

Mastering the FISO Factor

Volume 1, Issue 3

by Blythe J. McGarvie

Choose to Mentor

One of my friends in Japan runs an international manufacturing business, practices the flute, raises five charming daughters, and provides valuable mentoring to his employees. How does he find the time to do all of this? Is it really possible to be successful professionally and personally while also helping others develop?

When I visited his family and one of his manufacturing facilities, he showed me that his first priority was to assist *others*. However, he realized that the only way he could be strong and resourceful for his family and employees was to keep some time to restore and develop his *own* energy. He tutored me on the nuances of Japanese business culture, and I followed his leadership. He never boasted of his success, but his success was self-evident to those who knew him. *Fitting in* within Japanese society is of paramount importance. Yet, he also *stands out* among the individuals with whom he works because he *mentors* them and helps them succeed.

LIF'S LESSONS:

***Remove the rock from your shoe,
rather than learning to limp.***

Those of you have read my book know that my credo is *FISO: Fit In, Stand Out*. It is not a matter of evenly splitting your time between “fitting in” and “standing out,” nor is there any fixed ratio between the two imperatives. Rather, the key to FISO lies in the knowledge that *both* imperatives are required for successful leadership. The ability to make informed choices between the two are based on corporate and

career goals, the needs of the current situation, and the environment in which you must act.

One way to develop your FISO factor is to mentor someone. To mentor someone is an active choice, not something you shoe-horn into a schedule and dread. Even the busiest executives or managers can be a trusted counselor or advisor. Choose one person to begin this process.



Blythe McGarvie speaking at Emory University's School of Business.

Over the years, Fred has worked for different companies and has seen lots of people. When he began at Accenture, he knew his first job was to “fit in.” He also embraced the core value common among managers of nurturing employees and developing their talents. After he had been on the job for about a year, Fred tapped himself to start coaching a talented new senior manager. He chose someone who had great skills, but was in need of an attitude adjustment. He worked with this senior manager to help him develop better relationships with clients. Fred mentored him, teaching him “building the client is the single best way to ensure everyone’s success.”

Reap Positive Benefits

A group called MENTOR, founded in 1990, provided research to confirm what previously we had known only anecdotally or intuitively. A recent research brief published by Child Trends entitled, "Mentoring: A Promising Strategy for Youth Development," found that youths who participate in mentoring relationships experience a number of positive benefits. In terms of educational achievement, mentored youths have better attendance; a better chance of going on to higher education; and better attitudes towards school. In terms of health and safety, mentoring appears to help prevent substance abuse and reduce some negative youth behaviors. On the social and emotional development front, taking part in mentoring promotes positive social attitudes and relationships. Mentored youths tend to trust their parents more and communicate better with them. They also feel they get more emotional support from their friends than do youths who are not mentored.

LIF'S LESSONS:

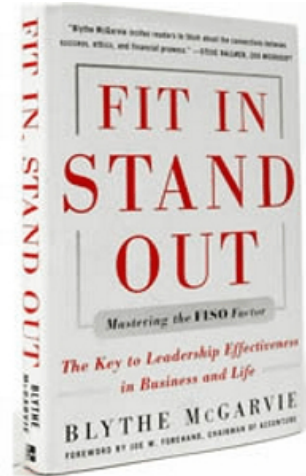
*My chief want in life is someone
who shall make me do what I can.*
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

What works for youths can also work for employees. Benefits accrue to companies with better engagement from employees who want to learn and practice positive social attitudes and relationships.

Your Choices, Your Success

We have talked about helping others. Yet when you develop talent in your own company, you also learn and prosper. Take a minute to think about my Japanese colleague.

Then, think of someone you already know who would benefit from your help. Don't wait to be asked, but start by a phone call or a visit, and share your own time and experience. Choose wisely, for you are choosing your own success, too.



Fit In, Stand Out: Mastering the FISO Factor as the Key to Leadership Effectiveness in Business and Life, was published in October 2005 by McGraw-Hill. It is available from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, and other fine booksellers. (ISBN: 0071460799)

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The **FISO Factor**™
Fit In, Stand Out

