



CS 428

Peopleware: Part III (chs 14-20)

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Bruce F. Webster

Part III: The Right People

- ◇ Get the right people
- ◇ Make them happy so they don't want to leave
- ◇ Turn them loose

Ch 14: The Hornblower Factor

- ◇ Companies often tend to push to hire the company average, “people that look like, sound like, and think like everybody else”
- ◇ Ditto for corporate dress standards
- ◇ “Unprofessional” is often used to characterize surprising and threatening behavior – “professional” is unsurprising behavior
 - ◇ Note: this is quite different from how I use “professionalism” in [TEPES](#)
- ◇ Entropy (uniformity) is always increasing in the organization
- ◇ Why do you think companies do this?

Ch 15: Let's Talk About Leadership

- ◇ Leadership is *not* a “work-extraction mechanism”
- ◇ Leadership is a form of service
- ◇ Real leadership involves (useful) innovation, which often involves rebellion
- ◇ Most innovation that happens is unwelcome because it requires accommodating change
 - ◇ Key point: humans hate and resist change
 - ◇ “Can’t we just do what we’re currently doing, but better/faster/cheaper?”
- ◇ Who’s the best leader you’ve ever worked with (in any situation)?

Ch 16: Hiring a Juggler

- ◇ Much of the hiring process often involves tasks or evaluations unrelated to the actual work being done
 - ◇ Puzzles or brain teasers
 - ◇ Asking to write code on the spot w/no access to books or the net
 - ◇ Aptitude tests that have no bearing on long-term contributions
- ◇ Three different approaches
 - ◇ Portfolio of work done to date, which actual examples
 - ◇ Audition: 15-minute presentation on some aspect of past work
 - ◇ Give candidate 30 minutes to critique sample of flawed or unfinished code
- ◇ What have been your own experiences in job interviews, good or bad?

Ch 17: Playing Well with others

- ◇ Once you have screened for talent, knowledge, and experience, then diversity becomes a bonus
- ◇ Bringing new and different people in can shake up a team for the better
- ◇ However, don't grow team size just for the sake of growth
- ◇ Have you ever been on an effective team?

Ch 18: Childhood's end

- ◇ Technology (new stuff) vs. environment (what you grow up with)
- ◇ Continuous partial attention – the opposite of flow
 - ◇ Difference between a 10% block of time and 10% of continual activity
- ◇ Articulate the contract: expected performance / behavior
 - ◇ In your case, work to find out what management expects and then live up to that
- ◇ Need to understand where attention lies (texting v. phone/e-mail)
- ◇ What does “maturity” mean in terms of professional performance?

Ch 19: Happy to be here

- ◇ Key problem with 'industrial' management viewpoint: turnover costs are seen as minor
 - ◇ In real life, they can be devastating to a project and to an organization
 - ◇ Hidden costs of turnover: management takes a short-term view to employee development and satisfaction
- ◇ Why people leave
 - ◇ #1 cause across all industries (recent study): their immediate manager
 - ◇ Just passing through, feeling of disposability, no reason for loyalty
 - ◇ Key point for would-be managers: **loyalty is a two-way street**
- ◇ Low turnover: mentality of permanence
 - ◇ Preoccupation for being the best
 - ◇ Investment in developing employees (education, training, etc.)
 - ◇ Clear career paths upward for all employees
- ◇ What have been your observations or experiences with turnover?

Ch 20: Human Capital

- ◆ Essential to see spending on employees as an *investment* not an *expense*
- ◆ Common management sin: focusing on improving near-term performance by sacrificing the longer term (“eating the seed corn”)
- ◆ Replacement of a valuable team member almost always causes a drop of team productivity (imperfect knowledge transfer, coming up to speed)
- ◆ Layoffs for the sake of layoffs can easily trigger a negative downward spiral
- ◆ What have you seen in terms of how management views its employees and their actual contributions?

Bonus slide: Keeping a strong IT staff despite layoffs

[\[link\]](#) (Baseline, 2009)

- ◇ Avoid or reverse the Dead Sea Effect
 - ◇ Get rid of underperformers; keep best people happy and on board
- ◇ Reduce Staff, Not Tools and Benefits
 - ◇ Need to keep people productive and happy
- ◇ Evaluate Teams, Not Just Individuals
 - ◇ When possible, keep high-functioning teams intact
- ◇ Shape Your Teams to Fit Your Projects
 - ◇ Keep people to fit what projects will go forward
- ◇ Act Quickly and Decisively
 - ◇ Don't let things drag out; your best people will leave before you can retain them