



Randy's Work *and You*

March Edition

Dear clients and colleagues,

In this month's edition, there is an excellent article about career advice from a Google Veteran. Interviewing strategies discusses what works in an interview today and in Boomer Corner, there are the 7 tips for working for a younger boss.

Copies of all past E-zines are archived on my website. Feel free to pass this E-zine on.

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This month's topics:

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1 Career advice from a Google vet: 10 guidelines **By Patricia Sellers**

Ever since I met Sukhinder Singh Cassidy, Google's former President of Asia-Pacific and Latin American Operations, a couple of years ago, I've been fascinated by her far-flung career path. Singh Cassidy worked at Merrill Lynch out of college, then went to Amazon.com and then OpenTV and News Corp.'s BSkyB. Eventually tapping her inner entrepreneur, she co-founded Yodlee, a financial-services Internet startup, and then landed at Google, where she built several operations from scratch and spent six years.

Just turned 40, Singh Cassidy has landed a new gig: as the CEO of Polyvore, a three-year-old Internet outfit with designs on conquering the fashion and lifestyle space. As I mentioned about her news, Singh Cassidy told me that she has, for quite a while, kept a list of career guidelines for herself. They're basically about understanding yourself, assessing your passions, and knowing when and where

to leap. So here is some great advice from a Silicon Valley star who I advise you keep your eye on.

–Patricia Sellers

1. Decide what you're trying to prove—and to whom.

You need to park what other people expect you to do. Take it out of the equation and figure out what you're trying to prove to yourself. Then parse it even further. If the journey itself gets you excited, you're on the right track. But if you're trying to prove something to yourself—and if the very thought of how you go about it is draining—pause and reexamine it.

2. Believe in the “gut/instinct, then data, then back to your gut/instinct” cycle.

When you see something that you like/love, you don't need to jump right away. But get as much data as you can. Then realize that the data is helpful but ultimately imperfect/incomplete and will only tell you so much. Use it for what it's for: to “reinforce” or “validate” your gut instinct, or not. Then choose to take or not take the last leap of faith on an informed basis. At that last step, it will always be a leap.

3. Recognize that you can't manufacture consumer addiction, or predict it, or overestimate its value.

A beloved user community that believes deeply in your product or service is your most precious asset. Treat it as such. Many companies have safe profitable business models, but one of the reasons that the consumer space online is so volatile—and so coveted—is because you just never know what people will love and use your product for...until you put it out there.

4. Look for lean teams that started on a shoestring.

Lean teams get traction very fast and at very low-cost. That DNA is the basis of successful, flexible, efficiently run organizations. I'm officially employee No. 13 at Polyvore, but you'd never guess from the big share of mind it's getting among online users that the company is so small.

5. Look for the passionate product-driven founder or visionary with whom you can partner.

If you're a business person in Silicon Valley, this is even more essential. Most of the great consumer companies here are driven by a passionate product visionary—most often a founder. This is someone whose consumer instinct is incredible. They also happen to be the guys—or women—who are most capable of inspiring and recruiting great engineers

who want to work on hard problems. Who's that partner for you? Welcome/embrace him or her. They're key to your success as a CEO.

6. Similarly, embrace all the founders.

The founders are the people most obsessed and willing to do anything to make their vision and the company successful. If they're all gone, perhaps you should be worried about a company run by the "professionals." After I left Google, people often asked me if I still believed in the company and would ever think about selling my stock. My reply was that the event that would most worry me would be if Larry Page or Sergey Brin left. This is the same way investors would feel if Steve Jobs left Apple.

7. Figure out how to make the "unknowns" known before you say yes.

Most people spend a few hours, or maybe a day or two or three at most, with the folks they're going to dedicate the next X years of their life to. (You don't pick a spouse this way.) The biggest difference between success and failure may be your culture fit/synergies with the existing leadership team—rather than your competency or theirs. If this is the case, how do you get a look inside the company before you're inside? Can you join a management meeting or a board session, meet more staff, or spend time with the CFO?

8. Look at what it the job is today and make sure you love it, vs. what it needs to be to get you excited.

It's nice to love a company for what you think you're going to make it. And obviously, going to something early, you have the ability to shape it. But if it's already got customers and employees and a brand, you've got to believe in the core of where you're starting from. If you're thinking about taking the company's current assets and reworking a significant part of the consumer front-end experience, you actually may be better off starting from scratch to achieve to your vision. Most often, you want to play off and accelerate the natural flow/culture of the company and its customers.

