

LIVING IN THE NORTH EAST

Spring

FREE Sept/Oct 06

MAKING SENSE OF MONEY

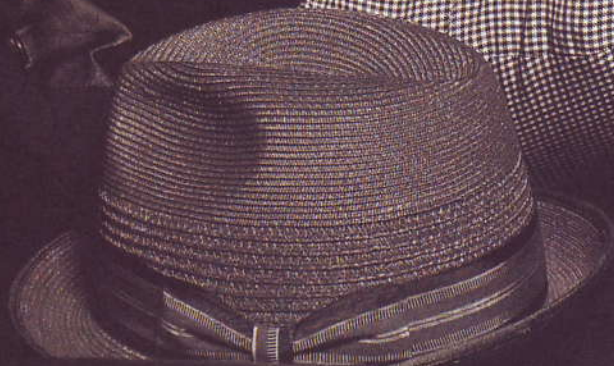
How to recover from a financial downfall

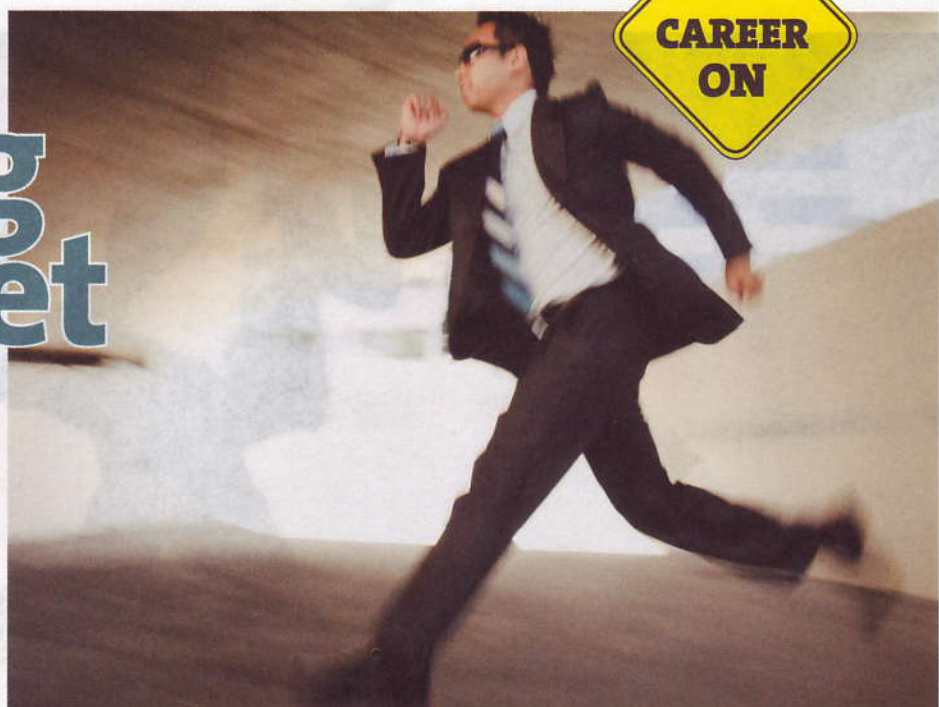
KIDS RULE!

Where to bring them this Children's Day

Rising Star

IMRAN AJMAIN IS SINGING HIS WAY TO STARDOM





Finding your Feet

Whether you are wet behind the ears or an old hat at the career game, starting off in a new organisation can be a daunting experience

TEXT KEITH G EMUANG

Store manager and former banking officer, Samuel Ong, 41, recounts, "When I was retrenched in 2004, it was a hard pill to swallow. It took me five months to find another job but when I happily reported for work at my new job, it suddenly dawned on me that everything was new to me."

"I was looking forward to starting out on my new career. However, when I took my seat in my new cubicle, I froze with uncertainty because I didn't know how to behave or fit into the organisation," said 23-year-old logistics officer, Perlyn Teh.

David Ang, executive director at the Singapore Human Resource Institute (SHRI), notes, "Fresh graduates or someone who has worked before have expectations and feel excitement when starting work in a new company. However, both groups, with different perspectives, may have different issues and concerns."

"In today's job market, it is critical for you to manage your own career and be ready to adapt to, not just new jobs but new careers too," stresses Kamini Das, group director at The Global Manpower Professionals (GMP) Group, a regional human capital solutions provider.

Common Issues

Adapting to a new job involves coming to terms with a new set of tangible and non-tangible circumstances. While the former will usually be overcome with time, the latter involves an emotional and psychological transition that many are not always prepared for.

After studying for so long, going into a new job for the first time naturally evokes a sense of exhilaration. We have all been there before. This undoubtedly marks a milestone in one's life, "an indication that they have arrived", says Ang.

Any apprehension comes as one ponders on the adequacy

of one's ability on the job. Interpersonal relationships in an office setting are a stark difference from those fostered in classrooms or canteens. So, one wonders how he would get along with new colleagues and if he would be able to put his training to use.

The anxiety, insecurity and uncertainty on the part of these young employees contrast with the seasoned worker who is coming out of retrenchment or moving from another job. With this group, forging interpersonal relationships is not as much a challenge as, say, understanding the corporate policies, structure or culture of the new company and coming to terms with the change.

If a change of industry is involved for these seasoned workers, concerns about the level of training possessed may also proliferate. In any scenario, these issues can, nonetheless, be dealt with over time with the right attitude.

Dealing with Transition

For any new employee, it is not unusual to take time to familiarise office policies, procedures and protocol. The key is asking intelligent and relevant questions.

"Even before coming in for the first day at the new company, it is important to find out as much as you can about your job and the company,"

advises Ang.

Fortunately, according to Ang, many companies have on-board or mentor programmes to help new employees settle in. This helps lessen some of the emotional and psychological issues, and is important because if not addressed, they can fuel uncertainty and insecurity, thus impeding the learning process and preventing one from making any contribution early on. That said, how one responds to the overtures made by his new company or colleagues, is still vital.

"Attitude is important. Don't think too highly of yourself. Be humble and willing to learn so that you can fit into the socialisation process," emphasises Ang.

Ms Das, who is also in charge of GMP's Career Advisory Division, adds, "Employers are changing their hiring strategies from hiring full-time permanent staff and maintaining them on the payroll for long term to hiring on a temporary, contract or project basis."

She explains that this allows employers to keep their overheads low and maintain flexibility in terms of headcount. "From the job-seekers' perspective, this means that they have to also be flexible in accepting short-term jobs. Hence, it is not just advantageous but necessary to adapt to new jobs in today's work environment," she says. ■

Fitting in Tips

- Be aware** of the company's guidelines and rules.
- Understand** your job description from the onset to avoid any future misunderstandings regarding responsibilities and expectations.
- Build** healthy and successful relationships with everyone (even the humble tea-lady). No one can function effectively in isolation.
- Pay attention** to important details e.g. project deadlines, memo notes and message dates and times.
- Be open** to constructive criticism and suggestions from superiors and colleagues.
- Admit** when you make a mistake to avoid further problems and offer a solution to show that you are one to take responsibility for your actions.

For further information visit: SHRI @ www.shri.org.sg
The GMP Group @ www.gmp.com.sg