MGMT 2303

Portfolio

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1. The Book About My Country

The book I recommend is The Cambridge History of China. The reason why I recommend this book is that almost all the books I know of are written in Chinese and the books in English are often full of misunderstanding and personal political opinion. Therefore, The Cambridge History of China is a relatively neutral, comprehensive and reliable book to introduce China to those who do not know about China. The series was conceived by British historian Denis C. Twitchett and American historian John K. Fairbank. This book includes the history of ancient China from 221 BC (when the Qin Dynasty was funded) to 1982 AD (33 years after People's Republic of China was funded). It gives a comprehensive introduction to the political, economic, social and cultural development in ancient China for more than 2,000 years, showing the profound influence of the unified civilization on the Chinese people and the evolution from the centralized feudal dynasty to socialist China.
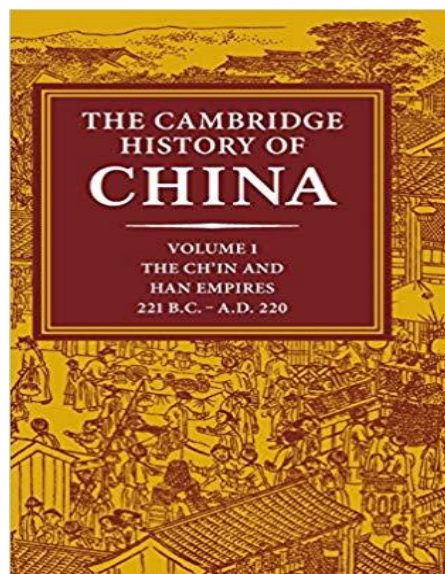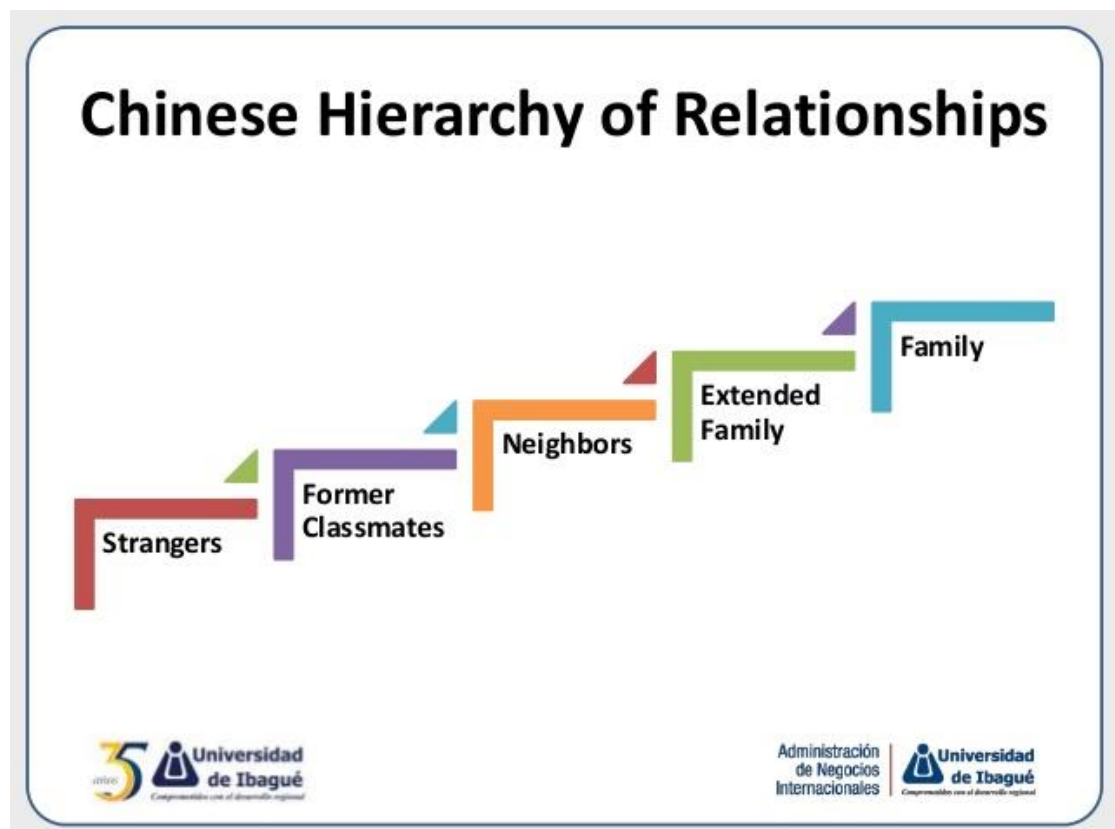
(Picture retrieved from Amazon.com)

