

Do what you are good at.

Staff

I had a revelation recently. It was nothing earth shattering or revolutionary, in fact, it was nothing more than common sense. But as someone once said, common sense is not common at all. My revelation was this: I have spent a lot of time recently doing stuff that I am not good at and while it was necessary for me to do so, I almost made the mistake of thinking it was necessary for me to continue to do so. I told you it was nothing earth shattering. But it does beg the question to be asked how much stuff do you or I do that is not the best use of our time but we have convinced ourselves that it is so?

All of us who have ever helped someone during a career transition have undoubtedly talked about the interview process and how it is necessary to demonstrate how our skills and abilities will meet the needs of the potential employer. In doing so we may have helped our client dig into their work history to help them really understand what it is that they are good at. Have you ever done an exercise like that for yourself? If not, I would suggest not to. At a recent HAPPEN meeting (www.happen.ca) I had the pleasure of hearing Brian Bassett (bcccoach@axxent.ca) talk about the communication process of the interview. During his presentation, using an audience member, he drilled down through the positions this individual had held, the stories of his accomplishments to the core of what it was he was really good at. He was able to do so in part because of his complete detachment and impartiality to who he was coaching. I do not believe that I have the detachment necessary to do that kind of objective analysis for myself. I, like most people, tend to see things the way we want to see them, not truly as they are.

We may know ourselves but every once in a while it may be prudent to have an outside pair of eyes evaluate what we are good at and then compare that to what we are doing. By doing so, we can answer the question "Am I doing what I am really good at" with confidence.

Now unfortunately it is the nature of business that none of us can completely stop doing the things we are not as good at and focus solely on the things we excel at. But a major factor to the level of success we achieve is directly associated with our ability to understand what we are good at and how much of our job we can devote to doing those things. My revelation led me to understand that I am not a programmer. I have learned some skills in that area over the last few months but I know now my abilities lie in bridging the gap between services that companies are trying to provide and the technology they use to do so. As with all knowledge the key becomes turning it into action if it is to have any value to us. For me it means stepping away from programming and letting those who have skills in that area excel. What does it mean for you?

If I can suggest anything to you, I think it would be summed up like this; you probably can not give yourself the high quality of unbiased, objective advice that you need to advance your skills and career. It might be worth sitting down with a career coach or counsellor to find out what you really excel at. In all likely hood, this is not a case of 'physician, heal thyself'.