



GET INTENTIONAL

ANIISU K VERGHESE Ph.D.



Unconventional approaches and tenacity
for personal branding and professional advancement

From the author of "Internal Communications: Insights, Practices and Models"



Notion Press Media Pvt Ltd

No. 50, Chettiyar Agaram Main Road,
Vanagaram, Chennai, Tamil Nadu – 600 095

First Published by Notion Press 2021
Copyright © Anisu K Verghese Ph.D. 2021
All Rights Reserved.

ISBN 978-1-63904-686-7

This book has been published with all efforts taken to make the material error-free after the consent of the author. However, the author and the publisher do not assume and hereby disclaim any liability to any party for any loss, damage, or disruption caused by errors or omissions, whether such errors or omissions result from negligence, accident, or any other cause.

While every effort has been made to avoid any mistake or omission, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that neither the author nor the publishers or printers would be liable in any manner to any person by reason of any mistake or omission in this publication or for any action taken or omitted to be taken or advice rendered or accepted on the basis of this work. For any defect in printing or binding the publishers will be liable only to replace the defective copy by another copy of this work then available.

Contents

Synopsis 13

Foreword..... 15

Advance Praise 19

Acknowledgments..... 23

Dedication 25

Biography..... 27

Preface..... 31

Introduction..... 39

Knowing Yourself and What You Want From Life57

Chapter 1 Discovering Yourself59

Chapter 2 Hard Work is NOT Equal to Success62

Chapter 3 Knowing When to Get Off the Bus65

Chapter 4 Be a Specialist and Differentiate Yourself.....67

Chapter 5 Keeping Secrets and Protecting Your Reputation.....69

Making the Right Choices for Success71

Chapter 6 Making the Most Out of Tough Times73

Chapter 7 Learning from Mistakes.....75

Chapter 8 Feedback and What to Do with It.....77

Chapter 9 It Is All about the Message.....79

Chapter 10 What Bad Bosses Can Teach You?81

**Signposting: Communicating Your Destination and
Why it Matters to Others and to You83**

Chapter 11 Respect Yourself to Gain Respect85

Chapter 12	Be Humble. Don't Let Your Ego Ruin Your Career	88
Chapter 13	You Have a Responsibility to Grow Others	90
Chapter 14	Find a Mentor and Take Charge of Your Growth.....	92
Chapter 15	I Got to my Destination. Now What?	94
Momentum: Making and Sustaining a Positive Impact		97
Chapter 16	Repetitive Work and Being in the Flow	99
Chapter 17	Reading the Signs Early Enough.....	101
Chapter 18	Why Am I Slogging While Others Are Having a Good Time?	103
Chapter 19	Honor Your Colleagues and Respect Their Work	106
Chapter 20	What You Say Isn't What People Take Away	108
Essentials		111
	Daily Regimen.....	111
	Giving Back	113
	Financial Planning.....	115
	Personal Branding.....	119
	Career Management	142
Derailers		175
	Be Watchful of Credibility Derailers. 'Small' Stuff Does Matter.....	175
	Avoid Credibility Derailers. Own Your Development.....	176
	Overcome Credibility Derailers. Be Humble and Tactful	177
	Be Wary of Credibility Derailers. Avoid Mindless Interactions	179
	Don't Ignore Credibility 'Degradars'. You Cannot 'Not' Communicate.....	181
	Shun Credibility Degradars. Protect the Culture	183
	Know What Good and Great Looks Like	184
	Partner for Success.....	185
	Networking.....	191

