Case Study
Unassuming

All specialists do well such as lawyers, architects, engineers, medical doctors, and so on. Are they also eligible to be the next president of a nation without being a political scientist, or the CEO of a Fortune500 company without being an MBA (Master of Business Administration)? Indeed, they are. An interesting observation is that a specialist cannot do another specialist's job but can guide other specialists. This article is a case study without being personal and the observations made are applicable to almost everyone. The writer is an engineer without people skills and is not an ambitious person.

The writer did several engineering jobs earlier on the career path as a charted professional engineer. To the surprise of his peers in Wellington, he started up a company in Auckland 32 years ago in the PC industry. The company remains in business as of today (2024) whilst most if not all competitors have ceased. He envisioned edge computing in 2013 and started up a 'Systems Division' to develop safety and security solutions for buildings. He has now entered the building construction industry as a multi-tenant building design and construction project manager. The industries mentioned above are separate economic or technology segments. The courage of venturing into 4 unknown fields at a cut-throat level is revealed by the following cases of study. There are hints.

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Case 1. Is Quantum Physics (QP) hard or easy? It is so hard that classical physicists in the early 1900's thought someone were kicking tires. Those 'tire-kickers' took the next 100 years to build up Quantum Physics in a scientific manner that classical physicists found hard to understand. It is easier to learn QP without classical physics training. We do not always learn from established fields and are likely to learn better than specialists in adjacent and unexplored fields.

Case 2. If we walk on the Equator, we will come back to the starting point after a lot of walking. The Equator is a one-dimensional straight line (or manifold based on topology). How can walking along a straight line takes us back to the starting point? Look at the Equator on a 3-dimensional model. Judgements based on our direct experience are not always correct. A higher dimensional vision allows us to see better.

Case 3. Nikola Tesla was a famous scientist who worked for Thomas Edison in the USA for several years prior to 1900. A lot of Tesla's ideas did not come to fruition. A hundred years (2016) later in an island nation in the Pacific Rim, a professor was able to demonstrate a Nikola idea that a motor supplied from a battery could charge up the battery by 2 to 3 times of its starting energy level. The demonstration breaks the law of Conservation of Energy which has been proven correct for a few centuries. The professor demonstrated the law was incomplete. (Ref: the info was disclosed by another professor who has been challenged by his peers of his current research.)

Readers may summarize the hints as an unassuming attitude. This attitude allows one to learn and work in areas outside of one's original specialization successfully. The attitude is indeed unbeatable for building careers in the most decent manner. This article is part of the Compucon CPD seminar series. For other earlier articles, please visit https://cnz.co.nz.

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