if you’ve gone in to the small talk zone with a candidate who has already mentioned having kids, don’t ask this. In fact, even if you’ve already related to each other about having kids, try to avoid asking any further questions around this topic. Asking candidates about their children or if they plan to have children can signal discriminatory hiring practices.

8. “What Are You Currently Making?”

If your business is in NYC, Philadelphia, Massachusetts, Delaware, California, Oregon or Puerto Rico, there is a salary history ban. The ban is limited to certain areas — and sometimes only publicly held companies — for now, but this trend is likely to continue. In fact, lawmakers are already pursuing bans on employer inquiries about salary history in Pittsburgh and New Orleans, so if asking

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candidates about their previous salaries is one of your go-to questions, you may want to drop the habit sooner rather than later. Instead, ask candidates about their salary expectations.

Other Interview Practices That Can Get You Into Trouble

It's not just illegal interview questions that can come back to haunt you. You also can cross legal lines when you do the following things while interviewing:

Making Promises You Can't Keep

When trying to win over your favorite candidate, it can be tempting to hint at all they could achieve and acquire while working for you, especially if you're a small start-up with huge potential, but be careful. If you imply a specific career path or promise long-term job security, you could end up with a lawsuit. Don't say things like, "I could really see you growing with my company. Who knows? If we do well, you could be VP of Marketing and build your own team in the next three years," or "With your skills and our culture of internal promotion, you could happily work here for the rest of your career."

Neglecting to Use a Standard Set of Questions for Every Candidate

Why is this bad? Because if a candidate finds out you asked them a question that you didn't ask most other candidates, they'll probably wonder why. And their deductions may lead them to believe you discriminated against them in your hiring decision. Asking only female accounting candidates about their availability to work longer hours at month end, for instance, points toward potential gender discrimination. Avoid these situations by using a regular list of questions that cover the basics. Only vary questions when it comes to specific items in a candidate's background, skills, or experience.

The appearance of discrimination is terrible for your reputation, and the related legal battles aren't easy on the wallet either. Avoid being accused of discriminatory practices by understanding the ins and outs of what is and is not allowed in interviews. It is possible to conduct your job interviews in a fair, legal manner and still land strong new hires. Who knows? Maybe you'll even hire someone amazing — someone you might have overlooked otherwise.

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4 REASONS WHY CLASSROOMS NEED DIVERSITY EDUCATION

By: Mathew Lynch

School climate and school culture directly impact student success. As a result, it is particularly important for the school culture (and the classroom culture) to reflect, acknowledge, and celebrate diversity. Taking these feel-good ideals and making them a reality can be tough for educators, especially with so many other initiatives on their ever-tighter schedules.

But I think that this is so important that as an educator, you must take the time to do it. How to celebrate

diversity in the classroom is another article, but for now, I want you to begin your journey with knowing exactly why it's important.

1. Because the idea of “diversity” is not even that straightforward. Not only must schools recognize diversity evident among broad racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Asian or Hispanic), but the diversity within these groups must be recognized as well. For example Chinese and Japanese students may share common cultural characteristics as a result of being Asian, but will also have

distinctly Chinese and Japanese cultural characteristics that differ from each other. The same is true of Caucasian students who come from vastly different family backgrounds, even from the same neighborhoods. In the interest of treating students equally, giving them equal chances for success, and equal access to the curriculum, teachers and administrators must recognize the uniqueness and individuality of their students.

2. Teachers have a particular responsibility to recognize and

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structure their lessons to reflect student differences. This encourages students to recognize themselves and others as individuals. It also encourages the appreciation of a diverse school population, and brings a sense of connection between disparate cultural heritages within a single school's culture. It is certainly in the best interest of students and teachers to focus on the richness of our diversity. Recognizing and acknowledging our differences is part of treating students fairly and equally.

3. So that you can facilitate the process of learning overall. One reason for seeking out and acknowledging cultural differences among students is the idea that learning involves transfer of information from prior knowledge and experiences. To assist in this transfer process, it is important to acknowledge the students' background, and to validate and incorporate their previous knowledge into the process of acquiring new information. All students begin school with a framework of skills and information based on their home cultures. This may include a rudimentary understanding of the alphabet, numbers, computer functions, some basic knowledge of a second language, or the ability to spell and write their names. It also includes a set of habits, etiquette and social expectations derived from the home.

