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Dear Reader,

To keep ourselves nimble of foot and mind, Team TCS-Octara is revamping the content to include handpicked interesting pieces from multiple sources with the objective of keeping our readers updated on the latest developments and fresh perspectives in management, and share insightful tips on different functions that will help ensure personal and organizational development.

Alongside we are also increasing the font size for easy readability and engagement. We will ensure that you never run out of interesting things to read, and eagerly look forward to your feedback on what you found of interest in this approach to our newsletter (comment on info@octara).

This issue we lead with **Rita McGrath** and the thought provoking case she makes for going digital. There is resistance to change, always has been and always will be, and the sooner we can overcome that mental block the faster will we progress.

The bane of the password is up next with **Juliet Bennett Rylah** holding forth on how Apple, Google, and Microsoft will roll out no-password login options over the coming year as per the Fast Identity Online (FIDO) Alliance which sets standards for passwordless authentication. Very interesting indeed.

Next, **John P. Weiss** takes comfort and conformity head-on and labels them dream killers. Nothing grows in the comfort zone is a pearl oft quoted. It's hard for people to rise above their opinions of themselves, says John. "This curse of self-limiting beliefs can often be traced back to childhood. What's sad is that our doubts are frequently far from the truth. But doubts are comfortable. Doubts give us an excuse to not try. Doubts are the status quo."

CN follows up by making a strong case for reading, saying that it strengthens connections in your brain, improves memory and concentration, and builds vocabulary. So read on!

Back of the book we have our column Nature Calling for Action Stations, and it's heartening to note that climate action is top-of-mind with our decision makers, and none too soon. Stay hydrated and stay safe and finally some advice for these uncertain times.

Cower not from the seeming ferocity and scale of the storm, a sage once offered, as thunder and lightning, and the howling wind played havoc with the landscape. Revel instead, he said, in the Creator's Omnipotence and All-powerfulness, and seek refuge in His Protection. That is the advice on offer, infinitely profound in its simplicity, to successfully meet, greet and prevail upon any hurly-burly. The spiritual quotient is top-of-mind as we forge a path through some unsettling times, putting it very mildly. May Allah bless us all with health, wealth and happiness, as also peace, progress and prosperity, Ameen. 🙏

INSIDE:



You can't avoid the digital dimension of your business, even if you wanted to!

By Rita McGrath | 7 min read



Are passwords over?

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How Comfort and Conformity Are Dream Killers

By John P. Weiss | 4 min read



How Reading Affects Your Brain!

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Nature Calling for ACTION STATIONS!

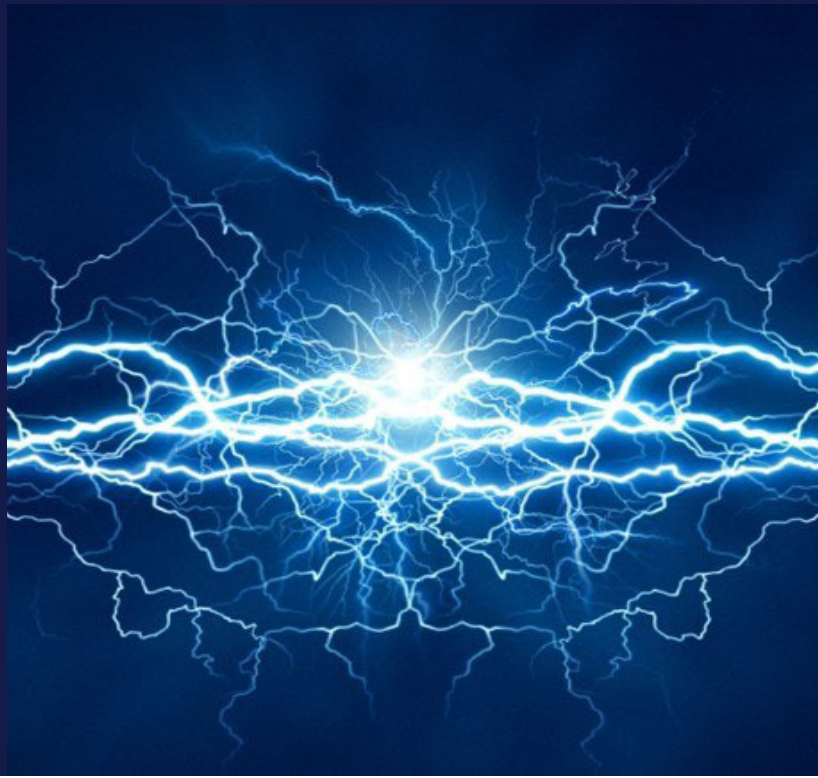
Adil Ahmad



Lifelong Learning Tips

JJ's Selection

You can't avoid the digital dimension of your business, even if you wanted to!



By Rita McGrath | May 6 | 7 min read

Asking what your digital strategy is today is a lot like asking what your electricity strategy was at the turn of the last century. Seems absurd. Yet both questions reflect how a shift in an underlying technology fundamentally changes what is possible.

Electrification of factories and plants took a long time. I mean, [a really long time](#). Usable electric light bulbs were invented in the 1870's. Thomas Edison build electricity generating plants in New York City and London in 1881. Yet, by 1900, less than 5% of mechanical drive power was supplied by electric motors. Instead, the last-generation technology, steam power, stubbornly remained the go-to technology for manufacturers. The norm for factories at the time was that they were powered by a central source — a massive steam engine or a river, for instance. That meant that every operation within the complex was designed around the logic of a central driveshaft,

with ingenious devices connected to it by pulleys, ropes and ties.

Once small electric motors were introduced, it became possible for every station in a factory to operate on its own power, when and as needed. But to take advantage of that new capability required rethinking everything — how equipment was built and used, how workers were recruited, trained and paid, how costs were allocated, and a myriad of other major shifts in operations. No wonder the early factory owners balked at making such a momentous shift. Indeed, just as leaders today try to do what they have always done but use digital to make it faster and cheaper, leaders then tried to use

electricity but to keep their factories more or less the same.

Eventually, of course, the old steam engines simply were not able to compete with new firms taking advantage of the brand new capabilities electrification offered. One example was Ford's invention of the production line, which revolutionized manufacturing, making formerly expensive and inaccessible goods affordable, and ushering in an era of skyrocketing productivity.

This story is analogous to where we are with digital today — while companies that have embraced it are reaping massive rewards, the vast majority are still lumbering along with their equivalent of the steam engine.

What does “digital” mean and why should we care?

As [Ryan McManus explains](#), to say that something has a digital component to it means that you have added a layer of information and connectivity to it. That could be information and connectivity between people, between things, between pieces of software, you name it. While this seems simple enough, once something is solely no longer in analog form, vast changes in what is possible — along the lines of the vast changes in what was possible with the advent of electricity — occur.

Several revolutionary qualities of digital goods bear mentioning.

Perfect Copies. The first is the potential for creating virtually unlimited perfect copies of the original. In an analog world, a physical

product, such as a photograph, requires an effortful process of chemical reproduction to copy. Digital photos? No trouble at all. Further, they can be widely shared, each version a perfect replica of what came before. Absent this quality, streaming of content would be prohibitively expensive.

The downside of course, is that when you have a potentially unlimited supply of something, your ability to extract a price for that good drops dramatically. That in turn means that the value for a customer is going to shift from possessing the physical thing to doing something desirable with it. In other words, from product and service value to the value in interactions.

We see this in the music business. As the price of a single song has gone to virtually zero, artists are finding they can only earn a living doing that which is scarce — going on tour and giving an irreplaceable live experience, in which customers pay for the interactive aspect of the experience.

Combination and Recombination. A second property of digital goods is that they are far easier to combine and recombine in new ways that simply can't be organized manually. In an early example, [the SABRE airline reservation system](#) used electronic records about passenger reservations and seat availability to match the two electronically. Prior to that the job was done with scribbled notes stored in lazy Susan type lockers. Very inefficient, and a big barrier to the post-war growth of the airline business.

Once, however, reservation data are available instantly and accurately, lots

of other possibilities open up. One can find out which seats and times are more popular and price accordingly. One can come up with another digital offering — frequent flyer miles — to enhance customer loyalty to a single airline. One can extend the information to staffing schedules. These are all examples of how you can increase value by recombining digital properties in some way.

Ease of Experimentation. Together with the recombinant quality of digital is the vastly decreased cost and vastly increased ease of experimentation. Just as workers in newly motorized factories could experiment with getting the best out of their workstations, workers using digital tools can engage in tinkering and experimentation without much need for resources or permissions, since the cost and risks are relatively low.

All of this has huge implications for how business models are designed in the digital age. When entirely new classes of value open up, the old business models won't allow you to capture them, just as steam powered plants couldn't compete with electrification.

Big opportunity or big problem?

Leaders are therefore on the cusp of needing to make fundamentally important business model choices. It begins with coming to grips with whether you see the potential offered by digital as a big opportunity to be seized, or a big problem to be avoided. You are much more likely to succeed if you take an opportunity lens to the digital revolution.

Newspapers, for instance, generally viewed the advent of digital as a threat, hived off their operations into a “digital division,” left their basic operations unchanged and were ultimately unsuccessful at holding back the digital tide. One shining exception was Norwegian operator Schibsted which both embraced digital technologies and compensated its executives for keeping customers with the company, no matter which channel they elected to use.

One of the better known stories of a company that used digital smartly to give itself an edge is Domino's Pizza. The company was in the doldrums after its 2004 IPO observers charitably called the period “[uninspiring](#)”. In 2009, the company caught the public's imagination with [a fairly audacious ad campaign](#) featuring then CEO J. Patrick Doyle and other Domino's employees acknowledging that for a lot of customers, the product itself was lacking. Simultaneously, the company began to aggressively invest in its digital strategy behind Doyle's simple mantra of “[making ordering as easy as possible.](#)”

One early controversial decision was to insist that all franchise operators adopt a [single Point of Sale system](#). In many other companies, franchisees were given leeway to purchase their own systems, but as we've seen, this completely undermines the potential of a digital architecture by locking valuable data away in separate systems. With Doyle as its indefatigable champion, every way in which the customer experience could be made easier through the use of digital technologies was explored and funded. The company also forged an unusual alliance between its technology

and marketing arms — leveraging the new potential of digital to connect authentically with customers.

As [a commentator for the Motley Fool observes](#), “In 2009, 20% of Domino’s sales were happening online... by 2018, that figure was up to 65%. More digital ordering means more rich data collection for Domino’s, and the ability to push more users to its loyalty program efforts.” Building a digital business model offers a tremendous advantage.

Some guidelines for developing a digital friendly strategy

Begin with frictions. Every established business does things a certain way because it was easier or more convenient or simply because it was possible at the time. But each of these activities are likely to create frictions that a digital solution might address. Imagine the possibility of digitizing operations to eliminate glitches and barriers — for instance, German metals services giant Kloeckner started its digital journey by getting rid of manual faxes. You can start with these kinds of problems, too.

Consider new kinds of value that might emerge from interactions. As Erich Joachimsthaler [points out](#), conventional views of strategy often rest on a zero-sum attitude towards value. Instead, imagine the value that could be created if digital interactions can be facilitated. He uses the example of John Deere, which starts by helping farmers get better yields, but facilitates interactions between seed producers, fertilizer people, chemical companies, local governments...and so on, creating value-

generating activities for all.

Consider re-architecting how work is done (not all at once, please!). One of the biggest impacts of digital, accelerated of course by the pandemic, is to change the nature of how work is done. Many organizations are using technology to reframe how they do business. At ING, for instance, conventional silo structures were [replaced with more agile ones](#) in which small teams could move quickly to solve complete complex problems with an architecture suitable to fast-moving technology enabled work. A variant of this is a call for “[permissionless](#)” systems in which those closes to problems can take action to resolve them.

Digital really is revolutionary, not evolutionary

As Jeff Bezos likes to observe, you can anchor your strategy on what is unlikely to change. Customers are almost never going to say, “I love Amazon, but I wish they would charge me more and deliver more slowly.”

As with electrification, capturing the benefits of digital means re-imagining how your business works. My best advice here is to think boldly, but experiment cheaply and quickly to see which of your guesses about how digital could help your business thrive in the future. ■

Source:

<https://rgmcgrath.medium.com/you-cant-avoid-the-digital-dimension-of-your-business-even-if-you-wanted-to-f8db6a0771a2>

Are passwords over?

Apple, Google, and Microsoft agreed to roll out passwordless logins. Here's what that means.

Juliet Bennett Rylah | May 9, 2022 | 2 min read

Passwords suck. They're the root cause of 81% of data breaches, but due to the dizzying number of online accounts people have, 65% of us still reuse them.

But guess what? Apple, Google, and Microsoft will roll out no-password login options over the coming year, per the Fast Identity Online (FIDO) Alliance, which sets standards for passwordless authentication.

