
OPINION

The Future Lies in Ourselves

Philip Carrigan
Partner, Optia Partners
philip@optiapartners.com

In these times of changes, mergers, acquisitions and layoffs we need to remember what William Shakespeare wrote in Julius Caesar.

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

It often takes a personal crisis, for our seed of greatness to grow. This may be of some comfort to those Banyu and Pfizer people who have lost their jobs. The companies say the layoffs are simply a reflection of the global market and both companies have had their share of problems. Drugs had been pulled from clinical development, patents had expired and both Pharma giants are also facing law suites. But where does this leave the individual? How can a middle manager or director ensure they are in the best position to find another opportunity when the axe falls?

When it comes to our careers - I always have the same answer. Our careers are not in the hands of our superiors, we have that power. It is the individual who controls his or her own destiny. By seeing ourselves as an individual business we then consciously take control of our lives. Psychologists agree that our confidence is directly correlated to the degree of control that the individual has of their lives. By being proactive and actively investing the time to upgrade skills and postgraduate studies is the easiest way to put ourselves in the best possible position.

Most of all we need to be flexible, be willing to change adapt. Four simple points we can all do to ensure that our careers are on the right track.

1. Have a clear vision of where you want to be in five years. Write your goal down. Write down the goal everyday with a date of its completion
2. See yourself as a business, selling your skills and time
3. Continually look to upgrade, take courses
4. Work the plan. Stay flexible

Many people fear change but one thing is certain - in 12 months time, our companies will be different. Products come and go, as do fellow employees and opportunities. On a day-to-day basis, life appears to remain the same. However, we only have to wind the clock back 12 months to notice that life has been in constant motion. Who would have thought 12 months ago, that internet king Takafumi Horie of Livedoor would be behind bars?

Much has been written on goal setting and its importance in all endeavors. However, how many of us actually put pen to paper and write down exactly what we want out of life? Sales-training guru Brian Tracy recommends in his book Goals to write down your goals everyday with a deadline of exactly what is you want out of your life and when it will materialize. If you are facing uncertainty, then now is the opportunity to take charge and set your goals.

For some, this passing crisis may be part of your destiny and be pushing you on to a brighter and better path.

In Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, another famous quote rings true.

Men at some time are masters of their fate: The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves