

Year End Greetings From The Jump Network

Leadership Strategy, Organisational Design, Talent Management

December 2012

As 2012 comes to a close we seem to have survived a litany of hurdles and challenges, from floods to recession to unrest and even the end of the world according to the Mayan calendar.

Most of us seem reasonably intact as we enter a brief period of rest and reflection, so here are some thoughts for health, happiness and prosperity in 2013.

1. Get Balanced

An astute client at the BBC recently pointed out that “work-life balance” is an irrelevant oxymoron. Why should all the hours we spend at work not be counted as life too? And why should we divorce “life” from the time and effort we invest in our careers? Indeed, why not decide in 2013 to integrate the two and recognise they are overlapping realities instead of competing priorities? Conflicting views on “Life-Life Balance” abound. Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer of Facebook and mother of two, says “There's no such thing as work-life balance. There's work, and there's life, and there's no balance.” A pessimistic but perhaps realistic assessment? By contrast, The Huffington Post's Arianna Huffington advocates getting “obsessed” with unplugging, recharging and getting enough sleep, actively fighting her “sleep-stealers”. A typically energetic view from America. On this side of the Atlantic, there is positive news from the usually apologetic British, where the Office for National Statistics found in 2012 that 62.6% people are somewhat, mostly or completely satisfied with the amount of leisure time they have. Whatever your view, the fact is that much as we feel constrained by the “system”, we are ultimately in charge of our own life, mindset, and career choices. The world is getting busier and more complex, but that's all the more reason to take stock in 2013. Research shows that, as long as the work gets done, executives who work less hours are perceived by staff as more effective. Food for thought.

2. Get Connected

Once viewed as the exclusive domain of sticky sales people and Hollywood PR, networking is now proven as a key survival tool for leaders at all levels. Busy people in government, companies, and communities are finding it harder to come up with the answers they need to get things done. Complexity and uncertainty in the environment accounts for most of this, rather than any lack of expertise on our part. But studies show that building and using your network is an essential leadership strategy. It helps with delegating and idea-sharing. It acts as mini crowd-sourcing for research and innovation. And critically, it helps us be more resilient by sharing all those daily demands with others who can support, mentor and brainstorm with us. Networks help us see what else is out there, makes us look at alternatives, and often opens up new career and life choices.

3. Get Creative

In the world of increasing screen time and reflex response to emails, texts and tweets, we seldom have time to think laterally about our responses or solutions. Creativity is a unique gift endowed to us human beings, but we have abdicated to the creative “ecosystems” of our smartphones, tablets and Apps. Take some time in 2013 to think, observe, and feel tangible things. Switch off the screen and take a walk. Come up with your own ideas rather than those pushed at us by the system – be it technology, media, the politicians or your bank manager. Use humour and experiment. A great example is The Washington Post. In its annual competition, readers to take any word from the dictionary and alter it by changing one letter to create a new definition. To get you started on your creative journey for 2013, here are my top three:

Dopeler Effect (n): Stupid ideas that seem smarter when they come at you rapidly

Sarchasm (n): The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and those who don't get it

And for my friends in Los Angeles, and with apologies to the Mayans

Karmageddon (n): It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes, and it's like, a serious bummer.

Happy New Year!

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2012 Selected Client List & Center for Creative Leadership Work: 20th Century Fox, ABNAMRO, BBC, Bausch & Lomb, Dyson, France Telecom, Jardine Lloyd Thomson, Maitland Group, M&G, Motorola, Novartis, Old Mutual, Orange, RioTinto, SABMiller

2012 Partnerships: The Centre for Creative Leadership (www.ccl.org), Nexus Training (www.nexustraining.com), Make Yourself (www.makeyourself.co.uk), Fast Track Learning (www.ftlearning.com)

Creative Enterprises: World Photography Workshops & Events (www.explorenation.net), Fine Art Photography (www.andycraggs.com), Humanitarian Documentary (www.who.int/tdr)