Instead of using a password, you'll sign in with your smartphone or other devices — similar to 2-factor authentication. But this method is called “public key cryptography.”

How it works

Let's say you decide to create an account with your favorite online retailer.

When you register, a key pair is made: a public key shared with retailer and a private key that stays on your phone.

Keys are just big-ass connected numbers. For example, a private key could be 2 long prime numbers, and a public key would be what you'd get if you multiplied them.

But you won't see these digits. You log in the same way you unlock your phone (e.g., entering a PIN or scanning your fingerprint). Your phone verifies with retailer that you have the right key and, meow, you're in!

Okay, but what if...

...someone steals your phone? They'd still need to complete the challenge, meaning they'd need to know your PIN or have possession of your finger.

Meanwhile, your keys are backed up on the cloud, so you can store them on multiple devices in the event one is lost or damaged, or transfer them to new ones. Other benefits:

- FIDO protects against phishing attempts, per Apple.
- You won't even have to use a password during initial sign-up, per The Verge.

However, there are still hurdles. Not everyone has a smartphone or device new enough to adopt passwordless logins.

And one survey found that while 85% of respondents wanted to use fewer passwords, 72% believed others would stick with passwords because it's familiar.

Fun fact: A recent survey by digital safety platform Aura found 39% of US pet owners have used their pet's name in a password — 48% of whom have also posted their pet's name online ■

Source:

https://medium.com/@Coding_Networks/how-reading-affects-your-brain-7cf69c9daeb4

How COMFORT AND CONFORMITY ARE DREAM KILLERS

Why changing your environment can improve your life

By John P. Weiss | May 2 | 4 min read

It's hard for people to rise above their opinions of themselves.

This curse of self-limiting beliefs can often be traced back to childhood. Either an unsupportive parent or careless teacher did or said something devastating, and we carry the wound forward.

The injured little voice inside our head whispers, "Just do enough to get by. Don't rock the boat. Don't risk it."

What's sad is that our doubts are frequently far from the truth. But doubts are comfortable. Doubts give us an excuse to not try. Doubts are the status quo.

Ask yourself, "What if my doubts are not true?"

What if?

An indefensible self-mutilation of the soul

A few years ago I was sitting in a restaurant with a good friend, and he asked about my writing.

"I don't know," I told him, "I work hard on my stories and essays, but there doesn't seem to be much return on investment. It's a lot of work. New readers join my newsletter each week, but just as many unsubscribe every time I publish. I'm thinking about quitting and going back to painting."

My friend listened attentively as I bemoaned the capricious nature of social media algorithms and how online readers prefer clickbait titles and cat videos over



Cartoon by John P. Weiss

elegant essays about life lessons.

Basically, I was having myself a little pity party, and indulging in self-doubt about my writing.

"Self-pity is spiritual suicide. It is an indefensible self-mutilation of the soul." — Anthon St. Maarten

My friend suggested that maybe I needed to make changes and break out of my comfort zone. This got me thinking that maybe my self-doubts were not true. Maybe I had simply become too comfortable in my writing, and needed to change?

I analyzed my work closely and realized that I had fallen into a comfortable style and approach. I had been using copywriting skills and emulating a few successful online writers. As a result, my work was derivative and boring.

What I realized is that comfort and

conformity are the enemy. They're dream killers because when we stay safe and copy others we deny our true potential.

So I changed things up in my writing.

I started to focus on more elegant prose, and tried to connect with readers on a deeper level. After that, I had one of my best years of online writing.

Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future

We are all creatures of habit. This is a good thing if the habits are healthy and productive.

Unfortunately, our habits often reflect the path of least resistance.



We do things subconsciously because they're comfortable and familiar. Like mindlessly clicking on the TV every night instead of exercising. Or following the same old formula in our writing or creative work.

Beyond comfort and conformity, our environment plays a huge role in our potential creative and personal success. This is because environment is stronger than our will. It wins over time.

Stock your kitchen with unhealthy food, and that's what you'll be eating. Put a big screen TV in your house and that's what you'll be watching. And what's crazy is that we complain to friends about weight gain and never having the time to read.

Who we spend the majority of our time with also determines the course of our lives.

Hang out with people who like to drink and party and soon that will become your lifestyle. Alternatively, hanging out with people who like to exercise and feed their minds will rub off on you, too.

