Thoughts- dump

**25th July, 2014:**

*Minutes of Meeting*

* Practise what you preach- broaden and make plans comprehensive
* Focus on Technological innovation
* Broaden your breadth of technology- Digital 5 forces
* Earn your stripes- start from rote work
* Understand what accounts are currently doing

# To Do

* ~~Finish and mail Tech Trends report~~
* ~~Prepare and mail Questionnaire for Account meeting tomorrow~~
* ~~House hunt~~
* Strat Mgmt/Planning & SMI content preparation
* Strategize for AIM
* Study and draft Strategy KSS ppt
* KnowMax-HiTech structure and industry analyses
* CoE structure and resources/capabilities
* Journal entries for Thu evng & Fri
* Study and understand Danaher’s industry
* My Plan for Innovate@HiTech and Timeline
* Standard Chartered CC application- PAN, aadhar card, office ID, payslip, photograph
* ~~Bike registration procedure~~
* ~~Collect charger~~
* Call mom, ~~dad~~
* FTR registration and money transfer
* Contact Unit HR and skills update in iCALMS
* ~~Plan trip to hyd~~

# Journal

Thursday, 31st July, 2014

Ankita’s time sink of 2 hrs +

That biker girl who set my pulse racing

Flat visits- two good places- stretching the budget, debating, discussing and deliberating

Sunil’s amazing Sambar and bhendi fry

Friday, 1st August, 2014

Saturday- Sunday, 2-3rd August, 2014

Monday, 4th August, 2014

Some days, the world just is a fucked up place!

# Self-interview Questionnaire

What are the career paths I am interested in?

1. Consulting (Management)
2. Strategy Management
3. Program Management
4. Operations/Marketing Management

What are the industries I wish to work/ build a career in?

1. Technology
2. Any B2B industry???
3. Banking?!!

What kind of money do I intend to make doing what I like?

* Currently, with <=1 year of post-MBA experience, I wish to have a pay package equivalent to Deloitte (14-16 lpa) with a net pay of about 12-13 lpa

What kind of perks do I expect?

* Time and money to **travel**
* Time to pursue hobbies- reading, guitar, music, photography
* Health and security for family

What am I really doing in TCS?

What have I intended to do in TCS (why I chose to join TCS?)

1. Is this the right company to switch to?
2. Is this the right offer to switch with?
3. Is this the right time to make the switch?
4. Am I looking to switch too soon? If I switch now, would the experience (11+6+x months) be of any use?
5. Where am I headed in the current path? What different could happen in the path I (should) choose?
6. Is/ Will the current experience be relevant to switch to a management/strategy consulting role in the next 6-9 months?
7. What are my options?

Deloitte Consulting - S&O consulting with a Technology bent of mind

Accenture Business Consulting – Business consulting with emphasis on Technology solutions

Accenture Strategy – Management Strategy Consulting

IBM – Technology Consulting

IT firms- Cognizant Business Consulting, Infosys (Management Consulting), Wipro,

# History still repeats itself…elsewhere

Part of my current role involves tracking and identifying technology trends and assessing them. This inherently involves tracking and assessing companies involved in technology. The result being some of my casual, off-work conversations inevitably gravitating towards work.

One such recent conversation with a friend who previously worked with “the bellwether” of the industry got me thinking. She happened to have devised the analytics framework that eventually led to restructuring in the company last year and that’s a topic we debate on every time we meet- with me always pointing out that such restructuring is very very bad for innovation. This time around, she was more accepting of my argument, even indicating how many people joined TCS CTO the last time that other company laid off.

“The trouble with these one-shot restructurings is,” says another colleague of mine here, “they have effects reaching beyond the headcount numbers. People talk and markets listen; and to meet the market expectations, the organization starts focusing on short term financial goals…” What does this imply- Innovation takes a backseat, partly because resource budgets are constrained, partly because people who promote innovation have been handed the pink slip and of course, partly because everyone is watching us and we need to “behave” (read ‘be conservative’).

The bellwether had to go through over 2 years of poor financial results, an almost complete change of leadership, an external CEO, a near total organizational redesign and finally it posted its first decent result this quarter. We seem to be repeating this part of history and we don’t have to go through all of that trouble to know what is in store down this road.

# What is killing Yahoo?

## …are the things it did not do

Here I stumbled on this article in The New York Times (link goes here), which documents a pretty comprehensive picture of what has been wrong with Yahoo and how despite her best efforts, Marissa Meyer could do only so much to fix.