Personal Branding.....	203
Personal Branding Interviews with Thought Leaders.....	230
Dr. Deva Rangarajan	231
Muqbil Ahmar.....	234
Tinu Cherian Abraham.....	238
Joseph Fernandez.....	242
Christina Daniels	249
Karthik Srinivasan	252
Gautam Ghosh	258
Alexander Michael Gittens	263
Mubeena Azeez.....	271
Itzik Amiel	275
Mangal D Karnad	280
Abhijit Bhaduri.....	283
Sandeep K. Krishnan.....	288
Scott Shirai.....	292
Sunil Robert.....	297
Dr. Latha Vijaybaskar	303
Abha Maryada Banerjee.....	307
Dr. Amit Nagpal.....	314
Sukanti Ghosh	320
Amith Prabhu.....	326
Dave Carroll	329
Raja Karthikeya.....	336
Jeppe Vilstrup Hansgaard	342
Karthik Nagendra PhD	345
Suresh Ramdas	348
Chip Helm	350

KV Dipu	352
Ramesh Jude Thomas.....	356
Cherian Kuruvila	362
Atamjeet Singh Bawa.....	365
Vidyadhar Prabhudesai.....	370
Patrick Widmann.....	373
Dr. Kalpana Gopalan.....	375
Personal Interviews in Media.....	380
Your Get Intentional Journey	384
<i>Appendix.....</i>	<i>385</i>
<i>Resources</i>	<i>385</i>
<i>Self-Assessment.....</i>	<i>387</i>
<i>5F Model Self-Assessment.....</i>	<i>387</i>
<i>Personal Branding Assessment</i>	<i>391</i>
<i>3X3 Networking Assessment.....</i>	<i>393</i>

Knowing Yourself and What You Want From Life

Success is due less to ability than to zeal.

– **Charles Buxton**

Discovering Yourself

“Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm.”

– Sir Winston Churchill

Amit, the Creative Director at Bitopi Leo Burnett, reviewed my file and said, “Since you have your papers in order, got your passport ready, and most importantly have the passion for the job, you are offered the opportunity to join us”. I had applied for the role of an account executive, the starting position in an advertising agency, and my first job.

Without formal education in advertising or experience, it is often difficult to get a break in advertising. Many will agree how tough it is to convince recruiters on why you fit the bill without the relevant experience. Very often, it is a chicken and egg story—without experience, you can get started but who started with experience in the first place? It hadn’t been easy either to get this opportunity. After my MBA, there were internships of various sales and marketing firms but those roles didn’t appeal to me. I realized early that I wasn’t good at selling products but did have a way with words. What then were my options?

Journalism? Content writing? Advertising? It came after about 100 plus applications to agencies—addresses which I had gathered from A&M magazine (the key sources for agencies in those days) as well as the internet. My carefully crafted application letter (called out why I was most suited for the role—imagine saying that without an iota of experience!) followed by persistent calls opened up this opportunity.

* * * * *

Here is the backstory. I grew up in Calcutta, the City of Joy, and as in most middle-class families, I kept getting goaded to studying science and becoming a doctor or an engineer. It is often the wish of most parents to see

their children securing their lives by enrolling in a renowned engineering college or a B-school of repute.

My parents, I am always indebted to them for it, imbibed me with the interest of reading and writing early in life. Staying on campus at one of India's famous libraries—the National Library—gave me access to the finest literature one can get his/her hands on. I spent many hours every day in the library and during my vacations and developed a passion for writing.

Without television (we got our TV only in 1984 or so—with hindsight, I was glad we never got it earlier), the radio became my companion. Listening to short-wave radio required patience and my brother and I often tuned into some of the best radio stations around the globe—The Voice of America, the British Broadcasting Corporation, Radio Deutsche Welle, and Radio Netherlands among others. My correspondence with these stations (they send you QSL cards if you report out frequency, signal, and interference data to them from your location) honed my writing skills.

In college, I grabbed the opportunity to turn around two newsletters that didn't have any direction. As a part of the cultural team, I carved a niche for writing. During my postgraduation, I worked for free to get by-lines for national and local newspapers. Alongside a few of my batchmates, I began conducting market research and feasibility studies barely covering our costs; just to get that much-needed 'experience'. By the time we were ready for placement week, we didn't need those jobs since we had in our belt 'experience' and rich knowledge that the others didn't have. Also, what impressed most interviewers were our determination and passion to get industry experience.