9. Go in with a vision of your 100-day plan and see if it resonates.

Before you accept the job, you should know what it might look like in the first 90 days. Have a thesis or basic game plan—some sense of what you think needs to be accomplished. Vet it/check it with the founders and board. Also, ask yourself what your day-to-day job will be and how it will feel to do those tasks. How much fun is it? Is it energy-giving or energy-draining? Be honest with yourself.

10. Even when you start a new job with great ambitions of work/life balance, realize that balance will fly out the window again.

I don't believe in work/life balance if it's measured over days or weeks. I took the past year, had a baby, got perspective on the different trends going on in the Valley, took a couple great vacations with my family and enjoyed not having any employees. But at the end of the day, doing exceptionally well is usually the result of obsessively focusing on one thing and getting passionate and inspired by it. Use the off-cycle to rest up, recharge, and put in place support for the coming phase. I lined up more household support, got my core fitness level back, and actually gave up a couple great professional opportunities to take stuff off my plate. I'm entering a cycle again where my balance will be off kilter for a while.

2. Interviewing Tips

I read in a LinkedIn sub-group that it takes about 17 interviews to get an offer in today's economy. The question posed was "How can I get that ratio down?" My response to the question is below:

To be honest, I thought the ratio would be higher than stated.

What do you think the top priority for a candidate in an interview? Get the offer? No. The top priority is to actively participate in determining the fit. Keep in mind that there are three elements to an interview: The hiring organization, the candidate and "the fit". If the focus is on the "fit", the candidate is less likely to take it personally.

In my roles of coach and executive search consultant, I find that most hiring managers are very poor interviewers.

In my view, there are only 3 questions that should be asked by the hiring manager in the interview:

- (1.) Can you do the job?
- (2.) Do you want to do the job?
- (3.) Will we like you doing the job?

Therefore, it's incumbent on the interviewee to:

- (1) Listen how success is defined for the position. "If I was successful in this position, what would I have accomplished in the first six months of employment?"
- (2) Never volunteer anything in an interview. The number one mistake in an interview is TMI (Too Much Information) given by the interviewee. Answer the question succinctly and to the point.

(3) Connect your relevant skills to the need of the position. If you do this successfully, both you and the hiring manager will have a sense of whether or not there is a fit.

(4) Be authentic and transparent about whom you are and what you believe in. This will help you be consistent in your answers.

It's actually possible to determine the fit by the end of the interview. I have clients ask for referrals at the end of the interview if the fit was not there (taking advantage of any "guilt" on the part of the hiring manager).

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3. 7 Tips: Working for a Younger Boss

By Emily Brandon *US News And World Report*

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As more baby boomers delay retirement and work until older ages, they may find themselves working for a younger boss. A recent Harris Interactive and CareerBuilder survey of 5,231 full-time employees found that 69 percent of workers ages 55 and older currently have a younger manager. The generational differences of this dynamic can create challenges. Here's how to form a solid relationship and even impress a younger supervisor.

Acknowledge their expertise. Be open to the fresh ideas and new approaches that a younger manager may bring to the job. "One of the problems that many boomers experience is that in their perception, the younger boss does not want to listen to their experiences and take account of their expertise," says Linda Gravett, a psychologist and coauthor of *Bridging the Generation Gap: How to Get Radio Babies, Boomers, Gen-Xers, and Gen-Yers to Work Together and Achieve More*. "The younger person has their own education and expertise and they don't want to be parented by someone."

Use electronic communication. A younger manager might prefer to interact with you via instant messenger, text message, or E-mail rather

than face to face or on the phone. "Talk about your preferred method of communicating," says Rosemary Haefner, the vice president of human resources at CareerBuilder. Make sure you log on to instant messenger every day and keep your cellphone, BlackBerry, or smart phone on to stay in the loop.

Don't expect too much face time. The number of hours you log at the office is generally less important to younger managers than the results you produce. "A boomer might say that work ethic means you are in the office half an hour before your start time and work through lunch, but a generation X or Y manager says that telecommuting allows you to miss the rush hour and get some more work done," says Gravett. "They are looking for results and productivity as opposed to face time in the office." Be prepared for webinars and teleconferences and fewer in-person meetings.

