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Source: LinkedIn

Publication Date: July 16, 2018

Communicating Effectively, Adapting to Change, and Looking Forward

While many people argue that the skills needed to be successful in today's workforce have changed, **there are three major contributing factors or "skills" for the modern worker which precede any technical advancement: effective communication, adapting to change, and looking forward.** If we trace our roots, we can see these fundamental skills are essential not only to the modern-day workplace, but they have existed for thousands of years.

For millennia, human beings have been working together to achieve and better their worlds by communicating with each other. Before the first cell phone, emails, Facebook, and even the internet, we communicated through different means and still achieved wonders. The great pharaohs of Egypt communicate with us, today, through the passage of time leaving their mark on the world: the Great Pyramids. How did they do it? To achieve their vision, they would have to be highly effective communicators. Imagine an ancient scribe listening to the requests of one of those Pharaohs, intricately writing down and laying out plans to not only find the resources to build their master's homage towards the gods but to organize and manage the workers necessary to craft such a thing. It must have been momentous.

Does this sound familiar? It sounds like the CEO of an organization communicating their vision and plans to their employees. Much like the Pharaohs of old, the modern worker needs to communicate effectively with their colleagues to be successful in the workplace. Today, communication can come in many forms and through thousands of channels. Any individual, be it 1,000 years ago or today, should be able to use any medium at their disposal to communicate with others to share their ideas.

Throughout history, human beings have learned to adapt to their environment. A quintessential human characteristic is the ability to evolve and react to any adverse conditions of the world around them. For thousands of years, we have been using this innate ability to survive and make our mark on the land. Consider the Spartans. A team of 300 recognized the Persian encroachment as a threat and adapted by meeting them at Hell's Gate and stopping their advance. In today's workplace as well as eons ago, humankind's ability to adjust to a changing world has made us who we are today.

From this historical perspective, like workers from an ancient past, individuals in our current "modern" workplace, and those of a distant future have to adapt to changing conditions. One might need to deal with unexpected job loss, or a market downturn, or perhaps a disruptive technology which changes the landscape of the sector you work in. Whatever the challenge may be, and in any era, adaptation to changing conditions is one of the critical skills needed to be successful in the workplace because it allows us to deal with anything that comes our way.

Human beings are gifted with the ability to take in information, analyze it, and guess at what happens next. In ancient times, this might have been called prophecy. In modern workplaces, we call this "looking forward." Ancient Roman architects were great predictors. After reviewing history and gathering information from travelers of the silk roads, they were able to predict the need for a

highway transportation system early in the Roman empire's formation. These thought leaders used logical reasoning and prediction to look far into the future and determine what their expanding nation would need: roads to transport troops, resources, and people from place to place.

The ability to examine the world around us and make forward-thinking decisions about what we think will happen next has been and still is, a valuable skill in the workplace. CEO of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, was looking forward when he created a simple online bookstore with the ability to pay for items and ship them to your house from anywhere with an internet connection. He was looking forward, probably further than most, at a world filled with limitless possibilities where he could build the world's most recognized E-commerce platform. Using available information and predicting what may happen next is an essential skill in the modern workplace; it allows us to look forward and make informed decisions about what we should do next.

While the work landscape has evolved, the tools we use have changed, and the skills needed to be successful remain the same throughout history. From ancient rulers to tech giants of today, humankind has succeeded by communicating effectively, adapting to changing conditions, and looking forward into the future. These are the skills I believe are necessary to be successful in the workplace today to build a better tomorrow.