“Show me your friends and I'll show you your future.” — Dan Pena

I'm not suggesting you dump your friends, but you should avoid any bad habits they might have. And perhaps try broadening your circle to new friends whose good habits and success you might want to emulate.

The enemy of growth

If you want to follow your dreams and find success, avoid comfort and conformity. What's easy and familiar seldom gets you where you want to go.

“Conformity is the jailer of freedom and the enemy of growth.” — John F. Kennedy

Surround yourself with people who inspire you, and whose positive example will help fuel your dreams and success. Create a home and work environment that helps you make good decisions.

Do these things, and you can change the opinion you have of yourself. You can become the person you always dreamed of being.

And when you get there, be sure and take the time to inspire and help others who are still struggling. This is how we not only change ourselves and others for the better but maybe even the world ■

Source:

<https://medium.com/personal-growth/how-comfort-and-conformity-are-dream-killers-4efc657d3afd>

How Reading Affects Your Brain!

If You Read Daily: Give Yourself A Round Of Applause!

Photo by Christin Hume on Unsplash

By CN | Apr 26 | 2 min read

The other day I wrote a blog talking about, how if you're reading this blog you are on the right track as you try to improve yourself(you can read the blog [here](#)). However in that blog I didn't talk about the benefits of reading even though I mentioned reading. So here are the benefits of reading!

1. Reading Strengthens Connections In Your Brain

Now, this might seem a little confusing at first. What do you mean: "Strengthens Connections"?

Well for that let's take a quick look at how the brain is formed. If we were to do so we'd see that the brain is basically a link(or rather a spider web) of neurons(information messengers). This is important because when there's something we do repeatedly(weather that's a thought, feeling, etc.) get's "hard-wired" in our brain(i.e. the easier it'll be for neurons to work in a certain way).

(Disclaimer: Everything I said about the brain, could very well be false. I'm no doctor so take everything I say with a grain of salt. These opinions are formed from research I did on my own :))

Now what does this have to do with reading? Well, if we constantly read, parts of our brain, specifically parts of our

brain where we take information, control language processing, etc., get "hard-wired"!

Here's a 2013 [Study](#) where this is proved!

2. Improvement In Memory And Concentration!

Here is what [insider.com](#) had to say about this:

When humans read, we create a "mental map" of written text. This mental map helps us process words we are reading and aids in knowledge recall and memory. Romanoff says a regular reading routine helps the brain "practice" mental processes that contribute to memory functioning.

3. Builds Your Vocabulary

This is a no-brainer. I don't think I need to provide any research for this.

But why is this important? Well, for one you don't want to be a 50 y/o with a 12 y/o vocabulary. You also don't want to sound non-educated. You also want your paperwork(emails, essays, etc.) to sound, sophisticated.

I truly think there are only pros to having a bigger & better vocab! ■

Source:

https://medium.com/@Coding_Networks/how-reading-affects-your-brain-7cf69c9daeb4



NATURE Calling For ACTION STATIONS!



Cool evenings soften blow of midday heat

Hot and dry with maximum temperature recorded at 41.7 °C and humidity level very low at 26 per cent is something one can handle in Karachi. City folk take multiple sighs of relief as the blazing noon day sun relents to the fabled sea breeze driven cool evening. Also, there was the cloud cover for the most part which cancelled the dire heat-wave predictions of the Met office. But the clouds have gone and the City sizzles for a few hours now. Thank God for the shady trees that abound in most parts of this great metropolis by the sea.

Further inland matters have gone from bad to worse, with daytime maximum temperatures ranging from 48 to 50°C in Dadu, Jacobabad, Larkana, Sukkur, Khairpur, Nawabshah, Shikarpur, Qambar Shahdadt and Ghotki districts, and with no sea breeze to look forward to, the evenings are oppressive, putting it mildly.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its sixth assessment report recently warned that heat-waves and humid and hot weather in Pakistan, along with other countries of South Asia, were set to become more intense and frequent in this century. India has banned wheat exports without government approval after its hottest March on record hit production. It's a blow to countries reeling from supply shortages and soaring prices since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. India, the world's second-largest wheat producer, said it was

"India has banned wheat exports without government approval after its hottest March on record hit production"

worried about the food security of its own 1.4 billion people.

GLOF ALERT!

Meanwhile the Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman, nicknamed 'Calamity Jane' in environmental circles for her capacity to bring down the wrath of Nature upon nonperforming government functionaries, has announced a National Task Force in line with the orders of the Prime Minister to ensure that disaster management efforts are streamlined and optimized to tackle the severe

"Hot, dry and windy weather is aggravating the forest fire season"

nationwide heat wave that is adding further impetus to glacial lake outburst flood events, acronym GLOF.