4. So that you can help students assimilate what they learn with what they already know. If a student cannot relate new information to his own experiences, or connect the new material to a familiar concept, he may perceive the new information as frustrating, difficult or dismiss it completely, believing it to be in conflict with his already tenuous understanding of the world. Teachers have the responsibility to seek out cultural building blocks students already possess, in order to help build a framework for understanding. Some educational pedagogy refers to this process as "scaffolding." Recognition of a student's cultural differences provides a positive basis for effective learning, and a "safe" classroom environment. Every group of students will respond differently to curriculum and teachers must constantly adjust to be sure their methods are diverse, both in theory and in practice.

What are some easy ways you've found to promote diversity in your classroom? Leave a comment below.

Also, if you're interested in learning more about how you can celebrate diversity in class, here are some tips I have for you.

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For College Admission Success, Mind Your Manners

By: Susie Watts

You may be wondering how college admissions and manners could possibly be related. The connection is surprisingly clear. As you go through the college planning process, you'll deal with adults who have some influence on your future. How you handle these encounters can make all the difference.

Frequently, the college admissions process seems quite impersonal, but there are many interactions with college representatives, admissions officers, alumni and high school teachers. This is where manners and appropriate behavior play a role.

Read on to find out the five areas of college admissions where manners do matter:

Teacher recommendations

Students usually ask high school teachers for college recommendations. Obviously, if teachers are asked to write a recommendation in the spring of your junior year, they have plenty of time to get this done during the summer. If, on the other hand, you wait until the recommendation is almost due, many teachers resent the rush and pressure to get the job done quickly. Teachers are busy people, and

they're doing you a favor. It's important to thank them for taking the time to write you a letter. Don't forget about your counselor, too.

Social media

Students don't always use the best judgment on their Facebook pages or other networking sites. Before you apply to college, clean up anything that could jeopardize your opportunities for college acceptance. Colleges DO care what you post and show online. If it's inappropriate, there's a good possibility it will be noted on your college application. A

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surprising number of college admissions officers reported social media sites have had a negative impact on a student's possibilities for college admission. Don't take that chance. It's poor manners to say things online that you might regret later.

Email and cellphones

It's wise for students to have a separate email address for all college correspondence. Your current address might be cute but doesn't convey the image you want to project to colleges. It's also smart to review your cellphone message. College representatives will often contact students on their cellphones to set up interviews. Most college reps would like to know that they've reached the student for which the call was intended. If the college representative hears blaring music, he or she may not know whether to leave a message. You might miss an important opportunity to connect with someone from a school that interests you. Also, know how to answer a phone. When asked, "Is this Rob?" say, "Yes, this is he," not "Yeah, this is him." First impressions count.

College interviews

If you have a chance to interview with someone from a college or university, by all means do it. Dress appropriately, and be prepared with a few questions you would like to ask about the school. Arrive at the interview at least 10 minutes early. College officers are busy and can't wait if you're late. It's important to meet your interviewer with a firm handshake. You should also maintain good eye contact throughout the interview. When you return home, it's polite to send a thank-you note, not an email. Ask your interviewer for a business card so you know where to send the note. Show interest in the school and listen to what the interviewer has to say.

College visits

College admissions committees like to accept students who show an interest in their school. One of the best ways to do this is through a college visit. Call in advance to set up a tour, information session and possible interview. Avoid using your cellphone or texting while you are visiting a college campus. Pay attention to the guide, and don't talk with other people during the tour. Colleges realize that you're a teenager and don't expect you to act like an adult all the time. However, they do want to know that you can demonstrate appropriate behavior and know how to conduct yourself, so keep in mind that manners are important for college admissions.

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USA ranked 27th in the world in education and healthcare – down from 6th in 1990

By: Scotty Hendricks

The American healthcare and education systems are known to need some work, but a new study suggests we've fallen far in comparison to the rest of the world.

The findings show what progress, if any, 195 countries have made over the last twenty years

The study suggests that economic growth is tied to human capital, which gives a dire view of America's economic prospects.