2. OB and I

2.1 Creative Connection

After taking this course, I find an interesting connection between OB and me. Though I never get a job before, I still can find many OB connections in my life. I was born and grown up in China. If we consider family as an organization, that is the first time I have a contact with OB. The family I am talking about is not a small family that only includes me, my parents and my grandparents (I was in Jiangsu province where the one-child policy was strictly implemented, so I do not have any brothers or sisters), it is more like a community of shared interests that all members are relatives.

Chinese Hierarchy of Relationships

Strangers
Former Classmates
Neighbors
Extended Family
Family

The Chinese society is a relationship society, except Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, in most cities of China, the power of relation is stronger than the rules. The family is a platform for interpersonal relationship sharing, it can maximize the interests of the family and each family member through the integration of interpersonal relationship resources. Especially in southern China, the family is a highly cohesive and hierarchical organization, with considerable power held by the patriarchs who organize the ceremony for their ancestors. Here is an example of how people benefit from the relationship, assume you have a disease and want to see a famous doctor who works in a public hospital. There are many people line up to see him every day. If you do not want to wait, maybe a family member's friend has some relation with the supervisor of the doctor. He can help you skip the line.

In this big family, blood ties between many relatives is too weak, some of them even do not know each other. When I was young, I was curious about why they are maintaining such a big family. I find the answer in OB. There are three forms of commitment shown in the family: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. As for affective commitment, they are tied by blood. Even some of them are not strong, they are still each other's kin. Especially the ceremony for the

ancestors bonds them together. As for the continuance commitment, they need to stay together to benefit other member's relationship and maximize their own interest. And for the same reason, they owe a debt to others which makes them ought to stay is the normative commitment.

2.2 Reflection on Assessment and Exercise

2.2.1 Poker Game Exercise

The first lab of OB impressed me deeply, I thought this lab would be like any other lab I've been to before, some in-class task, or another form of lecture. But I was wrong. Instead, we had a very interesting exercise of poker game. At the very beginning, a paper about the rules of the game was given to every students of the class and we were assigned into different groups of four or five students. We only had very short time (at least is not sufficient enough for a non-native speaker of English) to read and understand the rules, talk is strictly not allowed during the game. I can not remember the rules in detail now. All I can remember is that after each round, the winner goes to the upper group while loser goes to the lower group, and then we start another round.

In the first round, we got 2 Chinese students and 2 French students in the same group. None of us understood the rules. It's pretty funny that our rules changed frequently, no one is confident enough about his/her understanding to control the situation. Everyone is confused but we still need to have a winner and a loser based on the mess of the rules. When it comes to the second round, we got 2 people from other groups, one of them was super confident. Though he did not tell us the rules, he tried to use his finger to point out the key elements that influence the result of the game. So, we followed his rules. At the third round, I went to another group. In this round, three of us had different opinions about the rules and no one can convince others. When the argument intensified, someone began to argue that violates the restriction. The resulted in the situation that we were still stuck in the argument while other groups had finished this round. Finally, we compromised to a rule that everyone is acceptable.

In this exercise, I learned that When you're in a temporary and unfamiliar organization, leadership is up for grabs. When you are not confident, you are giving up your rights. However, excessive strength only deepens internal conflicts and has a strong negative effect on work and results. Efficiency can only be maximized if the parties constantly negotiate and compromise to find a solution that is acceptable to all.

2.2.2 Motivation Interview Exercise

The second exercise that impress me was the motivation interview

exercise. In this exercise, we need find a partner to get ourselves in pair and interview him or her to finish a paper about motivation. It was an opportunity for me to listen to other's experience about motivation. Through the interview of each other, we found out that motivation can be intrinsic and extrinsic based on the arising factor is internal or external. Generally, intrinsic motivation comes from the inside of an individual while extrinsic motivation comes from outside of an individual. However, in reality, it is hard to find a behavior that is purely intrinsic or extrinsic motivated. Most of time, people's behaviors are motivated by of mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and the nature of the mix can be changed over time. We found that we were both motivated intrinsically at the very beginning, while as time goes, the extrinsic factors took dominant position of our motivation. Take my partner's experience as example, he chose to take the ACS program by his interest, however, the difficulty of CS reduced his enthusiasm for learning. Instead the reason that drives him to stay in the program is the expectations from his parents and the pressure of getting employed after graduate. Except this, we also found that unfair treatment can demotivate people. Especially in a group project, when you contributed the most but got lower mark than a free rider.

2.2.3 Personality Exercise

In this Exercise, we were assigned into different groups and did the test of big five personality. Then we sort the result of our group members from

high to low based on the points of conciseness into a list but hide the name. After that, we exchange our list with another group and had a conversation to help link the person with the result. It was a really hard job since we barely knew each other, and it is impossible to get so many people involved in the same conversation. Therefore, we made our decision based on their extraversion.

(Picture retrieved from https://www.verywellmind.com/the-big-five-personality-dimensions-2795422)

By observing the result of the members of two groups, I found that the locals got high points on extraversion while Chinese students got relatively lower points extraversion. The lowest point of extraversion was from a student who comes from Norway. Also, Chinese students got the highest point on neuroticism. Although the sample size is too small, the

results basically reflect the influence of culture and environment on individual personality. Influenced by Confucian culture, Chinese people tend to be introverted. Northern Europe, with its high-latitude polar nights and cold climate, makes people less extroverted. Additionally, as international students who study in a foreign country, culture, language environment and even the pressure of study can all contribute to higher points on neuroticism.

2.2.4 Power Distance Assessment

We did an assessment about the power distance in class. We need fill the list and show the class for points by sit and standing.

I do not have a clear memory about the result, but there is one thing that I am certain of, many Chinese students got higher points on this list.

This is also a indicate of the influence of culture. As I discussed in the recommended book section, China had a long history with a centralized authoritarian government. Therefore, it natural for Chinese people to have higher power distance. The Confucian culture is performance oriented, a leader must better than his subordinates in most fields.

2.2.5 Affective Commitment Assessment

In this assessment, the bolded lines are situations that have negative effect on affective commitment. Based on this assessment, the affective commitment is rather an emotional loyalty than a rational decision compared to continuance commitment and normative commitment. The textbook describes affective commitment as "I want to stay".

I think the affective commitment is more suitable for a small company that pursues stability than a large company than pursues profit and innovation. The key of creating affective commitment is the belongingness

of employees. The relationship between colleagues is more like friends. Even the relationship between employee and employer is not just a simple contractual relationship, it is an emotional bond that connect every one of organization. The ideal model is a family business since no bond is stronger than the blood tie.

2.3 Connection Between OB and My Life

OB has a strong connection with our life, we can find OB concepts everywhere in our life. As a student, the most relevant concept with our life must be job performance, motivation, personality, culture, value, ethical, trust, decision making. After learning OB, we are able to distinguish the routine task, adaptive task and creative task, so we can train ourselves to improve our ability to handle these tasks. We also are able to understand the proper way to communicate with people who have different personality, cultural and religion background.

3. OB and the World

3.1 Article About Job Performance

https://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders-network/2011/aug/01/absence-rates-key-performance-indicator

This article suggests the public sector include absence rate into its KPI (Key Performance Indicator). It quotes a survey report from CBI/Pfizer, the largest absence management company in the UK, that claims the cost

of absence exceeds £17bn per year. The article emphasizes that organizations must define a standard approach that is coherent, accurate and transparent. And using this approach to find out the patterns and symptomatic reasons behind employee absence, so the employee's job performance can be improved.

(Picture retrieved from https://blog.cake.hr/top-5-things-know-staff-absence-policy/)

Absence, as a counterproductive behavior, has serious damage on the job performance of employee. Especially for public sectors, it is the waste of resource and damage the reputation of the public sector. The KPI of absence is an approach of Management by Objective that sets a goal of reducing the absence rate and uses a coherent, accurate and transparent measure to evaluate.

3.2 Article About Trust

In this news, it was report that the Chinese tech icon Jia Yueting, the chairman of Leshi Internet and the founder of Faraday Future, has stepped down as chairman of Leshi Internet and given up other positions at the company. Mr. Jia's personal guarantees bind together much of LeEco's debt, setting up a potentially messy situation that could embroil all of the LeEco companies as creditors battle for assets. Though the LeEco group claimed that it is still possible to receive a bailout from investors or a state-owned company, the bankrupt of Jia's reputation has seriously damaged the market's trust to LeEco Group.

(Picture retrieved from

yueting.html)

Reputation is an intangible asset can take a long time to build but can be destroyed easily. Trust is among the most significant factor in determining a company's reputation. In this case, Jia, as the chairman of the Leshi Internet, he used his identity and his company's reputation to borrow heavily to invest in Faraday Future, an American new-energy car company. However, he always used the excuse of "coming back next week" to default on his debts and finally tried to immigrate to the United States to escape the debt. His actions destroyed not only his own reputation, but the trust of the market, users and investors in Leshi Internet. At one time, Leshi was the top four video streaming providers in China. Because of Jia Yueting's behavior, Leshi fell into a huge crisis of trust, which led to its elimination from the competition in the video streaming industry

3.3 Article About Group Project

https://www.polygon.com/2019/3/5/18233699/game-developer-layoffs-unions-katie-chironis

This article is about the experience of a game designer, describing the instability of working and the frequency of layoffs and reorganizations in the game industry. Due to the competitive nature of the game development industry, companies often can't afford to continue projects that will not succeed in a volatile market. Employee layoffs and

downsizing events are common place in this industry. The event was only preempted with rumors of upper management discussing "reorganization of company structure". She was laid off with no warning to her or her co-workers and described the difficulty she faced in attempting to get back on her feet following "reorganization".

(Picture retrieved from

https://www.polygon.com/2019/3/5/18233699/game-developer-layoffs-unions-katie-chironis)

Laying off employees doesn't only affect those who are removed from the organization. Downsizing has been known to cause employees who are left behind to experience "survivors syndrome". This is characterized by anger, depression, fear and guilt felt following downsizing. An increase in work related stress is also experienced as well. Those who stay in the studio might worry about their future career:

would I be the next one? The perceived organizational support is likely also very low with very few rewards for hard work (overtime), no job security and insane working hours. This coupled with the already high level of expectation placed on game developers by organizations and terrible work conditions can lead to very low levels of organizational commitment and job performance.

4. Appendices

4.1 Article About Job Performance

Public sector absence rates should be a key performance indicator

Data collected by FirstCare suggests under-reporting of absences in the NHS but making absences a key performance indicator could ensure more coherency across the public sector, says **Richard Burrell**

One method of ensuring a coherent absence management policy is to make absence a key performance indicator (KPI) in all public sector organisations and publish monthly figures.

Separating the costs of absence out from salary and other personnel costs would enable organisations to fully understand the need to address all forms of workplace absence. It would also provide an easy and quantifiable way of recording the saving that can be made and ensure that the significant costs of providing emergency locum cover and temporary staffing can be reduced.

In the current climate public sector organisations are under enormous pressure to cut costs. The age of austerity has bitten hard into many which now face the unenviable task of saving money while maintaining service standards.

One way of saving money and improving service is to ensure a low rate of workplace absence. The cost of absence exceeds £17bn per year, according to a CBI/Pfizer survey in May.

As the largest absence management company in the UK, we collect real-time information on absences and work with over 120,000 employees across the public and private sectors. Our database – collected over the last four years – comprises of over 856,000 individual absences and records 7,200,000 working days lost.

We collect real-time absence data which at any point can give a snapshot of for example how many people are off on maternity leave on any given day. Our data was used by the government during the swine flu scare and we also recently submitted data to the Department for Work and Pension's sickness absence review call for evidence.

The Black Review of the health of Britain's working age population estimated that approximately six days were lost per employee per year. Other data is published elsewhere, but our data shows that the average UK absence is 8.01 days lost per employee per year; however public sector bodies continue to score much higher. Local authorities are particularly prevalent, here the average figure reaches 9.40 days per year; the NHS tops even this with 10.37 days lost per year.

Of course, theories abound with the exact cause of the disproportionate figures – longer hours, differing shift patterns and increased levels of stress can no doubt be argued as integral causes. (Employers are four times more likely to cite stress as the biggest cause of long-term absence than their counterparts in the private sector). What

is clear however is that the public sector must take the lead in driving down absence, and supporting employees back to health and work.

We believe that a significant number of public sector organisations such as the NHS are severely under-reporting absence. When we compare our data to that collected by normal absence recording tools in the NHS for example, we find a discrepancy. According to the CBI/Pfizer survey, he cost per absent employee in the public sector is, on average, 46% more than in the private sector, where more absences are of a short-term nature and the scale and scope of the problem is clear to see.

Currently a cultural problem exists whereby managers and HR teams are loath to admit to the full extent of employee absences, perhaps fearing that higher rates of absences may reflect badly upon their own performance.

If absence rates are to be reduced, organisations must define a standard approach, one that focuses on presenting coherent, accurate and transparent data. Only when they have access to transparent trend data can they even begin to properly assess the patterns and symptomatic reasons behind employee absence.

Richard Burrell is chairman of absence management specialist FirstCare

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of the professional agenda.

4.2 Article About Trust

Chinese Internet Tycoon Resigns From Troubled Company

The embattled internet tycoon behind struggling Chinese tech company LeEco has resigned from all his positions at the company's publicly traded arm, the latest action in a stunning fall for one of the country's most flamboyant tech icons.

Jia Yueting has stepped down as chairman of Leshi Internet and has also given up several other positions at the company, the company said in a filing. Mr. Jia will become global chairman of LeEco's electric car business, a separate announcement said.

Mr. Jia's departure from Leshi Internet ended his tenure at the helm of one of China's most ambitious tech companies. Last week, a court in Shanghai froze $182 million of assets tied to Mr. Jia, and on Tuesday, shares connected to Mr. Jia totaling 40 percent of Leshi Internet's outstanding stock were frozen by courts, according to a company filing.

Mr. Jia aggressively pushed Leshi Internet, which had started as a video streaming portal, into a spate of new business lines. Seeking to build a company combining content with hardware, he expanded LeEco, as the group of companies he controls personally has become known. Mr. Jia remains chairman of LeEco Holdings.

That expansion, however, relied heavily on debt to fund LeEco's ever expanding list of projects and brought in a wide range of investors to fund the newly established LeEco companies. Some had little investment experience, and were presented with guarantees that obscured the risk of start-up investing.

"Today LeEco faces huge challenges and I take full responsibility," Mr. Jia wrote in an open letter published Thursday morning in Beijing, asking for more time for LeEco and its electric car business. "We will fully repay our debts to financial institutions and suppliers," he wrote

Mr. Jia began his career a long way from Beijing's booming tech corridor, starting in a county tax bureau in Shanxi, a coal-rich northern province. As China's dot-com boom got underway, he moved into tech, starting a telecommunications company, and then founded Leshi Internet in 2004.

In 2008, his business received investment from a private equity firm led by Ling Wancheng, a member of one of Shanxi's most powerful families and the younger brother of the top aide to Hu Jintao, then the president.

The aide, Ling Jihua, was sentenced last year to life in prison on corruption charges. Ling Wancheng, who is wanted by Chinese authorities, moved to the United States. Mr. Jia has acknowledged in

interviews with the Chinese press that he brought in Mr. Ling for his political connections.

Two years later, the little-known Leshi Internet received a coveted slot for a public listing. At the time of its initial public offering, Ling Wancheng's private equity firm was Leshi Internet's third-biggest shareholder, after Mr. Jia and his sister.

Leshi Internet's shares soared after going public as China's retail investors got one of their first opportunities to bet on a start-up with big dreams. By 2015, the stock price propelled Mr. Jia to near the top of China's richest list, according to the Hurun Report, which tracks the country's wealthiest citizens.

But Mr. Jia led his company into an array of businesses that have not panned out. He invested hundreds of millions of dollars in developing LeEco's smartphone business Le Mobile, in what the new LeEco chief executive, Liang Jun, last week conceded was mistimed: Fierce competition has eroded profit for most handset makers.

Last year, as Leshi Internet exhausted its credit lines at a dozen Chinese banks, Mr. Jia began pledging shares in LeEco companies as collateral for more loans, borrowing at least $2.1 billion from a variety of nontraditional lenders like security brokerage firms, trust companies and capital management firms. Today, shares Mr. Jia controls in at least six LeEco companies are pledged to lenders,

according to Chinese corporate records.

Those same shares were then frozen by courts this week as Mr. Jia had personally guaranteed the debt held by creditors of Le Mobile.

Mr. Jia's personal guarantees bind together much of LeEco's debt, setting up a potentially messy situation that could embroil all of the LeEco companies as creditors battle for assets. No LeEco company has filed for bankruptcy, a company spokesman said, and LeEco could still receive a bailout from investors or a state-owned company.

