



Human Resource Management System

Passion for Excellence

Walter E Vieira

There is the story told of a platoon of soldiers who were on a forced march. There was great resentment. It showed on their faces. It showed in their stride. They seemed to drag themselves forward because they did not want to. They had to because they were ordered to!

Yet, after the march was over, and the soldiers were now tired; but free they had the option of going on a mountain hike; or resting in their camp. Most went on the hike; felt exhilarated by the challenge posed by the mountain; and returned late at night, tired but happy and smiling!

It is all about Passion. There are some who find passion in their occupation. They are truly blessed. Because if they have passion for their occupation; they will most likely also have a passion for excellence.

Take the case of R. K. Laxman, passionate about political cartoons. One cannot imagine Laxman doing anything else. Day after day always a new gem everyday. And a large diamond on Sundays! Laxman sometimes gives a demonstration of drawing a cartoon at Rotary meetings. It is a pleasure to see him. So facile, so fast, so entertaining; so passionate! No wonder he is among the best there is, in the whole world. And he keeps at it still, in his eighties. Neither the TOI, nor Laxman can loosen the chord that ties them to the 'common man'!

Some find passion for a hobby outside their job. This is not as good. But it is better than nothing at all. Commander Eric Lopez worked with me in a pharma company, as a Distribution Manager. He had retired early from the Navy. He always did an adequate job sometimes a good job. He was honest, sincere and hard working. But every evening he waited for the clock to strike 5.30 so he could be off... to his home and his passion playing the wooden saw with a violin bow. He was perhaps the only one who did this. And he was invited to give performances in different parts of India and even abroad, in Israel and Russia. He taught his two daughters this unusual technique and sometimes one of them accompanied him. It was a heart warming 'sight' and it was soothing music to our 'ears'. Lopez spent most of his non-working hours, practicing on the musical saw. It was his Passion. A passion he found in his hobby rather than in his work.

And there are those who find a passion in what they do, only after the end of their working life in their retirement! Like my friend Felix down the road who retired from BPL after 32 years, and then began growing roses. He got so good at this that he was elected President of The Rose Society of Mumbai. He developed some unusual rose grafts. He grew more and more; and different roses. Many five star hotels became his clients. Ferntastica evolved from a Passion to big business. 'Too little, too late,' you will say? Well with passion 'Better late, than never'!

Walter Vieira, is a Senior Management Consultant who started India's first Marketing Consulting Company (MAS) in 1975. He offers consulting and training services to companies in India, S E Asia, Africa and USA, over three decades. He is the author of 11 books including The Winning Manager; and Manager to CEO. Has lectured at Kellogg, Cornell, NYU and many other business schools. He has published over 700 articles in the business press. Was the first Asian elected Chairman of the ICMCI (the world apex body of Management Consultants from 42 countries). Walter was awarded Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004 by IMC-India.