



Great Leaders Connect With Subordinates

Leadership Q&A
with Convergys Cebu's
Alex Flores



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What's A Great Boss Worth?

Leadership Q&A with Convergys Cebu's Alex Flores



Alex Flores is a kind of leader who has a good grasp of what an authentic boss-subordinate relationship should make of. From handling directory assistance calls as a BPO agent in 2001, he's truly come a long way. Today as site director of Convergys in Cebu, he's continually given the opportunity to capitalize on his capabilities. And boy does he love it!

Soon after his first BPO stint over a decade ago, he progressed to being a team manager. "I moved to another BPO as team leader in 2004 where I helped launch a communications and technology program. I was promoted as senior team leader in 2005 and later on, launched a financial program as operations manager in the same year," Alex recalls. Then more opportunities in another province came. "I was given a provincial assignment in Dumaguete as senior operations manager in 2007 then later on promoted to site director. I stayed in Dumaguete for three years from which I held various positions: I was regional director for operations managing four Visayas sites and later on executive director for a healthcare program," he adds.

His transfer to Convergys, the country's biggest BPO, happened in 2010 when he joined the company as site director, helping to establish and launch a new site. At Convergys, "I was given good opportunities to really grow as an individual and as a team player," Alex remarks.

As a leader, he believes commitment and team work are two of the driving forces that nurture harmonious boss-subordinate relationships. Check out more of Alex's two cents on management skills, and learn how to lay the groundwork for a productive working environment that will run over the long haul.

CCG: What do you think is the one management quality a great BPO team leader should possess? How should the team leader demonstrate these values?

Alex: The quality is commitment since it comes in a multitude of forms and can be associated with various scenarios. As team leader, we commit to company goals, program, and team targets. It is critically important that we commit to the company's ideals, but that commitment does not stop there. You will have your best agents, and you will have your challenged ones. Some may be new to the business and may still be trying to learn the ropes. Commitment to these individuals requires tons of sacrifice, and ultimately, mutually committing to a target to achieve. Commitment also means selfless service—one good example is being a servant leader for your team. When I was a team leader, I committed to my team by making sure they had everything they needed: coaching, mentoring, floor support, and no-holds barred learning sessions. This commitment is always looked at as a two-way street. In this case, I committed to my team just the same as they committed to our collective target and goals.

CCG: When you were a BPO team leader, how open minded were you to other members' ideas?

Alex: The operative word is team leader. A team consists of individuals. And yet as team leader, subordinates look at you as the predetermined "expert" of the business. The expertise can evolve: What you were supporting for when you were an agent a year ago may be different now. Frontliners get firsthand experience in this evolution, which is why their inputs matter. On the same note, understanding trends, sharing of best practices, and comparing notes with your peers is always beneficial. Team conversations should always be collaborative and never one-sided. Each opinion is a contribution. *(continued on Page 5)*

IMAGE AND STYLING BY KENN CABRERA. HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY DAVEN SALIOT.
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Great Leaders Create More Depth, Connection With Subordinates

Fact of life: You can't run the world in joystick

Joystick: a cursor control device used in computer games and assisted technology. But not in people. There is no such thing as 'joystick people.' Folks who have independent mind hate being set with guidelines and rules so stringent no one could possibly measure up. In short, we all hate control freaks.

If you're a supervisor to a number of subordinates in your workplace and want them to operate in 'always-ask-the-boss' mode, you could very well fall into the control freak category. But don't take all the blame. All you may need to do is learn people skills.

Case study: Seven employees of a BPO company feel they're in a sticky situation. They complain about their team leader being a control freak, who they all agree micromanages, refuses to be flexible, and always breathes down their necks. Four of the employees think they're better off quitting their jobs.

Why does this problem occur in the first place? Because team leaders get promoted for individual excellence, they rarely possess proper training on people skills. They may know how to operate the business like second nature, but when they find themselves in charge of people, they barely manage.

If you're wondering how to handle such control-freak bosses, here are some tips:

- **Let them know how you feel:** Most people don't realize they are being control freaks.
- **Win their trust:** Sometimes it's better for subordinates to deliver than complain because it wins the boss' confidence.
- **Avoid criticizing too much:** Be open-minded about someone's working style or leadership methods.
- **Talk to the top boss:** This should be your last resort and should only be done if the control-freak boss affects the morale of majority in the organization.



Spot The Sweet Spot

Leaders should have a clear understanding of the 'sweet spot,' blogs business specialist Bruce Holland. He says the sweet spot occurs at the transition between two steady states called order and disorder, and suggests that "all living systems will move quite naturally and unaided to this point because this is the only point where they are able to grow and thrive."

When managers notice a sweet spot occurring within their team, many would feel a strong need to panic and take care of it to bring their organization to a steady state of order. "Any attempt to over manage this natural process or to control it or manipulate it will push the system away from the sweet spot, either into the steady state called order which by definition is unchanging and unresponsive, or push it into disorder and anarchy," Bruce adds.

