

## **“My main job was developing talent.” — Jack Welch**

Every four month, there's a meeting that I am anxiously awaited. That's the meeting with employees who received an A-grade from a job evaluation during that year's quarter. Before I'll tell my story, let me give you a quick background. In the past, we held a job evaluation only once a year which would be some time before the company handed out annual hefty bonus. But last year, we had revamped our evaluation system by increasing the frequency of the evaluation to three times per year and introducing the new grading system, e.g. A, B, C and so forth. Their grades would directly affect the amount of bonus they would earn in that year.

After the implementation of the new system, I asked each department to nominate one exceptional employee so I would have a chance to exchange conversations with these stunning people. I usually spent half-an-hour with each of them. Apart from listening to their opinions on their assigned jobs, I also wanted to hear what were their takes on the company and their personal targets. Moreover, I can cross-check whether or not heads of each department graded their subordinators according to performances.

In every quarter, I met employees from all levels, local service staff to executives. These people come from every office branches engaging in various jobs. Everyone holds great experiences and wide perspectives on different issues. Lots of them didn't work at the company's headquarter and rarely met with CEOs, let alone talked to one.

Even though they are different in many aspects, I noticed that they share a common thread—their dedication and love to their jobs. Admittedly, they can be sycophant and deceiving by saying that they love their jobs (of course, who would dare to say that they hate what they are doing right at my face). But there's something in their sparkling eyes and glowing face that expresses the genuineness in their answers.

Their works also demonstrate that they believe in what they do and they are willing to give it a hundred-and-ten percent. I vividly remember one employee who told me that he is a person who's easily bored. Hence, he likes what he is doing because it's challenging. He has to deal with new problems every day, but instead of getting tired of it, he enjoys finding solutions for the problems as if he is playing a mind-boggling game that he needs to be updated and innovative all the times. A lot of employees whom I talked to tended to share similar view. They feel good to be in the work environment where they can talk openly to the teammates and bosses without having to be embarrassed. Furthermore, they like a challenging job that they need to constantly be on their feet.

I often asked these employees about the reasons why they want to continue working for the company. Why do I ask such question? I knew that now Thailand is short of quality human resource. Thus, these excellent individuals have advantages in finding a new job with higher salary. But many chose to stay as long as they can explore and learn new lessons.

A lot of executives said that more responsibilities didn't translate to more challenges to their own ability but also to the team as well. They felt that they need a strong team in order to complete the tasks. It's a tough job because leaders ought to put everyone on their teams at the same level so the void between skilful employees and those who need improvements can

be eliminated. And because of the challenges that keep them at the company so they can see how their teams pull through. They will leave when nothing is interesting.

I also asked them how they see their future at the company in the next five years. Many said that they want their departments to deliver distinctive results and be envied by others. But one person had an interesting answer. She said that she couldn't see exactly where she would be in five years since it's a long time. She wanted to dedicate all her efforts in making the best out of the present.

In several occasions, I have said that one of the CEOs' main jobs, in my opinion, is to keep the talents with the company and find the ways to improve their skills and utilize them to the fullest potential. As time elapses, I strongly believe that our employees are the most important assets, and the leaders of every organization should find opportunities to listen to their opinions in order to find a better way to improve their abilities. On the other hand, mediocre employees aren't those who lack of potential. More than often, after a proper method was introduced to them by the head of the team, we could see that their work efficiencies were doubled and they could place themselves in the top tier.

I am planning on a project called Talent Mentoring Program where each department will nominate a distinguished member to participate in the program. I will be their chaperone from the beginning until the end of the project. Participants will continue with their usual tasks, but I will have extra assignments for them to complete. Through out the project, I will closely monitor their reactions, results and methods in solving the problems that they face. I haven't started it yet. It's just an idea. But it seems that many are interested. I think it will come to shape very soon and I will tell you exactly what happened.