The concept of human capital has only been around since the '50s but

it's become an increasingly popular way of looking at the economic potential of countries. Typically defined as "the attributes of a population that, along with physical capital such as buildings, equipment, and other tangible assets, contribute to economic productivity" it includes things such as education levels, skill sets, and other intangible items that foster economic growth.

While we already know that a country's average education level is associated with its economic growth, a recent study looking into the growth of human capital around the world

over the last 26 years has included healthcare outcomes to the mix. While it was created to help motivate lower and middle income countries to increase their human capital investment, it offers a harsh look at the progress the United States has made over the previous 20; if any.

The study

As part of the World Bank's call for more data on human capital, a team of researchers at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington scoured

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over three decades worth of educational and medical data to help create an index showing the levels of human capital for every country in the world for both 1990 and 2016. In this study, human capital was defined as “expected years lived between the ages of 20 and 64.” Adjustments were also made for health and education levels, which were also ranked and compared. The four variables listed in the final analysis were expected years lived between 20 and 64, functional health status, years of educational attainment, and learning or education quality.

All of this was then fused into a single “expected human capital” score for each country.

That’s great and all, but where is my country?

School children in the Central

African Republic. Fostering human capital by means of education and improved healthcare systems is especially important in developing countries where growth projects typically focus on material goods.

The United States fell 21 spots over the years from 6th to 27th. This places us in the company of Germany (24), Greece (25), Australia (26), and the Czech Republic (28). The top spots are dominated by Western European and Nordic countries, with Finland topping the list both in 1990 and 2016. South Korea and the Republic of China are the only non-European representatives in the top 10 for 2016, edging out Canada, which fell to 11th place.

Wait, how did that happen?

One problem was that America’s scores declined in one significant category, educational attainment. The

decrease in education spending during the time period studied might have caused this. Nevertheless, countries that increased spending in analyzed areas, such as Turkey and both Chinas, saw tremendous improvements in their position on the list.

That was the only dimension where the United States saw a decline, however. The other categories saw improvement — albeit marginal. The primary reason why the U.S. fell so far was that other countries were able to improve their scores by a lot more than America was. Austria, for example, was ranked 19th in both 1990 and 2016 but saw substantial gains across the board, allowing it to surpass the United States.

But, we spend so much money!

It’s not that Americans don’t spend a lot of money on these things. As a

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matter of fact, the U.S. spends more per student than almost any other country on education and way more than anybody else on healthcare. The problem, or at least part of it, is that much of this money is spent inefficiently. The Nordic countries, which dominate the top spots on the list, have universal healthcare which provides better outcomes at a lower price than the American system does. Because of this system, the cost of drugs and health care administration is lower in Europe than in America. Last year, half a billion dollars was spent on lobbying on behalf of healthcare providers, pharmaceutical companies, and insurance companies which could have been spent on actual healthcare.

Today, there are still around 30 million Americans without health insurance despite progress over the last decade. The number of those

uninsured has increased in the last couple of years due to rollbacks on Medicaid and reduced advertising of government programs. These inefficiencies add up to mean that, despite increased spending, America's human capital scores hardly moved over the last three decades.

What does this all mean?

The study reconfirms the relationship between human capital and economic growth. With countries that make the most substantial investments in their populations seeing higher growth rates as a result. This could speak poorly for the future growth prospects of the United States if its relative position continues to decline. President Jim Yong Kim of the World Bank hopes the data collected will help spur further investment by governments into education and healthcare. He framed the benefits of a single, comprehensive human capital

index as a motivating force.

With the right measurements, an index ranking the human capital in countries will be hard to ignore, and it can help galvanize much more — and more effective — investments in people

The findings also offer a bit of good news for the world. Even the country that came in last place, Niger, made progress over the years. It just did so at a slower rate than everybody else.

If nothing else, the relative decline of the United States over the last few decades shows that no country can rest on its laurels. Like the Red Queen in *Through the Looking Glass* tells us, "It takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

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We are an Equal Opportunity Employer, who fully and actively supports equal access for all qualified applicants, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability status, Genetic Information or Testing, Family & Medical Leave, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law, and prohibit retaliation against individuals who bring forth any complaint, orally or in writing, to the employer or the government, or against any individuals who assist or participate in the investigation of any complaint, or otherwise oppose discrimination.

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