HOW TO MAKE YOURSELF UNRETRENCHABLE!

" In any well run company, merit is always given key consideration in order to ensure reliable employee performance evaluation – and rightly so. Every business that truly desires to be CONTINUALLY successful will actively identify and reward employees who demonstrate a passionate drive and commitment to helping the company achieve her goals – even if they have to go "the extra mile". Employees who perform this way often acquire and effectively apply a wide range of complementary competencies that give them an edge over others in the workplace. This article reviews a number of such competencies – explaining how diligent Self-Development can enable any willing employee acquire them, and consequently deliver performances that would make decision makers regard him/her as a valuable asset that must be held on to. In other words, s/he would have become unretrenchable. "

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"All successful employers are stalking people who will do the unusual, people who think, people who attract attention by performing more than is expected of them." — *Charles M. Schwab*

Who Should Read This Article?

A. The career person who wants to know what she can do to stay perpetually relevant to the organisation's future – and therefore be (to a large extent) unretrenchable.

B. The decision maker, employer or business owner who is curious to learn what qualities her employees need to develop to ensure they can consistently deliver the desired level of productivity.

Any Employee Can Become Unretrenchable

Any employee can deliberately equip herself with competencies (skills, knowledge and attitudes) that will make decision makers continuously regard her as being relevant to the organization's future. Published studies of highly successful executives(e.g. "The Lessons of Experience – Lexington Books" – by Morgan McCall Jr., Michael Lombardo and Ann Morrison) reveal that most of them acquired and effectively applied competencies that were instrumental to their achievement of significant career successes.

Some of those competencies are described below:

1. Active Learners From Others/Experience: They are constantly on the lookout for lessons to learn from others (mentors, peers etc), and from things they do that go wrong – or right. Regard every on-the-job experience as a learning platform to improve themselves. They then apply their learning to future actions they take.

2. Positive Thinkers/Problem-Solvers: Always see the positive side of things. Typically regard problems as opportunities to learn new things – and are often prepared to keep going as long as necessary to find a lasting solution. Have a clear understanding of the(sometimes long term) benefits offered by periodic visitations of adversity. Most importantly, they are motivated by failure because rather than fear it, they dislike failing.

3. (Voracious) Readers: They cultivate and maintain healthy reading habits aimed at keeping them up-to-date with latest developments in relevant fields. Their resultant diverse knowledge of various subject matter makes them interesting to interact with – and also equips them to coach others effectively.

4. Multidimensional Thinkers: They always try to "see the big picture". Keep tabs on the pulse of the company, to anticipate trends and adjust themselves to remain relevant to her changing needs. Team playing is important to them, and they will often "cross over" unasked, to help other departments resolve their problems, so as to help the organization move forward.

5. People Developers: Good coaches, often striving to develop others around them to be high performers. Believe in helping new entrants "learn the ropes" quickly, (rather than "re-invent the wheel") by striving to shorten/make less painful, their learning curves. This frequently gains them a strong following amongst peers and subordinates, often resulting in an informal leadership status being conferred on them.

6. Enjoy what they do: They get a lot of excitement from doing their jobs. The daily challenges give them something to look forward to i.e. sustained motivation.

7. Intelligent Risk-Takers: Like to be in the thick of the action – and are not afraid to take responsibility. Will readily accept high priority or risk-laden project assignments that others dread taking on. Practice Intelligent Mistake Making™(i.e. take

calculated risks, learn quickly from any consequent error(s), then being subsequently wiser, avoid repeating them) and do not fear failure. As such they tend to recover quickly from setbacks, using lessons they've learned to achieve new and/or greater levels of success.

8. Challenge the status quo: Always in the forefront of the drive to change the way things are currently being done, for the better. Often to be found visualizing the future i.e. "What can be", and not "What is or Was". Not afraid to "rock the boat" in looking for viable alternative(s) to existing ways of doing things.

9. People Managers: They know "how to win friends and influence people". Can usually get people not working directly with or under them, to do things without forcing (or clashing with) them. Some people call it having "people skills". As team leaders or members, they are therefore often very effective.

10. Multi-preneurs: They employ a multiple-career strategy involving acquiring a variety of relevant skills so as to be in a position to capture opportunities when they appear. Consequently, they wear many hats at work (e.g. True story of an ex-brewer – this writer – who got recognition for using his "self-taught" IT skills to computerize brewing data collation/reporting, by developing automated computer spreadsheet applications – thereby eliminating the need for the company to buy expensive off-the-shelf software). Read my article titled How To Be A Jack Of Many Trades™, And Why It Can Make You Succeed More Often? to learn more about Multipreneurs.

