

Would you like to retain more of your enthusiasm or mojo no matter what job you might currently have?

Would you like to know a career truth that neither my High School teachers nor University professors talked about yet I discovered working with clients and colleagues that has helped me work in over 25 countries?

In researching the term **obsolescence** for this article, the formal definition states it occurs when an object, service or practice is not wanted, even though it may still be in good working condition.

In the mid 1990's, I first noticed 'obsolescence' with household and kitchen goods yet by the early 2000's, it was an expectation that these regular use items would be obsolete **before** they actually broke. I recall as a young teenager growing up in California, that when things broke, my parents, boss or neighbours would get them repaired and these items would continue working for much longer or until the tool or item wore out.

In the early 1980's I first noticed buyer terms like '*one year parts warranty*' then in the 1990's, that changed to a '*one year parts and labour warranty*'. By the 2000's, it was a simple '*30 day money back guarantee*'.

Product and service phraseology has had to change over the decades from warranty to guarantee because consumers like shorter time frames to return a product which is not fit for the purpose, not in good working order or if something doesn't fit properly.



I can recall a perfectly good Hewlett Packard printer purchased in 2005 for our Singapore office that stopped printing in black, white or colour. At first, we thought it was a defective laser ink cartridge so we bought new ones and installed them yet it didn't solve the problem. We also learnt that once we opened the cartridge box, the office supply company wouldn't give us credit or a refund because they were considered 'used consumables'.

A call to the HP service centre was made to arrange a time to have the printer checked. While our printer looked 100 % new, the HP service centre advisor suggested the computer circuit board was 'redundant'. He said it would be a minimum \$150 plus a service charge of \$80 to fix it and no guarantees it would work.

No worries - just buy a new one

At that point, his training kicked in as he said, "**no worries - just buy a new one**". He suggested it could be a better use of \$230 and while the previous model worked well, once it broke down, it cost as much to fix as it was to purchase a new one. At some point, I expect our replacement HP printer will just stop and most likely from the '*planned obsolescence date*' that is inserted into a redundant microprocessor chip at the factory.

When did you first notice society's 'throw it away' mindset?

When did you first notice you were comfortable with the mindset of '*throwing it away*' versus having something fixed or an item repaired by a service centre? It seems that the new norm is to not have shoe heels replaced or torn pants, shirts and blouses mended or hand me downs given to the next generation or to have the broken washer or refrigerator repairman pop by our homes.

The truth is that much of society is conditioned into shopping for the latest, greatest, coolest and newest item and then throwing out the old while we boast about our new gizmo in our social media updates.

I was recently in Colorado at a new COSTCO with my brother to shop for a dinner / birthday party we were having with friends who all graduated from the same University. With several birthdays to celebrate, we were pretty focused as we pushed our trolley around and at the turn of each aisle were reps showcasing new products. As they offered samples to taste, they knew that if we TRIED IT, odds were high we would BUY IT.



For anyone who has ever been to a Walmart, Costco, Carrefour, Tesco, Kroger, Aldi, Home Depot, Best Buy, IKEA or Courts as mega shopping outlets, there is no end to high grade quality products at very low cost.

Microwaves, flat screen televisions, video recorders, workout equipment, camping gear, washers, dryers, fans, mowers, coffee makers, pc's, mobile phones are easy examples of 1 to 3 year purchases. When the product warranty period expires or a new model or style comes out, manufacturers are ready for shoppers to put the old one in the garbage or bring it in for a credit to be used to buy a new one.

To survive and thrive – quash career obsolescence

Having lived and worked in the USA, Australia and S.E. Asia during the last five decades, I have watched family members build solid careers and industry colleagues create businesses and products with regional and global success. A wonderful by product has been that their successes have created employment for others and ways to contribute to their communities plus they help in volunteer and charity related organisations.

While none of us want to be considered obsolete like an old object or process, the fact is that these times are a changing as Bob Dylan first sang in late 1963. Companies keep innovating with faster technologies, financial transactional systems or social media engagement options. Some which benefit each of us in our own particular way.

What can you do in 2018 to ensure you meet new challenges and grab onto golden opportunities?

1. Start or join a mastermind or thought leaders group. Meet at least once every 90 days to enhance your awareness, ideas and share in common interests and topics.
2. Each week review your 2018 journey and the pathway of relevance to engage in areas to leverage your expertise and time with others.
3. Upgrade your knowledge in your profession through skills workshops, accreditation courses or industry conferences.
4. Re-visit your intentions and action plans that will create significance in your field of expertise.
5. Have fun during this time of discovery while making a difference to improve your / our world.



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