Some key highlights that the article discusses in detail are:

* “Yahoo is getting better in solving a problem that doesn’t exist anymore…”
* Alibaba is currently the only buoy holding up Yahoo valuations (& stock) from sinking to the bottom
* Micromanagement, Quick and intuitive hiring for strategic positions, accepting nothing but the best (in her own way)- the things Meyer did to save Yahoo are just the things actually killing it

However, I believe it is more of what Marissa didn’t do that’s killing Yahoo than what she had done. In fact I would go out and say that she did quite a few things right- she could adapt the nimbleness of start-ups to a behemoth in several areas.

Take the case of hiring people- a ‘traditional’ company that size would take months if not more to hire a CXO; multiple rounds of (internal/external) vetting, personality assessments and what not. But when you are trying to turnaround a company, you can’t act on ‘tradition’. Hire, test, fire may not sound so reasonable in de Castro’s context, but yahoo didn’t have the months and years to deliberate.

Or the case of taking on Big Media with Yahoo’s entry into original content: big bets- yes, unreasonable- yes, non-traditional, yes. But if this hasn’t been done we would be discussing how Yahoo gradually lost out on all advertising of TV content.

I still agree with the financial valuations of Eric Jackson and Aswath Damodaran; Yahoo is surviving on the merit of its one right decision: buying a stake in Alibaba. And it didn’t get from $50 billion valuations to a negative $5 bn valuation overnight. It took many bad choices and unwise bets over a period of several years. Neither is one single CEO responsible.

What was done and did not work?

Here, I’d like to highlight one aspect the article indicates but doesn’t discuss much- Yahoo has been trying to act like a ‘giant start-up’. Not bothering with the irony of this term, I find this was the primary reason why Yahoo is taking longer than usual to turn around (with no good omens in sight).

Start-ups are characterized by limited resources, close monitoring, strong mentorship from powerful early investors. This builds in inherent risk mitigation by way of capping the financial risk you can take, because you only have limited resources for all your needs. Yahoo acquired 41 startups in a little over two and a half years, with little restrictions imposed; the contradiction couldn’t be more evident.

Then there were the not-entirely-procedural hiring-firing policies, micro-management et al. Trying to run a large corporation with tens of thousands of employees is not the same as managing a start-up with hardly tens of employees- in terms of transparency, ripple effects, cultural transformation and change management.

What was not done?

Separating the new business/ innovations/acquisitions from the pitfalls of the ‘large organization syndrome’

There are abundant analyses and research on Innovation deliberating on why innovation is stifled in traditional large organizations. In fact, when a news article quoted Meyer as saying “a giant start-up”, I hoped she would prove the research wrong. But it appears this was not meant to be.

When Steve Jobs returned to Apple trying to turn it around, he organized separate design and product development teams. When IBM tried to reposition as a Global Services Company, it soon sold off its failing PC business. Microsoft had separate Venture Capital subsidiary to promote innovative start-ups. Almost every company trying to innovate keeps the old and the new separate; for good reason too.

Is product improvement and rationalizing product portfolio enough? Should Yahoo have killed products that have outlived their time?

Would Yahoo have turned out different had it separated its new products from the old? I hope it is not too late to see…

# Innovation Awareness Series- III- Areas of Innovation

While ‘Innovation’ is one word we hear all so often, what we hear little is what to innovate on. Evidently, the word means different things to different people. So, here we took upon ourselves some jargon-busting to help you understand exactly what you hear so much-

**Technological, Business Model, Use case Innovations**

A. Technological Innovation- related to the technology involved in the design of a product/service (what goes into the product) or the execution of a process (how the product is made)

B. Business Model innovations- how (more) revenues can be generated, how costs could be reduced and/or how greater profits could be derived. (Essentially, how we can make more money)

(A business model is the way in which a company makes money- involves how it generates its revenues, how its costs are organized and how this together result in profits for the company)

C. Use-case innovation- in finding novel uses to an existing product/process/service; this is primarily novelty in reconfiguration (how can we use existing things in new ways, rather than create new things)

Now that we know what is usually considered innovation, the next question that needs answering is “What can we innovate on?”

Innovation is not just about creating or building new products, more so in our case where our ‘products’ are intangible and packaged/delivered as services. So what can we innovate on?

**Products/ Services-** Can you think of a new application? Do you have an idea for an improved utility for a piece of code you can reuse? Can you put together different existing components and build something refreshingly new? That’s innovation.

**Process**- We all know we have a lot of processes around us. We have many processes for everything. Can we think of ways in which we could do our jobs faster, easier and better?

We can? There we have an innovation.

**Organization**- Can we organize ourselves differently? Can we put together a small team to quickly design, develop and test a new idea? Can we empower our associates better and make them grow? These, for us are innovations.

**Marketing**- Can we find a new market for what we have? Can we expand the current market by tweaking our products/services? Can we position our offerings to our customers better? That makes up for a good innovation in marketing.

It should be worthwhile to note that innovations usually belong to more than one of these categories; a successful innovation would cut across categories. Consider an innovation such as cloud computing which would have new products/services built or reconfigured from existing technologies, new processes for ways of building and delivering these products/services, a new business model (pay-per-use), and a novel use case (enterprise grade computing with tremendous economies of scale provided for SMEs).

Having said that, the most important thing that goes into an innovation (the secret ingredient, if you may) is ‘Perseverance’. No matter how clichéd this may sound, it is true nonetheless. Because right from the time you tell someone an idea, every step along the way, you have people that shoot you down. Plenty of them. Let’s hold our ground, work on our ideas and prove them all wrong.

Lastly, we have a few ideas of what should come next in this ‘Innovation awareness series’, but we are not able to decide on which should come first- each of us in the team is holding our ground there… We would love to hear from you about what you wish to hear from us. Do leave your opinions and topic suggestions in the comments below and we’ll come to you with those…

Cheerio!

[pradeshmukh@deloitte.com](mailto:pradeshmukh@deloitte.com)

Dear Pratibha,

This is with reference your mail regarding the Consulting roles in Deloitte. Here are the details:

**Degree**: PGDM

**Institute**: Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIM-K)

**Year of Graduation:** 2014

**Graduation:** B.Tech. (ECE), University College of Engineering, JNTU, A.P., 2011

**Work Experience:***Post-MBA:* Consultant- Technology & Innovation, TCS, Bangalore (since June 2014)

*Pre-MBA:* Systems Engineer at Mahindra Satyam (11 months)

**Current Location:** Bangalore

**Preferred Location:** Bangalore/Hyderabad

**Joining Time:** Mid-August

A detailed CV is attached herewith for your reference.

Thanks & Best Regards,

Manish Chandra K N

PGDM, IIM Kozhikode

+91-99806 35588

Gluttony

Lust

Greed

Sloth

Wrath (super-intense anger)

Envy

Pride

Cookies

Huge fatty burger and fries

Death by chocolate- cake

Paprika- extra hot

Aphrodisiacs- honey, chocolate, almonds, saffron, peaches, figs- honey butter, hone y mead

Caviar

# Why we should sit up and take notice of Sikka’s Infosys?

Those who have been following news about Infosys would know the seemingly discrete events that put the company and the man 'Vishal Sikka' in the news almost everyday. Are the events discrete? Or is it all part of a plan?  
​Here's my take on the aspects that keep Infosys very much in the race and why we should run harder just to stay where we are:

* ​Vishal Sikka- An innovator and innovation champion himself: led SAP through a turnaround with his innovation team at the company
* Reinvigorated the emphasis on platforms and non-linear growth areas at Infosys
* Welcomed as a Consulting professor at Stanford- the breeding ground of the world’s best start-ups
* INR 20 crore Grant and Infosys Chair Professorship at IISc, Bangalore- research and innovation on Mathematics & Physics
* A “murmuration”- crowdsourcing customer-focused innovative ideas from anyone and everyone in Infosys- such a huge repositories of ideas emerging out of a workforce that expects to see changes everywhere
* A $100 million corpus fund set up in Infosys, to incubate and encourage internal and external start-ups (on the lines of Microsoft Ventures and Google Venture Fund et al)
* Ably motivated on-ground workforce; stopped the exodus of top leadership; the company is now with a ‘can-do’ attitude and charged up
* Shifting focus in Infosys from being a margin-oriented to a market/margin-share oriented firm

Now, the bread-and-butter outsourcing tasks are undergoing expansion, with new lines of business being promoted aggressively.

# Fluid form of core competency

Service infrastructure- everything as a Service business models- everything right from computing, storage, software to car rides (Uber), hotel stays (airbnb),

Radical adjacency- new products and new markets- innovation happening at the convergence of hardware, software, service, communications, data- points of convergence: medical devices, pervasive computing, advertising

Externalization- shift activities from within the firm to outside the firm- to the ecosystem, eg. Forbes writers, GigaOm analysts; Open Innovation comes under this??

Portfolio of Strategic options- a large bunch of innovations that are potential candidates. Many may fail, some succeed

Thriving businesses need to evolve and evolve fast. So, is the concept of a ‘core competency (-ies)” dated?

Nike’s Apparel, Apple’s move from design to mobility (iPhone), music (iPod), maps, Netflix’s move from content delivery to content creation (original programming, House of Cards)

Ways to grow: Partnerships, new talent, acquisitions,

Note: Think up and write about externalization of the “core competency”

Sources for this:

<http://www.fastcompany.com/3005850/core-competency-dead-lessons-nike-apple-netflix>

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/haydnshaughnessy/2013/08/30/six-core-ideas-for-the-future-of-innovation/>

“

Remember that time you asked, “I am too wicked for him. I should stay away from him, shouldn’t I?”

And I talked all sorts of tales to make you feel better.

Well today, I know the answer, you wicked witch; the world would be a much better place without your lies, deception and betrayal.

”

A good friend:

* No facades
* Not judgemental
* Not patronizing
* Accepting (as we are)
* Caring
* Not selfish

**My Responsibilities:**

1. Research

Bringing studies and identifying their relevance to Innovation- MIT, IIMs, IITs, other acad instis.

1. Evangelize- (talk, publicize, preach)

Offerings, research, implementation, reaching out to customers

## Prologue

She knows…

For once, she knows the truth. Or she always knew all the truths she hid behind the lies she told.

“Oh, it doesn’t matter, does it?” thought he as he relished the scoop of the brownie and ice cream in front of him- another one of a long list of his favorites that she introduced him to.

How simple and easy life used to be before her. He always could feel in the gut that his life was changing. Becoming “suave and sophisticated” he thought then. It was just last night that he realized life now is chaotic, ruinous and tangled.

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It was just about a year ago he recalled- the time he believed all along to be the best week of his life so far. Red district (Amsterdam), Green district (Copenhagen), Romance district (Paris), Oktoberfest (Munich)- all in the same week. He never once thought then that his life could get any more colorful. Greater than the fun and more precious than the souvenirs he so purposefully collected were the memories he filled his heart with that week.

That morning, he woke up to a pretty Swiss train conductor asking him for his ticket. In a few hours, he’d be in the French Riviera. He could almost see the weekend of fun and frolic in front of him. Then she had called with the news. 20 hours, 8 trains, 3 countries and a night in a remote French train station later, he finally reached her side- exhausted, famished. In the moment she ran into his arms neither hunger nor sleep did matter. Her tears on his shoulders seeped down into his heart.

The burgled credentials, the apathic friends she had for company and her nerves have all but put an end to her Eurotrip. Getting it back on track was his reason of existence for that day. Or so he thought.

He thought he could soon be back on his way, traveling with his friends back in Sweden, doing all the stupid things they always did. But life had other plans.

“None of these people truly get along with me well. It’s like I’m alone when I’m travelling with them. It would be so wonderful if we could travel together, but pity it would upset your plans.”

That was where the chaos began.

The sharp cling of the doorbell brought him back to the now. The last Saturday customer just left the coffee house. As he glanced at his watch, he noticed that the past year had played pretty slowly in front of his eyes- it has been over two hours since he stepped into the coffee house.

“Coffee houses in this city closed pretty early, particularly on weekends. This is the city of pubs, people don’t drink coffee late on Saturdays,” one of his ‘local’ friends told him on his first weekend in the city.

That was the first time he went to a pub to get drunk.

“I never could understand the concept of ‘nightlife’. Those who had company didn’t need a pub to drink and those without company- it hardly mattered where they got drunk,” he tried explaining to his drunken friends that night.

Tonight, after a quick bite at the neighboring street food joint, he walked the short way back home feeling stupid. That was how he felt every time he thought about those days from last year; thought about her.

Too exhausted to think anymore, he noticed his mind slipping into a slumber- a mechanism that has evolved from all the times he put himself so close to a nervous meltdown.

Let Go…

That’s the secret- Letting go…

More of the small/trivial things you let go and the sooner you do it, more will be the peace you’ll have and you’ll have it sooner too.

It is true that these smaller things take up little spells of our time, effort and mind space. Also true is the fact that we usually tangle ourselves in a gazillion of these small things- day in, day out- and they add up. Ask yourself, when was the last time your mind was empty- utterly, totally empty- of all thoughts. Sitting quietly on a park bench, our mind goes for a jog alongside all the people strolling in the park- he’s fat, she looks good in the sun, look at that cute kid, god how I wish that stupid bird would shut up and so on. When you are not too occupied with your head inside your smartphone, that is.

And for the hyper-sensitive, attention-deficit youngsters of today (of which I am one myself), it takes very little to push them over the tolerance threshold- dusty roads, vague signboards, faulty grammar, ill-typed mail, wrong color of a picture, you name it. Ironically, some of us, we are bugged even by our own less-than-perfect work of yesterday.

I can’t even begin to think why it is this way with us. I don’t even think I know enough to dig into the reasons. But here’s what I recently learnt from a patient, sagely boss (yes, some do exist): Let go.

The perspective he gave was quite interesting in that it was simple; it got me thinking. Everything is done by people, and no person is perfect- neither in what they are, nor in what they do. But they do things nonetheless, for whatever reason. Now, it ain’t possible for us to take everything upon ourselves. (Yeah, we have enough things to do already) So, let go- let people do what they have to do. And you get down to do what you need to.

Call it delegation, call it tolerance or as Dale Carnegie says, “Don’t saw sawdust…” and see for yourself… Hakuna matata!