It is estimated that due to rising temperatures, glaciers in Pakistan's northern mountain ranges comprising the Hindu Kush, Himalayas and Karakorum are melting rapidly and a total of

"City folk take multiple sighs of relief as the blazing noon day sun relents to the fabled sea breeze driven cool evening"

3,044 glacial lakes have developed in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), posing a clear and present danger to the mountain communities of Pakistan.

Water woes

Pakistan was among three most water-stressed countries in the world and could become a water scarcity-hit country by 2025 if steps were not taken to conserve water and reduce



impact of climate change, said Senator Sherry, calling for bringing changes to the lifestyle and behaviour of people and conserving water. She said her ministry would set up a climate communication strategy for creating public awareness about climate change. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Chairman Lt. Gen. Akhtar Nawaz and Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Climate

“3,044 glacial lakes have developed in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), posing a clear and present danger to the mountain communities of Pakistan”

Change Jodat Ayaz were on hand to back their minister's play.

“Water and food security will be seriously impacted even if rains help with water levels. Pakistan is in the top ten countries vulnerable to Climate Stress.”

Pre-existing vulnerabilities – poverty & governance challenges

Recording increase in the intensity and severity of droughts in Pakistan, the ‘Global Food Policy Report 2022’ has cautioned that summer heat-waves are projected to increase at a rate of 0.71 day per decade in the country, while in India it is estimated to triple or quadruple by 2100.

Released by the Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the report says water scarcity in Pakistan is projected to worsen with climate change. Himalayan glaciers, an important source of rivers in South Asia, have lost more mass since 2000 than in the entire twentieth century, according to the report.

Of the world's five basins where water scarcity-led GDP losses are projected to be highest, three including the Indus, Sabarmati, and Ganges-



Brahmaputra are in South Asia. In the Indus Basin alone, GDP losses by 2100 are expected to exceed \$5,000 billion, it estimates.

The report warns that South Asia's pre-existing vulnerabilities — high levels of poverty, governance challenges and limited access to basic services and resources — amplify the region's climate risks, with potentially devastating effects if warming continues at this pace.

Low trust on water

Meanwhile, officials of the International Sedimentation Research Institute of Pakistan (Isrip), which works under Wapda, will again measure flows at Guddu Barrage upstream to determine whether the flows being released Taunsa downstream are showing a rising trend at Guddu Barrage.

A joint team of Wapda, Sindh and Punjab irrigation officials, Isrip officials, Indus River System Authority's members from Punjab and Balochistan, along with IRSA chairman Zahid Junejo, visited Taunsa Barrage downstream, working under the supervision of National Assembly's Standing Committee on water resources headed by Khalid Magsi, an MNA from Balochistan. Ministry of Water Resources joint secretary Mehar Ali Shah is also part of the team.



**Minister for Climate Change
Sherry Rehman**



The flow measurement and monitoring exercise had to be initiated after the Standing Committee had a heated debate with stakeholders over shortages in Sindh. Sindh Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro was quite vocal about ‘missing flows’ between Taunsa and Guddu. The committee formed this joint team to conduct the exercise at Guddu, Sukkur and Taunsa barrages before submitting its findings.

“Balochistan is getting 700 cusecs through Pat Feeder canal of Guddu Barrage,” said MNA Magsi. This quantum is totally insufficient because these minimal flows would be absorbed in the canal bed before reaching Balochistan. (Dawn, May 17th, 2022)

“South Asia’s pre-existing vulnerabilities —high levels of poverty, governance challenges and limited access to basic services and resources — amplify the region’s climate risks”

Indus River in the crosshairs

Meanwhile, a high level of urgency has been urged by the Federal Minister for Climate Change to protect the Indus River System as she announced an “Indus recharge initiative” for which the policy framework was in the pipeline.

“The Indus River is Pakistan’s lifeline,” she said. “On priority we need to regulate water flows

annually downstream Kotri barrage. The 1991 Water Accord needs to be implemented and water distribution needs to be fair. It’s the only way out to save the dying Indus in Sindh. If freshwater does not flow towards the delta, there is risk of a huge loss of biodiversity, culture and heritage.” (Dawn, May 15th, 2022).

The tsunami continues amidst burning woods

The Billion Tree Tsunami and 10 Billion Tree Tsunami are on course under the new dispensation, but the hot, dry and windy weather is aggravating the forest fire season with the Margalla Hills National Park and the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board clearly on the back foot with seven fire incidents already this season.

To the West the Koh-e-Sulaiman mountain range is on fire around Samzai and Sharghali villages and there are reports of casualties amongst local firefighters and thousands of valuable pine trees reduced to ashes. Koh-e-Sulaiman is known for being the world’s largest Chilghoza (pine nut) forest, with its 26,000 hectares producing around 640,000 kilograms of this irresistible dry fruit every year.

In conclusion

Endemic corruption has compromised and rendered dysfunctional the command and control mechanisms of civil society at the grassroots and this needs to be redressed on a war footing. Morale and motivation must be restored amongst the civil services which must be equipped with the tools necessary to perform their function if they are to be held accountable for their performance. ■

Column by Adil Ahmad, Correspondent, TCS Octara.Com

Lifelong Learning Tips

Selection by JJ

▪ If you've already made up your mind

about a course of action, don't go through the charade of involving employees only to do what you wanted to do all along. Example: Don't call a meeting to "explore ideas" and then strike down suggestions that don't support your decision.

▪ Help people solve problems

themselves instead of dumping them in your lap by peppering them with questions. Ask: "What have you done so far?" "Who have you sought out to help?" and "What information do you still need to solve this?"

▪ Sell your ideas

by playing upon your listener's dominant emotion. Example: If your boss fears competition, show how your competitors' recent triumphs have made your organization vulnerable.

▪ Want to help employees

better understand your organization's mission? Have them periodically write—in their own words—how their jobs support the mission. Publish the best entries in your internal newsletter—and reward the authors.

▪ Reduce anxiety

by slowing down to calm down. Instead of rush-ing to a meeting, walk slower. Those few extra seconds will help you arrive more relaxed.

▪ Maintain people's attention

by stating your main points before handing over a memo. Why? The moment you hand over the memo, people will begin to read it, and you will lose their attention.

▪ Speak more clearly

and persuasively by rephrasing negatives in positive terms. Example: Replace "It's not my intent to mislead" with "I want to make this clear."

▪ Laminate some of your business cards

to use as tags on your luggage, briefcase, laptop or camera case. Besides serving as I.D., they may also spark conversations that could lead to a business or career opportunity.

▪ Leave a note

if you want to speak with someone who's on the phone. Don't walk into the person's workspace and wait, or—worse—try to speak to the person while she's on the phone.

Extracted from Communication Briefings

Lifelong Learning Tips

■ Post this reminder

where you can see it easily: “My long-range goal is . What I’m doing now will help me reach this goal by. If you have trouble filling in the last blank, you may be wasting valuable time.

■ Break out of a slump

by arriving at work an hour early. Use the time to tackle an activity you’ve been putting off, such as filling out your expense report or editing a memo. Your sense of accomplishment will keep you flying all day.

■ Reduce hiring bias

by setting measurable standards that top candidates must meet before you start your search. Beware: Research shows employers often favor applicants they interview late in the hiring process.

■ Never talk down to an angry co-worker

with patronizing statements such as “You’re upset now. Why don’t you calm down, and we’ll continue when you’re more rational?” That will only make a person angrier and more defensive.

■ Protect the interests

of those who send you sensitive e-mail by securing their permission before forwarding their messages.

■ Keep your writing spare and clean

by adhering to this rule: Use no more than four punctuation marks in one sentence.

■ Trim the fat from your writing

by conducting a word search for “and.” If you find the word “and” linking any two similar words, ask if you need both. Examples: “background and experience” or “each and every.”

■ If you have an indecisive co-worker,

show him what his waffling costs the organization. Example: “Every day you delay making a decision about buying this equipment, we pay \$100 in leasing fees.”

■ Gain control of your phone time

by leaving messages that specify the best time to reach you. Example: “Please call me back between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. when I’ll be at my desk.” Just remember to keep your promise. Adapted from *Communication Briefings* June 2003

■ Tackle long-term tasks

amid a sea of “do now” work by posting the tasks in a visible place. Devote 10 minutes a day to work on the first item. Within a few weeks, you’ll chip away at your to-do list and be ready to update it.

Extracted from Communication Briefings

Please comment on best article in this issue: info@octara.com