Point out your results. Keep your boss up to date with your progress toward meeting goals. "Ask questions when you are not sure, deliver on time, and try to overachieve," says Haefner. Tally your accomplishments, and make your boss aware of them on a regular basis. Instead of chatting about your decades of experience, talk about expectations you have exceeded over the past month or six months.

Act your age. Avoid comparing a younger manager to your adult children or talking about what you were doing at their age. "The last thing the boss wants to hear is 'you remind me of my son,' " says Gravett. Conversely, you don't need to prove yourself hip to 30-somethings. "It is not appropriate to try to act younger than your age, dress younger, or try to disguise yourself as a younger individual in order to fit in," says Cam Marston, president of Generational Insight and author of *Motivating the "What's in It for Me?" Workforce: Manage Across the Generational Divide and Increase Profits*. "It comes across as silly."

Update your skills. When a manager introduces a new workflow system, take advantage of retraining opportunities. Think of it as a way to get paid while you learn new software programs and keep your skills up to date. Becoming proficient with the latest technology is key to staying employed in a difficult job market.

Don't compete. According to the CareerBuilder survey, some employees complain that their younger bosses act as if they know more than older workers when they don't (15 percent) or didn't earn their position (12 percent). But it's best not to openly compete with a younger supervisor or belittle him or her because of age. "Don't come across as being a know-it-all just because you have been around for a while," says Gravett. "Of course you know quite a bit, but that doesn't mean you know it all."

4. Success Story:

Robin Sweeny Age 80

“The woman who won’t quit”

For Robin Sweeny, retirement is time to get up and go, go, go. Her dedication to civic service and volunteerism is simply a way of life. Robin is a retired nurse. She spent 28 years on the Sausalito City Council. She was the first female mayor of Sausalito in 1972 as well as the first female Rotarian in 1987. She has served on countless volunteer activities in her life.

And she shows no sign of quitting. She continues to volunteer, advise, organize or lead the way for many projects and groups. She works to raise money to operate, maintain and pay drivers for the Southern Marin Hot Meal Coalition that she help found in 1995. Once a week she is a docent at “The Icehouse”, Sausalito’s visitor center.

“I do not really know what propels me from one thing to another,” Robin says. “I cannot sit around doing nothing. I get restless.”

(Excerpted from an article in *Marin the Independent Journal* written by Carla Bova).

5. Humor Department: Actual job titles on Craigslist.

Wow!

1. Experienced bra fitter – I bet they had trouble finding candidates for this one.
2. PlayStation Brand Ambassador – please report to your residence in the United States of Nintendo.
3. Eyebrow Threading – I REALLY hope this has something to do with dolls.
4. Administraive/ Secretary – ok, ok, we get it. It’s clear where you need help.
5. Finish Carpenter – for when the Start Carpenter gets tired.
6. Helpdesk Technician @ Pentagon – “Uh, hello? I’m having a problem with this missile...”
7. Nail Tech – so nails *can* be pretty complicated...
8. Remedy Engineer – aren’t those called “doctors”?
9. Saltlick Cashier – new trend in the equestrian industry. Ok, enough horsing around.
10. Molecular Biologist II – when Molecular Biologist I gets promoted.

11. Breakfast Sandwich Maker – we also got one of these recently.
12. Preschool Teacher #4065 – either that’s a really big school or they’ve got robot teachers.
13. Glacéau drop team – for a new sport at the Winter Olympics: ice-water spilling.
14. PLUMMER/ELECTRICIAN – get a dictionary/thesaurus first.
15. DoodyCalls Technician – they really shouldn’t put down janitors like that.
16. Golf Staff – and here I thought they were called clubs.
17. Pressure Washers – what’s next, heat cleaners?
18. Sandwich Artist – another “Jesus in my food” wannabe.
19. COMMERCIAL space hunter – so they did find animals further out in the cosmos? Who knew.
20. Licensed Seamless Gutter Contractor – just sounds bad.

6. Words that Inspire:’

No one is completely unhappy at the failure of his best friend.

-- Groucho Marx

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