

Member's Quarterly

Summer 2020 Edition

Perspective

Two Traits for Top Performers: Optimism and Adaptability

Is YOUR glass half full?

Over the past months, we've experienced the COVID-19 crisis which has affected everyone on a global basis, not just those in Canada or across North America. This scenario has never happened before and there was no "rule book" on how to manage the workforce.

As we try to become more agile in our organizations and manage better, I found that two personality traits stand out for top performers: Optimism and Adaptability.

Most of us have now experienced the full range of emotions from fear, depression and grief to anxiety and panic. We hear sad stories daily of how those around us have been impacted by this pandemic. At one point, it is necessary to come to terms with the reality of the situation, do the analysis and find ways to move towards a better future.

You can either be an optimist or a pessimist — which one works best? Those who have walked around with a black cloud over their heads for most of their lives are not looking towards developing any path of improvement or how to reach more positive outcomes at the best of times. If 'the glass was half empty' before, what happens now?

That's where optimism plays such an important role. You will move faster and further in a forward direction being an optimist with "the glass half full" attitude. To be blunt, you'll not only succeed but possibly exceed your expectations and those around you!

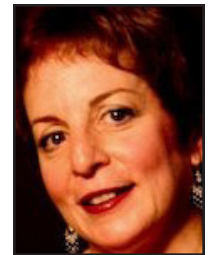
Let me share with you some conversations that I've had in the past few months. A senior manager with 20 years' experience in a prominent organization with only a few years before retirement found out that she'd been terminated. She went through the initial shock and the seven stages of grief and believes that she can overcome this in spite of the odds. Rather than obsess in the misery of it all, she reaches out to explore what skills she can obtain to expand her horizon and eventually find a job in another related field. She develops a full strategic plan on what she needs to move ahead with the professional development and update her resume for the post-COVID-19 job search.

A department manager reaches out to us because his employer laid off 30% of its workforce, moved those left to work out of their homes and he feels this entire operation will fail. He asks for suggestions to help him manage his team telework but he knows this new way of working is doomed. Where do you go when "the glass is half empty"? The first thing is to try to change the mindset but that is not an easy process. He must understand that with the attitude he has, he will not be able to hide it from his employees regardless of what he says or does. He is also not in the position to help others move forward as he's not looking in the same direction. Once he understood, some concrete suggestions were made with the hopes that he'll move along the right path.

Being an optimist will help you in every aspect of your life. Not only will it help you become a better and more successful person, it will motivate and uplift those around you. It has also proven to help overcome major hurdles in life such as life-threatening illness and job loss to name a few. Having lived through this crisis I've learned how important it is to see "the glass as half full".

As the saying goes, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade."

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