The best way to go for leaders, then, is to delegate practically all the regular work to their staff, says J. Keith Murnighan, a professor at the Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management in Illinois, USA, in his book "Do Nothing!: How To

Stop Overmanaging and Become a Great Leader." When leaders practice delegation, they will have more free time to facilitate and orchestrate everyone else's performance. It's hitting two birds with one stone because the approach will result in improved staff morale, and better product and less stressful life for the leader.

A Protector Wins People's Hearts

Say you're part of a customer service team who has consulting relationships with long-term clients. Dissatisfied and irate with your advice to use your organization's product to run his business, a client suddenly launches into a verbal abuse. When your team leader learns about it, she calls a brief meeting to tell team members that from now on, you will transfer the worst calls to her and she'll take care of them.

Without knowing, your team leader instantly earns her team's loyalty because she knows how to cover her people's backs. Is there anything more motivating than a boss who's always ready to defend you? A survey of BPO and BPO-related employees in the country reveals that in the country reveals

“Without knowing, your team leader instantly earns her team’s loyalty because she knows how to cover her people’s backs.”

that in the country reveals that their boss would back them up if their job was on the line. Certainly no employee is 100 percent perfect. An ideal boss would notice and appreciate the 99 percent of a job well done, and not let the other one percent get in the way of performance appraisal.

Additionally, because a huge percentage of the respondents feel comfortable talking to their bosses about work-related problems (92 percent), they regard their superiors as the key to good staff morale (82 percent).

Be careful: Don’t make a big mistake by ignoring your staff’s morale. A happy employee is a hardworking employee. If they feel positive about their work environment, they will more likely put extra effort to contribute to their work. Employees who create new ideas could generate revenue for the business. Communication is one of the basic yet most important things you can provide to your employees if you want to cultivate positive feeling and affection.

On the other hand, 62 percent thinks their boss can be better if he were nicer to his people, according to the survey. For instance, by maintaining his cool in the middle of a hot-issue discussion, a boss will exhibit self-restraint and provide an opportunity for everyone involved to cool off and think things over.

“Some scientific studies suggest that being in a position of authority has a unique effect on the human brain that can cause people to become less sympathetic to the emotions and concerns of others,” Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval, authors of the book “The Power Of Nice”, blog. They quickly add, however, that there’s hope for bosses to avoid falling victim to this paradox trap: Be nice.

In order to be a nice boss, Linda and Robin say you should:

- Make it a point get out and simply make small talk with your employees every day
- Build effective communication between you and your employees. Shut up, listen, and make eye contact.
- Practice transparency to establish trust with your team.

Who Cares About XY Chromosomes?

Whether the boss is male or female doesn’t seem to matter a great deal to BPO employees, the survey discloses. This seems to indicate a positive trend on how the workforce views female leadership. Although women are usually thought to let their emotions get in the way of their leadership, sometimes they have to be a lot tougher when taking such a role in order to be taken seriously.

The bottomline: Whether it’s the good, the bad, the distant, the kind, or the somewhat crazy boss, their general personality, temperament, and how comfortable they are with authority will determine their functioning as a superior. Bosses should take their position as a chance to inspire, reassure, motivate, and even give someone hope for greater things in their life, Jeff Haden writes in his Time Magazine article “The Five Qualities of Remarkable Bosses.”

(What’s A Great Boss Worth? Q&A with Alex Flores continuation)

CCG: Does a leader need a power or an authority? Why?

Alex: There’s a big difference between power and authority. Authority is what we see on the surface—often defined by our position in the company’s organizational chart. Power, on the other hand, is relative. It is defined as the ability to influence. You may be a person of authority but may lack the power to initiate and influence. Power and influence can be used in both the good and the bad.

Hence this influence, when done right, can create a bigger and better impact in an organization. The chasm of authority is eradicated through a conscious effort of leading by example. Trust is earned and respect is gained, not by the title you hold, but on how you influence and motivate individuals in achieving your set goals.

CCG: Advise us: What are the steps one should take to maintain a good relationship with his/her co-workers?

Alex: Respect each individual. Each personality contributes to the whole and having the right attitude towards work—maintaining positivity—provides a more pleasant avenue to collaborate. It’s hard to imagine how positive ideas get welcomed in a hostile environment.

You should maintain and share positivity. I tell you, it is infectious and motivating. Picture this: when you influence and motivate a person into positivity, it creates the ripple effect. Soon they will tell their teammates, their friends, and their loved ones about the positive experience they had with you. The next thing you know, your positive influence has touched so many as they, too, have begun to influence one another. My goal is to rub in positivity for two people each day. Positivity breeds positive results!

CCG: How do you manage work-life balance?

Alex: Having a supportive wife and a playful son is always helpful. My wife and I engage in what is known as “multisport” or triathlon as it is more popularly known. It is a grueling sport in three forms: swimming, biking, and running. It requires commitment, sacrifice, and discipline. I enjoy being outdoors and competing (mostly against myself). What makes it even more special is the fact that our son, Miguel, has picked up the sport as well! He’s currently a member of the triathlon club of Ateneo de Cebu. On top of triathlon, I also cross train on my first love: basketball. I get to play ball every Saturday night of every week.

My world is never boring as I always find time to be active. My dad also gave really good advice while I was growing up. He said, “Try to do all the things that you want to do when you’re young and able. Don’t wait until you’re old and wrinkled to start doing things you love to do.”

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Where Jobs Are: Earn That Bonus Advantage This Holiday Season

It's always been said that the Philippines have the longest Christmas season anywhere in the world. If you're looking for ways to make some quick bucks during this extended celebration, some basic tips are here for the taking.

Retail is an all-year-round business, but special seasons like the Yuletide or Summer are huge profitable opportune times for the industry. Still, preparing for these anticipated peaks is never without a challenge because holidays, seasons, economic climates, and many other factors affect your business. One way to adapt to demand changeability is to bring in that extra hand to beef up your personnel.

Temp hiring and outsourcing is a staffing strategy that many retail owners employ to give their businesses the much needed flexibility. Christmas is the busiest retail season of the year, and when you notice the seemingly more attendants following you around a Marks & Spencer shop in one November morning, chances are they've already prepped for their staffing needs.

Think about it: If your need cannot wait, a direct temp hiring or recruiting through an agency could serve your requirement immediately, but you run the risk of getting sub par employees. Of course, there's the extra expense of salaries, employment taxes, and training to take care of. With retail staff outsourcing, you get staff that is ready to walk in the door at any day you need them and score those sales deals.

Find 'Golden Goose' In Your Temporary Help

Did I tell you yet that temp staffing can drive profits in your business? In many ways than one, it can. Here are just a few of them, according to an employment blogger:

- **You keep your business' flexibility:** When you hire temp employees, you meet peak demand periods or unexpected surges in business.
- **You focus on core activities:** You hire them for areas where you need them. For example,

a temp staff can help you critically man the cash register in your shop, which frees up other shop crew to focus on their most vital priorities.

- **You reduce overtime expenses:** You can use your temp staff instead of having your regular employees work overtime. This will reduce labor costs and prevent employee burnout.
- You cut down on training costs: Experienced temp staff can help get the rest of your shop employees up-to-speed and more productive. Usually, a new face at work brings in freshness and renewed enthusiasm among older employees.

Last year, a group of retailers in Cebu predicted an increase in consumer spending for the Christmas season. The increase was driven by the consumers' strong confidence on local economy, according to Melanie Ng, Philippine Retailers Association-Cebu (PRA-Cebu) president in a newspaper interview in November 2011. Given that the same outlook stays this year, retailers should well consider hiring temporary workers to boost their competitive advantage.

Tip: Don't treat temporary employees like 'temps.' Show them some importance even though they're working for you only for a short term. For instance, you can provide your temp hires with a detailed job description that clearly lays out the responsibilities and duties of the position. You can also share with them of the goals you want to achieve for that season and your expectations just as you would any hire. If temp hires feel valued, they would be motivated to perform well.

Job Seekers: Turn That Stint Into A Permanent Position

Many businesses — many of which are from the

retail sector — are seriously considering getting some extra help for the upcoming holiday shopping season. For job seekers, this means a resounding opportunity to pick up some extra cash.

The classifieds section of your newspaper is always a good source for seasonal or part-time jobs, but referrals from friends, colleagues and family are just as reliable. The following businesses usually offer the more appealing temp jobs:

- Theme parks and museums
- Resorts and hotels
- Malls and retail outlets
- Travel agencies
- Shipping and delivery services
- Bars and restaurants

These jobs may be part-time or short-term, but there are ways to make a lasting impression on your employers and be offered a permanent position. Here's how:

- **Study industry trends:** Businesses like grocery stores, clothes shop, department stores, restaurants, and warehouse operations get busy like crazy during the holiday shopping season. How these sectors fare post holiday will depend on the trends. For instance, if it's a more stable job you want, you should steer away from private transport service companies which peaks business from November to December, but slows down drastically after that.
- **Show off:** If you know you can offer more than what you were hired for, don't be shy to show it off. Highlight additional skills on your resume (e.g., computer networking, graphic design), and be ready to offer to help solve problems at work when they arise. Many employers look back on their temp hire list when they need employees to fill in new positions.



“Share the goals you want to achieve for that season and your expectations just as you would any hire. If temp hires feel valued, they would be motivated to perform well.”

- **Befriend upper management:** Take time to get to know senior leaders at your company. “From the leader’s standpoint, by getting to know you as more than a name on a roster, he or she can have a face and personality in mind when making decisions that might affect you and your job. You, conversely, begin to have a clearer understanding of who this leader is and how she or he thinks. This can be very helpful in better aligning your actions with the goals of the firm. The leader may also gain from a connection with you, because he or she is getting an unfiltered view from the ‘floor,’ which can be very helpful,” says John Millikin, clinical professor of management at Arizona State University’s W.P. Carey School of Business in the US and former vice president of human resources at Motorola, in an interview by Kaitlin Madden, writer and blogger for CareerBuilder.com. Just think about it: if a permanent job opens up, it could be you they’d have in mind!
- **Be honest about your intentions:** If you’d like to stay on past the holiday season, don’t be afraid to tell your boss. Make use of your temp time to educate yourself on their business. This insider info can give you a big advantage if and when the company would need your permanent service in the long run.

Career First Institute

Unveils Corporate Learning Solutions for Evolving Workforce

The landscape of talent management has taken a different shape. More millennial workers get hired and advance up the professional ranks. The rules of engagement changes as fast as anyone can move information in this technology-driven world. It is important for organizations to see things from the workers’ eyes, understand how they play their part, and recognize what critical steps the organizations can do to keep things moving forward.

The Millennials—also known as Generation Y—refer to those who were born roughly between 1979 and 1999. The oldest members of this group are just embarking on their careers so understanding their styles at work and professional expectations is a great challenge. Executives must not only recruit candidates to meet current needs, but also factor in how hiring will benefit the company over the long term.

Profiling The Millennials

Career First Institute (CFI) as a corporate training service delivery, shares with the rest of the workforce the dynamism and excitement of these changing times. Every strategic owner or CEO needs to understand what fuels the ‘millennial machine.’ CFI has a grasp on the general profile of a typical Millennial worker:

Gen Y workers are self-motivated and ambitious. They are willing to go the extra mile for the company’s success. To go with this high self motivation, it is important to bring out the best in them—making them accountable to their own wins and failures—as well as celebrate their milestones. Imposing “your way or the highway” will easily turn them away. If close observation is necessary, it is vital that you explain the purposes for such activities, and that the company has their buy-in on the process.

CFI’s **Certified Professional in Leadership and Management (CPLM)** program introduces the leaders of Gen Y workers to practical and tested approach that encourages them to connect with their team and instructs how to bring out the highest productivity and morale of team members.

Loyal but impulsive: Millennials hope to remain faithful to their current workplace, but in reality, a good majority want to bring in a range of new experiences and challenges into their lives, making them susceptible to impulses, for instance travelling and looking to work with other companies. Let them travel within your dynamic office instead by giving them diverse projects and opportunities to collaborate with other departments.

Career First Institute’s Corporate Learning Solutions

Companies across industries choose CFI to design training programs that engage and enhance the skills of the workforce. CFI holds workshops for professionals from different IT-enabled companies to become better presenters to their clients and business partners via CFI’s **Managing Virtual Teams and Virtual Presentation Skills Program**. In this program, CFI takes the data processing team from back office to customer-facing by equipping them with communication skills that cuts delays and allows them to deliver information in the most effective way.



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CORPORATE LEARNING SOLUTIONS

Translating Potential into Expertise

Diverse and tech-savvy: Gen Ys are comfortable working with people from different cultures, orientation and ethnicity. They also have access to information right at their fingertips. Therefore, all means of communication from everyday face-to-face interactions, chats, and emails down to office intranets should be designed to reflect equality and accessibility to people of various backgrounds. Gen Y's knowledge and dexterity with technology should make it more easy for companies to tap on many social media in delivering and gathering information in a very short span of time.

As companies gravitate towards the use of social media, people management platforms and the like, CFI's series of **Communication Readiness Program** introduces to employees ways on how to stay business-focused yet personable using the essential tools for communication.

Cosmically conscious: Millennials value the positive impact of their work beyond the office. Gen Y workers are drawn to employers who share their eco-awareness and social consciousness. They emotionally connect with the company this way. When they see the same social consciousness from their employers, they take pride not only of their job, but of the company, as a whole. To the Millennials, social harmony equals—sometimes surpasses—any monetary rewards.

Social animals: Millennials love to connect with other people. Even those profiled as introverts recognize a need to be able to connect with those who

share similar attitude and interests. Networking on the basis of relationships, enjoying their coworkers' company, socializing with them and even with willing bosses, feed on the Millennial's motivation to stay with the company. In fact, the Millennials regard social connection and culture as strong motivators to accept job offers from "great companies," and maintain long term careers.

Meanwhile, CFI's **Team Adventure Program** has been delivering outdoor teambuilding activities to bring various social dynamics into play and direct the social energy to constructive learning experiences which they later on bring with them to work.

Within your company alone, you can get a good estimate of how many millennial workers are currently employed. The numbers—which will increase eventually—speak from themselves. Learning how to attract, retain and grow these workers are no longer a matter of choice but a reality. Understand the rules of engagement in this field, and be in control with how you can shape the future of your company.

If you want to tap leaders in talent development for all levels, partner with Career First Institute. They will be your gateway in shaping a high-performing millennial workforce within your organization.

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Apply Spending Habits That Lead To Success

Income is what can be spent. Do you spend yours wisely?

“With a lot of money in your hands during a festive season like Christmas, it is so tempting to overspend or spend on the wrong things, but there are several money saving tips to keep you out of financial trouble.”

Do you consider yourself a spendthrift? Or maybe a bad spender? Or maybe just a little bit in between? Just what is the opposite of wise spending? Before you attempt to answer these questions, think about the word ‘budget.’ Many people get turned off by this word because they equate it with suppression i.e., not being able to do as you wish. To them, hearing the word ‘budget’ invokes the same feeling as when they’re on a diet — your thoughts and actions are always restricted.

It’s not all that bad though. If you’re spending way beyond your means there’s no better tactic to make ends meet but coming up with a clear plan on how to spend your money. In short, you should budget your finances.

Why it’s important: Having a budget is the first step in gaining clarity about your financial situation and will help you prioritize your spending, says Atty. Raymond Bulaon in his Asian Journal article “Overspending While In Debt Is A Recipe For Financial Disaster.”

How You Spend Is Who You Are

A study by media and consumer research groups Kantar Media, TNS Philippines and Kantar World Panel has found that urban Filipinos, on the average, claim their household income to be P24,000 per month, while their rural counterparts claim about P15,000 per month. With more income in their pockets, urban Filipinos tend to spend a bit more, “but what they spend is less than the rural Filipino when taken as a proportion of income. Rural Filipinos spend more than 92 percent of their monthly income,” says the study.



Here’s the catch: Only two out of 10 Filipinos have savings. Not exactly a good thing, but another way to look at how Filipinos spend is through demographics. For example, studies have shown that people from the North are avid savers while people who live in the NCR actually tend to be sluggish savers.

Additionally, the youth — which make up a big part of our population — are always eager to try out new things and excited to ‘conquer the world.’ This possibly translates to one thing: the youth love to spend. “Our consumerism is actually driven by this young population, and it is good for the economy as businesses see high demands,” comments Krissy Domingo, a personal finance blogger and owner of the blog site MoneyLifeBlood (www.moneylifeblood.blogspot.com).

Krissy points out, however, that Filipinos need to expand their personal finance knowledge. “You see young professionals at new restaurants, strolling around malls carrying shopping goods. The sad reality is that about only one percent of the population is investing in the stock market.” And spending can actually be savings given the right perspective, she says.

Hey Big Spender...Or Not

What, then, is the right perspective of spending? It is spending wisely on things that are of value. But what things are of value? Check out the following scenarios:

Scenario 1: Nicole, a BPO team leader who earns P27,000 a month, pays P25,000 annually for a pension plan. At least once a year, she makes it a point to travel to her favorite tourist spots for some R&R.

Scenario 2: Jeffrey, on the other hand, is an accountant who maintains two high-end mobile phones, both of which are on post-paid plans. He rarely talks to people on the phone apart from family and a few close friends, but he is about to buy a brand new iPhone5 only because “it’s the fad.”

Between Nicole and Jeffrey, who is the wise spender? Clearly, it’s Nicole. “A yearly insurance payment can sound like an expense to my budget, but it actually is an investment,” maintains Krissy. A travel vacation might look like a waste of money, “but for me it is an investment that is truly priceless: to spend precious time money can’t buy with the people I love,” she says. She adds that it’s quite easy for all of us to fall victim into spending irrationally like Jeffrey, but we should pick up from what our parents and mentors teach us about the value of money.



So the next time those red hot killer shoes in Prada tease you into maxing out your credit card, close your eyes and think about this: If you or someone close to you is sick or in need of financial help for hospitalization, you should be able to provide.

Wait, you don't have to wallow in misery. There are alternatives, Krissy guarantees. In the case of the red shoes, for example, it just might have a 'grade A' copycat at the tiangge shop across your office building. Go check it out. The point is, there are a lot of creative ways to spend wisely. Krissy's advice? "Stretch your imagination and you just might be able to stash big savings out of it."

Ready To Be 'Rich'? Manage Your Bonuses Right

Regular Filipino workers are always a-month's-salary richer towards the end of every year because of the 13th Month Pay Law. 13th Month Pay is "a form of monetary assistance equivalent to the monthly basic compensation received by an employee, computed pro-rata according to the number of months within a year that an employee has rendered service to an employer," describes Jaromay Laurente Pamaos Law Offices in their blog "Philippine e-Legal Forum."