Marshall Goldsmith describes this powerful moment in his book *'Mojo'* as "that positive spirit toward what we are doing now that starts from the inside and radiates to the outside."

However, we need to be aware of opportunities that might come along which look more attractive enough but are not in line with our core strengths or focus. Avoiding the temptation to jump ships is what will determine your long-term success.

Takeaway: Know your strengths and get stronger at them. Over time, you will be known for your expertise.

Reflection:

- What do you think are your key strengths?
- What can you do to enhance them?

Exercise:

- Think of your ‘superpower’. What do you think it is? What is that you can do to give back to others around you?
- What can you do to make it work? Write down two actions you will take to help others know and feel the impact of your ‘superpower’.

Hard Work is NOT Equal to Success

“If your success is not on your own terms, if it looks good to the world but does not feel good in your heart, it is not success at all.”

– Anna Quindlen

The company’s flagship event is around the corner and Vinitha is frustrated that Jessy has been playing hooky once too often. In fact, she has spotted Jessy leaving her lunch box at the ground floor reception area so that she can indiscreetly leave the office at short notice and without informing anyone. All this is frustrating Vinitha and she feels helpless. It is causing immense stress on Vinitha’s ability to manage her home and work. There are just too many moving parts—expected from an event of this scale and very little support from the four people who are also expected to contribute to the effort. Jessy seems to always portray an image that she is around and contributing to the event although she hasn’t even attended the last three meetings. Familiar with this situation? Someone who takes credit for your work while prancing around someplace else? What I share here is a true episode in a respectable organization.

Vinitha’s manager keeps asking her for a status on the event and she isn’t able to share that the project is slowing down due to a lack of cooperation from others.

She isn’t able to confront Jessy since she manages to come up with the weirdest excuses and can’t approach her supervisor because it gives an impression that Vinitha isn’t able to get work done or keep a team together.

So, is hard work enough to succeed at your workplace? Or does it mean that if you play hooky, you will get away from real work?

Let me debunk the myth. Vinitha feels that hard work equals rewards or recognition or success. Unfortunately, that is far removed from the truth. Everyone is expected to work ‘hard’ and that is the basic ask in the workplace. However, working to add value is what takes you ahead. You

need to constantly think about the problem and propose and implement a workable solution that benefits all. It is also about managing expectations, keeping people informed, getting buy-in, and also staying closely connected to what goes on around you. Again, not to say that you need to be involved in gossip but knowing what the themes are floating around can help you navigate the system better. It isn't that Jessy's actions are going unnoticed. Sooner or later, it will catch up with her.

However, it shouldn't be Vinitha's problem to keep chasing people. She has to make some tough choices.

Here are some tips that will make her life easier and get her focus back on what she does well.

She needs to document every meeting and conversation, formal or informal, and build a culture where each individual needs to give status about his/her tasks, be it in person or on the phone, or even on e-mail.

A rhythm for running the event must be established and agreed on by all stakeholders and Vinitha can even own reporting out to the leaders and her manager. That will reduce the chances of those trying to flee from their responsibilities.

She also needs to check if the team is convinced about the event's objectives and gauge if there is a motivation issue.

Let's go back to some of the elements of the framework that we began with:

Knowing yourself: Vinitha needs to know her capabilities, the limitations of her job, and what she wants from this event.

Making the right decision: In this case, her following up with others isn't a good choice since it dilutes her effort and defeats the purpose of teamwork. If she decides to accuse Jessy, it would have reflected poorly on her image. If she chooses to go it alone since she wasn't getting the support, it might lead to burnout. Instead, by establishing openness and transparency, she can influence how all in the team contribute equally to the success of the event. Finally, Vinitha must realize that this is only a job and not take life so seriously. She should learn lessons from people around her. You can't choose your colleagues but can help them appreciate what value you bring to the table.

