

Bulletin Board: Defining moments lead to success

by Amy_Winter

Even though he was only 5 feet 3 inches tall, Tyrone "Muggsy" Bogue didn't let ridicule from others get in the way of his dream of becoming a professional basketball player. His resilience helped him become the shortest NBA basketball player during his career.

Resilience was one of Bogue's defining qualities - important characteristics we all have that drive us. Patrick Sweeney, president of Caliper Corp., a management consulting firm, says finding these qualities is one step toward achieving career goals.

"People succeed when they are being true to themselves and playing on strengths," says Sweeney.

Sweeney, co-author of "Succeed on Your Own Terms," defines these qualities to help workers move into positions where they can succeed:

- Define what success means to you.

Create a time frame: "I will be succeeding next year if ..." Sweeney calls it the ultimate fill-in-the blank with both a personal and professional aspect.

- Seize your defining moment. The moment might be an event that happened, or it could be something you want to create but keep postponing.

Paul Schulte was left paralyzed after a car accident. He took this defining moment and overcame his disability by participating as a member of the U.S. wheelchair basketball team in the 2000 Paralympic Games in Sydney.

"You will be ready for your defining moment once you define your success," says Sweeney. "You will be able to see it in the headlights and not in the rearview mirror."

- Love what you are doing. People give off energy when they are passionate about an activity. Look at your current job and consider what you like most about it. Work on those aspects an extra hour each day. If you can't find something you enjoy in your current position, look for another position.

"You will feel better about the job because it is something natural and what you like," says Sweeney. "People will like it because they will feel your energy and passion."

"Doors open when you have a definition of success."

E-MAIL TOPS PHONE CALLS

Most young adults would rather text, instant-message or e-mail rather than pick up the phone. Communication through electronic tools is also becoming more popular in the workplace. Sixty-five percent of executives would rather receive e-mail over other communication methods, according to a survey by OfficeTeam, a staffing service that interviewed 150 senior executives. Only 34 percent of executives favored e-mail 10 years ago.

The desire for face-to-face meetings, paper memos and voice mail have all decreased in the last decade. Forty-four percent of respondents favored meetings in 1997, while only 31 percent answered the same in 2007. Paper memos' popularity went from 12 percent to 3 percent. Voice-mail preference dropped from 7 percent to 1 percent.

"Two benefits of electronic communication are the immediacy and historical context it provides, including the ability to maintain a record of conversations and obtain project updates from co-workers and business colleagues," says Diane Domeyer, OfficeTeam's executive director. "But there can be too much of a good thing when in-boxes reach capacity."

Even if e-mail is fast and convenient, it may not serve as the proper medium for all types of communication.

"Often, tasks can be accomplished more quickly and clearly with a phone call or face to face," says Domeyer. "When people find themselves spending a lot of time searching for precisely the right words, it's often a sign that the topic warrants an in-person discussion."

OfficeTeam provides guidelines to avoid surplus e-mail and make sure your messages are received in the proper manner:

- Write the purpose first. Put the main points of the message at the beginning and follow with supporting details.

- Keep it short. Most people don't have time to read a long e-mail. If additional information is necessary, include a summary.

- Avoid hitting the forward key. Only forward the e-mail to those involved.

- Create a proper subject. Describe the message contents in the e-mail subject line.

- Mark a message "urgent" only when it is necessary for the person to read it as soon as possible.

For more information, visit www.officeteam.com.

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