Workers loosely refer to this compensation as "bonus," along with other additional company benefits that come along their way during the holiday season (e.g., Christmas bonus, party raffle prizes). While many employees get their 13th month pay in the month of December, some companies opt to distribute the bonus earlier in consideration of the Christmas rush.

With a lot of money in your hands during a festive season like Christmas, it is so tempting to overspend or spend on the wrong things, but there are several money saving tips to keep you out of financial trouble. Most importantly, you should strive to be debt-free. If you have loans to pay you can prioritize by paying the ones with highest interests, for example your credit cards, Krissy advises.

Then you should set aside money for your emergency fund. For instance, you can save 10 percent of your bonus to invest in a time deposit or mutual fund. Only after doing these things should you splurge with the remaining cash. "The trick is to make the most out of your bonus by setting yourself free from debts and then be able to reward yourself after," she claims.

If you were to indulge, make sure it's on something important. Again, travel is a luxury that makes sense because you learn a lot from the experience. You can also treat yourself with that bathroom renovation you've been wishing for. Home improvements increase the value of your property so it's considered a wise investment. Other prudent spending practices include:

- Replacing all your bulbs with CFL (compact fluorescent lamp)
- Buying generic brand medicines or supplements instead of branded ones
- Drinking only water when dining out
- Washing your own car instead of bringing it to a car-wash service center
- Making a shopping list when going to the grocery and sticking to it.



Krissy Domingo Advises On Investing In Banks

Question: *Some people are more comfortable saving their money (e.g., in a bank) rather than investing it. What are the pros and cons?*

Krissy: There's really nothing wrong with saving in a bank since you are not touching the money and you are not spending it over unimportant things. However, remember that every time we save money in the bank, we actually lend to the bank, which means that the bank makes use of our money to run their business. The sad part is that these days, banks offer very low interest. If you think you can buy a burger at the end of the year with the interest for a P5,000 deposit, forget it. You can't.

So why not lend to the big companies such as Meralco, Ayala Corporation, or PLDT? And by lending to these companies I mean investing — through mutual funds, UITFs (unit investment trust funds) and stocks. For as low as P5,000 you can open a mutual fund which is collectively a big pool of money invested in various companies. You can potentially earn more than what the banks can offer in savings accounts. From stocks, you can even earn dividends if the companies you bought declare dividends!

However, if you are looking for safety over your money, you can always save in banks less than the maximum amount that the PDIC (Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation) can guarantee. This is because investment products such as mutual funds, UITFs and stocks are not guaranteed by PDIC. This means that you can lose money and PDIC will not recover it for you.

There are pros and cons indeed in saving money in banks or investing. For the purpose of saving money for emergency, I would advise saving in time deposits offered by banks. For other life goals such as wedding, education, travel and retirement, you can opt to put in your money in the investment products I have mentioned.

**BUY 1 MONTH
GET 1 MONTH
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Employers Beware:

The 7 Deadly Social Media Sins in the Workplace

Can't your employees resist updating their Facebook status, or sharing links to new Nicki Minaj videos on Twitter beyond their one-hour lunch break? It's time you blow the whistle and enforce some guidelines.

Two-thirds of Filipino organizations provide Internet access to all its employees, according to a 2010 study by the Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries (EJISDC). This privilege allows employees to enjoy the perks of social media at work either through their own devices or by using the company's computers. But with only less than half of these organizations implementing social media policy in the workplace, they could be jeopardizing their company's reputation.

Social media employ web and mobile-based technologies to support interactive dialogue, and experts have always agreed people should embrace it with open arms. Employers, however, must make sure to "minimize the risks by adopting a social media policy and training employees," say a panel of experts in a discussion sponsored by Sacramento Business Journal in the US in August.

Scenario: An employee of a famous multinational burger chain posted a video on his Facebook account which showed another worker dropping a patty on the ground, picking it up, putting it on the bun, and handing it out the drive-thru window.

In situations like this, employers need to protect themselves. They can use monitoring equipment to capture employees who want to attract some quick attention online. If employers have a clear-cut social media policy in place, they can take offending employees to court and save their organization's integrity based on legal standards.

Thou Shalt Not Sin

A company's social media policy serves as its life jacket. Although no one policy will fit all businesses, employers must make sure to avoid the seven deadly social media sins or they may suffer the repercussions, warns Mark Stein in his article "Social Media in the Workplace: Seven Mistakes Companies Make," published on The Miami Herald in August.

Employers should not:

- **Ignore reality:** Socialmedia is not just hype, it's a reality. Twitter and Facebook uses at work continue to be on the rise. A Palo Alto Networks study on the browsing habits of employees at over 2,000 companies around the world revealed that people still spend time on social networking in the workplace, but increasingly doing so via Twitter rather than Facebook.