Messages you convey: Every communication, be it verbal or e-mail, sends out a signal about one's capabilities as an individual and as a professional. By consciously framing her responses, including her manager in the decisions she has made or chosen to make, Vinitha can overcome wrong signals going out from others to let her down. She must go in with the premise that although everyone has good intentions, it is every individual's responsibility to shape his or her image.

Takeaway: Hard work doesn't pay, working smart does.

Reflection:

- What has been your experience with working in whichever capacity that you engage in?
- Have you noticed how your work is perceived?

Exercise:

- List three ways in which you will not just let 'your work speak for itself' but also make it a point to let people know how you add value.

Knowing When to Get Off the Bus

“Try not to become a man of success but rather to become a man of value.”

– Albert Einstein (1879–1955)

Jabil is a man in a hurry. He has a lot going for him—a marketing degree from a reputed institution, a great job, people seeking him for assignments at work, and well-meaning colleagues. However, he doesn’t seem to be happy with his title and wants to be promoted despite not having enough experience to move to the next level or getting the confidence of his supervisor or peers. But that doesn’t deter him. *He is adamant and abrasive*, to a point that he ‘threatens’ to quit for this reason. His supervisor tries to reason with him pointing to the future and how much he is valued in the company. That does not cut much ice with Jabil and he scans the market for other openings and takes the first one that elevates his title. He jumps jobs and quickly updates his LinkedIn profile to demonstrate to his former colleagues that he is made for better stuff and titles. But, quickly his joy turns into frustration since the new organization doesn’t ‘respect’ his qualification or his expertise. They treat him like a new hire and he increasingly looks to come back to his former workplace. Know someone like this?

Getting into an organization is sometimes relatively easier than moving on. Especially since one joins an organization with the intention of staying and building a career.

There are multiple reasons. Primarily, we often forget the reason for joining the organization in the first place! What did you think when you applied for that role? How did you see your career shaping up?

After joining, did your experience match the expectations you had?

If these questions aren’t satisfactorily answered, you have a reason to reconsider continuing.

Then, there is the social pressure that people usually think of. How will my peers, family, and friends view my career if I switch jobs often?

More often, we are also concerned about losing the investment of time and effort we have put in the organization.

Remember, you are a professional and the organization will need you as long as you are useful. Likewise, when you aren't growing personally and professionally, you may want to either discover the reason or find another place where you can achieve what you want. You aren't married to your company!

I know that in the past, staying loyal to a firm did sound like the right thing to do. It isn't about loyalty. It is about You.

So what are the signs that indicate you need to get off the bus? Here are my thoughts.

1. Your work isn't respected.
2. Your personal and professional lives blur and the organization isn't doing much to balance the two, nor are you able to get to a common ground. If you can't spend time with your family, then for whom are you earning so much?
3. Your organization can't get its bearings right.
4. You are leaving for someplace and something better. Be sure that the next place isn't like what you are leaving.

Takeaway: Don't leave for whimsical reasons. Have a good reason that enhances you as a person both professionally and personally. Also, the world is a small place and word spreads about good and bad deeds.

Reflection:

- *What signs tell you about your current role and how people view your commitment and work?*
- *How can you tap into the signals that give you leads?*

Exercise:

- *Write down three ways to ensure your work is respected more than what it is currently.*

Be a Specialist and Differentiate Yourself

“Be like a postage stamp—stick to one thing until you get there.”

– Josh Billings

Very often, I have heard this question come up during my addresses to students and the communication professionals. What should I be—a specialist or a generalist?

Well, there isn't a straightforward answer but I do have a point of view and further supported by research done on brands around the world, you can safely say that a specialist is usually more sought after.

Take for instance that you are ill and need to diagnose the cause for your sickness. Very often, people show up at a general physician's clinic and then get moved under a specialist's care. The reason is that while a generalist can only probe the cause and recommend a high-level solution, a specialist is more equipped to dig deeper into the symptoms and provide an accurate diagnosis.

When you think of buying a car, would you go with a company that has been making cars and is reputed for their work or a vendor that also supplies tractors, trucks, lawnmowers, etc.? Chances are that you will go for the former.