LeEco's electric car ambitions are centered on Los Angeles, where the financially troubled start-up Faraday Future, with more than 1,400 employees, is developing high-end electric cars in a bid to challenge the market leader Tesla Motors.

Mr. Jia remains Faraday Future's largest shareholder and emphasized in his letter on Thursday that he would dedicate his energy to getting the company's first production-ready model, called the FF 91, into mass production.

Faraday Future is in the process of raising more than $1 billion, a spokesman for the company said in an email, noting that LeEco and Faraday Future are separate companies.

4.3 Article About Group Project

Making games for a living means being in constant fear of losing your job

Letting go of the fear was a mistake I won't make again

It's date night tonight, and my husband Max and I are — as usual — trying unsuccessfully to plan our future.

We'd like to buy a home, or at least sign a lease for more than one year at a time. We'd like to have kids. Not now, but someday. This is when the conversation usually takes a dark turn.

You see, Max and I are both game designers. We have our dream jobs, in theory. But neither one of us has ever worked for a company longer than three years, despite our best efforts. This means that it's next to impossible to plan more than a year ahead. This situation isn't unique in the world of video game development, it's the normal state of affairs for so many of us.

How do you have a stable life in an industry which doesn't seem to offer one?

THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME IT HAPPENED

Max and I met and started dating at Microsoft Game Studios in 2013. We were both part of a group of "new grad" employees who had been hired to bring fresh talent to departments throughout Xbox, with the goal that many of us would become lifetime employees. We all worked hard; this sort of job had always been the dream, and here we were. Things were fantastic for a few months.

It didn't last. As the launch of the Xbox One grew closer, people

began to whisper a new word around the office: "re-organization." We didn't know what it meant, but we knew enough to scared.

Management called our entire group of new grads into a conference room to let us know we would be let go at the end of our first year. Microsoft had funded this hiring program but then, somewhere in all those calculations and re-assessments of profit and loss in the following months, it had been scrapped.

I had turned down offers from other game companies like EA to come to Microsoft. We had been promised careers, growth, and mentorship. These days, most of that original group doesn't work in games anymore.

That sort of experience sticks with you. It was my first time being laid off in the games industry.

IT DOESN'T GET EASIER WITH TIME OR EXPERIENCE

I found a new job before my time at Microsoft had run out, but it was soon clear I had joined a new studio in a tough situation. Projects weren't shaping up as expected, and there'd recently been a round of layoffs. Those who were left were spooked. I was determined to work hard, keep my head down, and hope for the best.

But it wasn't enough. When a project spun down I was let go, along with the other newest hire, a few months later. The producer who delivered the news also escorted us out the front door immediately. We

weren't allowed to retrieve our belongings.

I sat in my car out in the parking lot, pressed my head against the steering wheel and cried. My coworkers had likewise been given no warning that I would be laid off, including the summer intern I'd hired and managed; it was like I had been abducted by a UFO and suddenly they had to pick up the work I had left behind.

I had no savings. I'd been pouring every bit of my paycheck into paying down my massive student loans before the interest piled up. It had felt responsible at the time.

Max stood by me, to his credit. We lived together and, although it was a struggle for him, he had a new job himself and was determined to cover my half of the rent until I found work. I was terrified of being a burden, so I hunted for a job obsessively, spending 12 hours a day doing everything I could to find another position. I took rare breaks to lay on the couch and stare at the ceiling, lost in a fog. I had gone through two layoffs in two years. Was this just how the industry worked? Surely everyone in games didn't live this way, right?

Weeks later, a small developer offered me a role as a writer for one of its upcoming games. But my future manager pointed to the last two jobs on my resume during my final interview.

"We want to hire you, but we're concerned," he said. "This is a studio where people stick around. I've been here over ten years. The last

writer was here for five, and the last one before him, nine. Are you going to commit to staying here?"

He might have been concerned, but I was relieved. I told him nothing would make me happier than to work at the developer for as long as I could. I wanted stability and commitment as much as they did. I signed the offer immediately. My start had been rocky, but surely this job — my next job — would be a good "forever home."

And things were great, for a time. I formed close friendships with coworkers and shipped a game I had a major hand in shaping. Fall turned into winter, and we held office holiday parties. We played hackey sack in the parking lot. I finished writing the game I'd been hired to write, and began working on the story beats for the next. And I'd saved up some money to build a safety net, just in case. The fear in my gut slowly dissipated.