- **Go without policy:** Employees should understand the difference between public and private social media use. This can be clearly defined by the set rules and guidelines that businesses put in place. For instance, your policy can remind employees that they shouldn't say or do anything on social media that discusses your business' confidential information.
- **Fail to observe and enforce:** If you don't monitor your employees, it doesn't make much sense to have a social media policy. Your first line of defense in enforcing the policy is monitoring when sensitive information gets shared. Tools like Radian6 can help track social mentions of your firm. These tools detect inappropriate sharing, as well as help you track sentiment regarding your business, which in turn can aid your market strategy.
- **Put up with ignorance of the law:** With the realization of Republic Act No. 10175 (a.k.a. the Cyber Crime Prevention Law), both employers and their workers should put more effort into understanding the many laws at play in social media (e.g., libel, copyright, and privacy). It's always a wise move for businesses to consult a legal entity learn and understand the law, then train and educate their employees.
- **Overlook the company's sensitive information:** Various company data are being generated every day on a typical network, but much of these are at risk of being lost through email, removable media, or mobile computers. Don't risk millions of pesos and lost productivity by failing to implement basic data loss prevention schemes and policies. You must protect your company's information.
- **Compromise ownership of the information:** Be wary of your employees' tweets, blog posts and Facebook posts about the company's products and services. For instance, businesses should know that they own their social media accounts. When the employees who create the accounts leave, employers should take the appropriate steps to ensure that they retain the ownership.

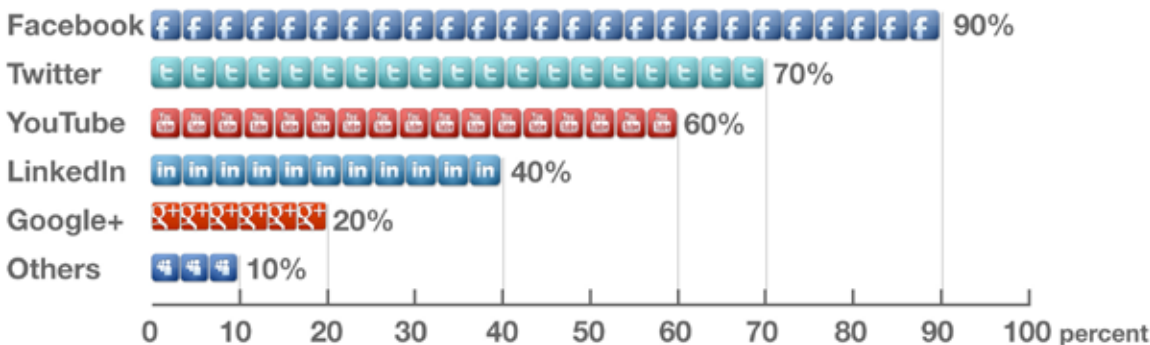
SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT

A SURVEY ON CEBU'S MOST VISITED SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Since their introduction in the early '90s, social media sites (a.k.a. social networking sites or SNS) have attracted millions of users. In a 2011 study published on 24/7 Wall St, the Philippines was dubbed the social networking capital of the world, with 93.9 percent of the nation reportedly signed up to Facebook (followed by Israel at 91 percent, Turkey at 90.9 percent, and Chile at 90.2 percent).

Cebu refuses to trail behind: When we asked working professionals from Cebu what social media sites they use the most, Facebook topped the list. Social media allows these professionals to establish direct and indirect connections across among friends, families, peers, and even complete strangers who share their interests.

Social Media Platforms Used



Facebook (90 percent): The average visit time on this site is 20 minutes. It isn't just huge in the Philippines and the US. It also ranks number one in Canada, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

Twitter (70 percent): About 300,000 new users sign up for Twitter everyday. This six-year-old service has been described as "the SMS of the Internet," and has about 500 million active users to date.

YouTube (60 percent): A video-sharing website which saw first saw the light in 2005 when three former PayPal employees decided to create an online service on which users can upload, view and share videos. Today, YouTube operates as a subsidiary of Google.

LinkedIn (40 percent): It is the largest professional network with over 700 million members in 200 countries worldwide. Executives from all Fortune 500 companies are LinkedIn members.

Google+ (20 percent): As of September 2012, it has a total of 400 million registered users of whom 100 million are active on a monthly basis, says Wikipedia. It is sometimes written as Google Plus, sometimes shortened as G+.

- **Be passive:** Don't just let things happen under your nose. Take action.

Executives' Impression on Social Media: Positive

A survey by professional services firm Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited found that 45 percent of executives say social media has a positive impact on workplace culture, while only 27 percent employees agree.

"Executives may be using social media as a crutch to build culture and seem accessible — but good leadership can't be dialed-in," says Deloitte's official report. Two other findings reveal that:

Forty-one percent of executives compared with only 21 percent of employees believe that social networking helps to build and maintain workplace culture.