Likewise, at the workplace, while it is good to be aware of the various areas of work, we can only remember the specific skills that make people stand out. For example, you will recall a Joe, who is great with managing people or a Jane who is a wizard with spreadsheets, or an Amit who demonstrates leadership while conducting community events.

One way to figure out if your specialization is recognized is to keep your eyes and ears open to feedback. For instance, I often hear 'let us get the draft reviewed by Aniiisu before it goes out' helping me understand what people value in my work. Over time, you will have built an equity that is strong and will take you forward in your career.

How do you build that equity? By focusing on one key skill that differentiates you from the rest. You need to be careful not to get distracted by ‘better’ opportunities that come your way that will goad you to add more areas of expertise.

For example, if you want to be known as an expert in analytics, then you can’t be seen doing general management work. Instead, you should be creating best practices on analytics, sharing industry trends, speaking on the topic, and openly advocating the subject. This leads to the tag of ‘analytics’ getting linked to your name and the word spreads.

Takeaway: Carve your niche and be successful.

Reflection:

- *What are your thoughts on being a specialist vs. a generalist? When does each work best?*
- *How can you blend both?*

Exercise:

- *Note down how these two approaches have impacted your career and life.*

Keeping Secrets and Protecting Your Reputation

“What is told into the ear of a man is often heard a hundred miles away.”

– Chinese Proverb

Lalitha managed the HR Communications portfolio and handled sensitive information. In fact, she had access to company news much before it broke to the rest of the organization. Mukesh, an instructional designer with the HR team, knew Lalitha’s access to information and hatched a plot to get details of a leadership transition. He befriended Lalitha and asked her probing questions about the reasons for the leadership changes. Lalitha trusting Mukesh revealed the timing of the change. Soon, news spread about the changes and it severely impacted the morale of the organization. Kapil, the HR Lead, got wind of the information leak and dismissed Lalitha from her job.

In the workplace, even if we aren’t in positions that handle sensitive information, it is vital that we know where to draw the line between information that can be shared and which is privy to few people. The reasons are manifold, information passed on without context can be misleading and can derail internal processes or changes, for example.

As professionals, it is critical to be wary of social engineering and always seek clarifications if people are asking for information more than what they need to know. We live in a world where information spreads faster with the reach of social media and such gaps can have a huge impact on your organization’s reputation and brand image.

Not just that it damages your internal equity with co-workers who see you as unreliable. Over time, you are given lesser responsibility and finally, you will be seen as someone who contributes even less to the organization. In fact, I believe that people respect you more if you are known as someone

who can be trusted with information. That in turn makes them call you in to discuss changes and take your opinion a lot more.

Here Are Some Tips to Safe-keep Information:

1. **Keep a low profile if you handle sensitive information:** Often, if co-workers know how much is at stake in knowing you, they usually try to befriend you.
2. **Be aware of the information channels and rumormongers:** By observing people who always have something to share about someone or trade-in secrets, you know whom to keep a safe distance from.
3. **Define your boundaries:** Without jeopardizing your relationships with colleagues, you can quickly establish a protocol and code of order that allows each to stop the other if the information isn't sharable. Know that it is a question of your job and reputation. No one will feel sorry if you are dismissed for violating an ethics code of conduct.
4. **Avoid falling for guilt:** Often social engineers use the 'guilt' trap to snare victims. They may gain your trust and then use the relationship to garner favors. Remember that you are a professional and it is best to know when to draw the line between friendship and professional ethics.

Takeaway: Keeping secrets in the workplace is a healthy practice.

Reflection:

- *What makes people want to know more about your personal and professional lives?*
- *How have you stayed aware yet non-judgmental of workplace gossips and rumors?*

Exercise:

- *List three ways in which you can avoid and confront those who engage in unhealthy workplace practices.*

Enjoyed reading this sample?

Purchase the whole copy at

amazon.in