

CS 428

PEOPLEWARE: PART III

(CHS 14-20)

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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 HORNBLLOWER 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