As it relates to management visibility, 38 percent of executives think social media allows for increased transparency while only 17 percent of employees agree.

Nevertheless, the positive role that social media plays in human relationships — however small it may be — cannot be denied. You create, keep, and foster relationships with people from across the country and even across the world through social media sites. In the same vein, bosses can build relationships with their people through social media. They can also use it for internal communications within a team or department, making the exchange of ideas faster and easier 24/7.

Octoberpets 2012: Animal Welfare At Its Finest

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Rising human capital solutions provider Career First Institute (CFI) joined the trade show as media partner.

Parkmall, the first pet-friendly shopping center in Cebu, recently witnessed the sixth annual gathering of a group of veterinary clinics and hospitals dubbed as Octoberpets.

Cebu Companion Animal Practitioners Association (CCAPA) president Dr. Maricel Garcia, along with the rest of the active officers and members, brought in a different touch to this year's event by holding it indoors and including activities that emphasized animal welfare awareness and responsible pet ownership.

The program included lectures from:

- Dr. Susan Adlawan of Cebu City Animal Bite Center who discussed rabies and its impact on humans;
- Dr. Ventura, president of Philippine Veterinary Medical Association, who shared the five basic animal freedom which aimed to remind pet owners of their responsibilities;
- Dr. Ivy Zialcita and Dr. Guillermo Zialcita of CCAPA who talked about insect borne diseases and pet first aid tips;
- a representative from Crocolandia who discussed rearing and handling of crocodiles; and
- a representative from IRO (Island Rescue Organization) who updated the audience on their animal rescue activities.

The sixth Octoberpets, which attracted about 550 participants, also hosted various games and exhibits from different participating clubs. Career First Institute (CFI) participated as one of the media partners, and along with other long time sponsors and animal enthusiasts worked to create more awareness on animal welfare and responsible pet ownership.

Participants were treated to free veterinary consultation and discounted veterinary pharmaceutical products during this year's Octoberpets. Octoberpets also dovetailed with the culminating activities of the Animal Welfare Week, which was organized by the Bureau of Animal Industry.

This year's Octoberpets was held for the benefit of the IRO and Barangay Bangkal in Lapu-Lapu City. CCAPA aims to keep Octoberpets as an annual event in the coming years and cater to more participants. The organization is guided by the Five Freedom Principle: (1) freedom from hunger and thirst; (2) freedom from discomfort; (3) freedom from pain, injury and disease; (4) freedom to express normal behavior; and (5) freedom from fear and distress. Supporting this principle will inspire every pet enthusiast to contribute—even in their own little way—to better the welfare of animals in today's society.



How to Budget When You're Broke

Today might be one of the days when you suffer from lack of cash. For a regular employee who earns a limited amount each month, being broke may be something you are used to. Though difficult, budgeting efficiently is essential, and can be your saving grace. Here's how to do it:



1. Keep a daily diary of all your expenses

The first step in learning how to budget is to list down everything you spend—from bills, to coffee, to food, to transportation. This way, you're aware of just how much money you need in a day; how much you can save; and what expenses you can cut or reduce.

2. Review bill payment due dates, and prioritize

Evaluate all billing statements, and check which one needs to be paid off first. You don't want to be broke, homeless and without electricity, Make sure you pay your mortgage or rent first, then your utility bills second.

3. Bring an exact amount of cash

Allocate a daily allowance for yourself, and only bring that exact amount you need so you can avoid impulse buying. If you plan to spend P300 a day, then bring just that. Leave your ATM and credit cards at home—they only give you the temptation. And if you don't finish your daily allowance...

4. Stash away your extra money

If your daily allowance is P300, and you only spent P250 yesterday, put the remaining P50 in your piggy bank or savings account. You'll be surprised at how saving just a little can go a long way.

5. Reduce your expenses

Start by reducing your water and electricity consumption. Simply unplugging appliances



when they're not in use, or turning off the light switch when you leave the room, can make a big difference in your bill. If you're on a postpaid plan, try switching to a prepaid card so you can have full control of your phone expenses.

6. Cut your vices, if you can

If you're a smoker, try cutting down on cigarettes or quitting altogether. If you can't survive without coffee, opt to make your own, or bring packets of cheaper alternatives instead of going to expensive coffee shops. Soda, alcohol, clothing, and Internet gaming—all these are unnecessary wants that you should label as last priority when you're budgeting.

7. Accept changes

So you miss your social life. You miss hanging out with friends. You no longer have new clothes. Don't feel bad about it. You're coping with your own financial woes—so are a lot of people. Learn to accept the changes that go along with it. You don't need to completely alter your life. Just remember that there are cheaper alternatives, and yes—the best things in life are indeed, free!

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