Question: But HOW Can One Develop These Competencies?

Answer: Through Self-Development which I define as..

".. the process by which an individual continually – and intelligently – uses her own efforts, resources, knowledge and experiences(as well as those of others, voluntarily supplied), to improve her ability to achieve repeated personal or workplace successes"

Who Else Has Acknowledged This Thinking?

The truth presented in this article is based on timeless wisdom that has been substantiated by recognised and qualified authorities in the field of Human Resources/People Development.

Peter Drucker, as far back as 1955, wrote in his book "The Practice of Management", that development cannot be anything other than Self-Development. Among other things, he explained that for any organisation to take on the responsibility of developing her people would effectively be a waste of time because, that responsibility is the individual employee's – and no development would happen if the individual does not take up the responsibility to make it happen.

In the book "The Lessons of Experience", Morgan McCall and his colleagues researched the careers of nearly two hundred of America's most successful senior executives and concluded – quite accurately – that every individual manager has "the primary responsibility" for his/her own "effective development".

The British Institute of Management in a major report on "Management Mobility and Redundancy" admonished the "prudent manager" to regularly evaluate her knowledge status as relates to her job, and take action to ensure it is updated to not just stay in touch with latest developments in her field(s) of interest, but also prepare her for the challenges of the future.

What Can You Do?

Various Self-Development resources exist. E.g. Books, tapes/CDs, seminars, on-the-job experiences, the Internet etc. The key here is for you to realize that you would be unwise to wait for your organization to "develop you". You must seize the initiative! Sometimes you may need to self-sponsor your Self-Development initiatives, so your company's "contributions"(for which many employees will most likely compete) can be like welcome extras!

Lastly, remember this: The success conscious organisation is always looking for employees who can help it become more profitable. So, transform yourself into that kind of employee and you WILL make yourself UNRETRENCHABLE!
To the employer: If the organisation wishes to see her employees develop, her individual managers' abilities or willingness to provide necessary encouragement or guidance for each employee to practise self-development (as opposed to "stifling" or "mis-directing" efforts by each employee to do so), would be a major determinant of success.

About Tayo Solagbade

Tayo K. Solagbade is a Location Independent Performance Improvement Specialist and Multipreneur (i.e. a highly versatile/multi-skilled entrepreneur), with a bias for delivering Best Practice solutions to Farm Businesses and others.

Since 2002, he has earned multiple streams of income providing individuals and organisations with personal development training and coaching, custom MS Excel-VB solutions, web marketing systems/web hosting, freelance writing services, and best practice extension support services (for farm business owners).

Tayo is the author of the Self-Development (SD) Bible™ and the popular Livestock Feed Formulation Handbook. He is also the developer of its accompanying Excel-VB driven Ration Formulator™ and the Poultry Farm Manager™ software.

He has delivered talks/papers to audiences in various groups and organisations, including the Centre for Management Development, University of Lagos, Christ Baptist Church, Volunteer Corps, Tantalisers Fast Foods and others.

In May 2012 he was the Guest Speaker at the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development's Annual Semester Entrepreneurial Lecture at Yaba College of Technology in Lagos.

On 1st April 2013, Tayo (who reads, writes and speaks the French language) relocated to Cotonou, Benin Republic to begin slowly traveling across the West African region.

His key purpose is to deliver talks, seminars and workshops on his key areas of focus and interest to interested audiences (Email tayo at tksola dot com for details).

In a previous life, before leaving to become self-employed, Tayo served for seven years (October 1994 to December 2001) as a high performing manager in Guinness Nigeria. He rose from Shift Brewer to Training & Technical Development Manager, and later acted in senior roles as Production Manager and Technical Manager.

In addition to constantly challenging the status quo and influencing positive work changes, he built a reputation for using self-taught spreadsheet programming skills (starting with Lotus 1-2-3, and later moving to Excel Visual Basic) – in his spare time – to develop Automated Spreadsheet

Applications to computerize manual report generation processes in the departments he worked. Over four(4) of his applications were adopted for brewery level reporting.

When he's not amazing clients with his superhuman skills (wink), Tayo works as the creative force behind his Daily Self-Development Nuggets blog - on which he also publishes previews of The Farm CEO weekly paid subscription newspaper.

You can connect with him on Twitter @tksola and Facebook (www.tayosolagbade.com/fbk).

Visit Tayo Solagbade Dot Com, to download over 10 performance improvement resources to boost your personal and work related productivity.

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