The new year brought rumors that the studio was switching to a new game engine for the next project. I had experience using this engine, but no one else did. Studios make changes to the technology that drives their games, it's part of the business, but it often means they have to let people go and hire some new people to make sure they have enough developers who know how the next technology works without having to be retrained at the company's expense.

I had a nagging sensation something bad was coming, but coworkers

were adamant that everything would be fine. The studio had weathered a lot in 16 years. We'd be okay.

IN WHICH WE WEREN'T OK

A month later my manager called me during a day I was working from home. He'd never called me before.

The news was grim. Just before lunchtime, the PCs of many employees all suddenly logged out at the same time. No one knew what was happening at first, but then management began calling people into a conference room, one by one. They were being let go.

I had somehow survived this round of cuts. The survivors gathered in the center of the empty office the next morning. We shared stories about the previous day and wandered around in a daze, not knowing what we were meant to be working on. What would happen to the game we'd been making?

I was overcome with guilt. Why hadn't I been let go instead of them? Many of them had children, partners, or disabled family members to take care of. What would become of them now?

And I was left with an even worse feeling: I had been right. My paranoia about being laid off, my obsession about planning for what to do if it ever happened again, it was all telling me something. I should never have lost the fear in my gut. I should have let it drive me. It would have been safer.

Years later, I've realized that this fear and anxiety isn't just common. It's necessary if you want to have a long career. Games might fail fast and hard upon release, and studios can shutter overnight. There may not be obvious warning signs. It might even happen at companies with a large number of hit games.

I was once out with some friends when someone from Telltale Games informed our group that the company seemed to be in good spirits, projects were running smoothly, and morale was high. It was shut down a month later. Jam City, a mobile game developer, was aggressively hiring in Los Angeles up until the day it reported a layoff of roughly 25 percent of their workforce. Friends of mine from the Big Fish and Capcom Vancouver layoffs last September are still looking for work.

SO HOW DO YOU SURVIVE?

Some people try to keep their heads down, getting only their required work done and investing no extra time or emotional commitment to the game they work on. I don't blame them for a second; a culture that makes workers expendable cannot expect those workers to perform above and beyond the call of duty under the guise of "passion."

Others gather in bars after work to vent about the studios that have burned them the worst, sharing horror stories to help others know what to expect from certain companies. Some employees do their best to rise up the ranks into studio leadership, where things are a little more stable.

And some, like me, focus on making friends at other studios. We look out for each other the best we can, helping one another through tough times. I send multiple introductory emails, DMs, or Facebook messages each week trying to connect talented friends to other friends in search of their next stable gig. After all, I never know when I'm going to need to call in a favor for myself.

Other developers just leave. They go to regular tech companies, they return to school to learn new skills, they travel overseas, or they try something completely new. And they rarely come back. Video game development is remarkably efficient at chasing away talent; the industry often seems inhospitable to anyone who craves stability. Or health insurance, for that matter.

The recent Blizzard layoffs terrified seasoned game developers, myself included. Blizzard is known to be one of those rare stable places at which you can settle for life. It has been known to give developers gifts at the five and ten year mark; a sword and shield, respectively. The company treats its people like people, not like resources to be expended. It's the kind of place nearly every developer dreams of ending up specifically because of that promise of stability. If even studios like these can go through layoffs, then is there such a thing as a "safe place" anymore?

For players, the worst part of this cycle may be that the most senior

developers, the ones who compete for the best jobs at the "safest" companies, now have even more reason to leave the business entirely. Ambitious game teams struggle to hire the experienced, steady hands who know how to handle massive projects well. Game development is hard, complicated work, and often experienced folks can spot project-killing problems early or generate novel solutions to tough problems. In other words, senior developers help all of us make better games.

IT CAN GET BETTER

One thing is clear: Conditions around layoffs need to improve if the industry is to move forward. Many game developers are starting to discuss solutions such as unionizing, in the same way the film and TV industries have done in the past.

While it's unlikely that unionization would perfectly solve all problems from the get-go, it's a start. We all want a future full of inspirational games that continue to push new boundaries. Creating a better quality of life for the people who make them is the first step in paving that path.

Dream jobs are a funny thing. You can make money doing what you love. That's pretty cool. But after multiple interstate, or intercontinental, moves for the sake of finding a new job, or rebooting your social life for the fifth time, or having to explain to your daughter why she's changing schools and leaving her friends, the cool parts lose their luster.

And once that luster is gone, a dream job is just another job.