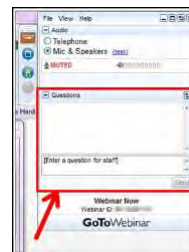




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“Why am I muted?”

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We have a collection of career resources to support you during this global pandemic:



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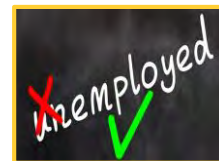
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ACS Career Resources



Managing Your Career



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Successfully Working Across Cultures



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Succeeding in a Global Environment: Successfully Working Across Cultures



RAMKI SUBRAMNIAN
 Managing Director, DowAksa USA



TOM HALLERAN
 Manager Career Consultant Program,
 American Chemical Society

Presentation slides are available now! The edited recording will be made available as soon as possible.

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My Journey...

Geography

- Lived and worked in US & India
- Worked with people & companies in Far East, Middle East, and Europe

Job Roles

- PostDoc
- R&D
- Business & Application Development
- Business Leadership
- People Management
- Entrepreneur

Company Size

- Very Large
- Very small
- Small



What is Culture

“...patterns of human activity within a community or social group and the symbolic structures that give significance to such activity.” (Typical Definition)

Ex. Customs, laws, dress, architectural style, social standards, religious beliefs, and traditions

Work culture is a collection of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that make up the regular atmosphere in a **work environment**.

... **Work culture** determines how well a person fits into their **environment** at a new **job** and their ability to build professional relationships with colleagues.



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Some Examples...

- The “Beckoning Finger”



- The Head Bob

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Disclaimers

- These are my personal experiences and observations
- Not being judgmental: No “Right” or “Wrong”
(But there are certain hard boundaries...)
- Not being disrespectful to ANY culture
- May or may not be relevant today
- Difference between “Culture” and “Work Process”



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Education

- **Primary to High School:** Chennai
- **BS (Chemistry)** – Loyola College, Chennai
- **BSc (Tech)** – Bombay University
- **PhD (Organic Chemistry)** – Loyola University Chicago

Main Experiences

- Undergraduate education: main emphasis on “Theory”
- Graduate education: less focus on “Application” or “Industrial” aspects
- Independent thinking – defining the “problem”
- Learn & Implement Scientific process

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Post-Doctoral Research

University of Sheffield

- The Coffee Room ritual
- 5 day work week

University of Houston

- 6 day work week
- Focus on grant proposals and papers

Some extreme work culture examples

- Some professors called their lab on a Sunday morning to check if all postdocs and grad students are at work!



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Job Interviews

Two Interviews:

- 2 days – met over 25 people, gave my seminar twice
- Sent thank you notes to each person I met with

Company A

- “We will get back to you within 2 weeks”
- Waited for 4 weeks and then sent a note to the main contact
- Response: We are not selecting you because “You were too pushy”

The Dow Chemical Company

- Response: What impressed us was how you followed up diligently; We like you, but there is a hiring freeze
- Job offer 6 months after interview!



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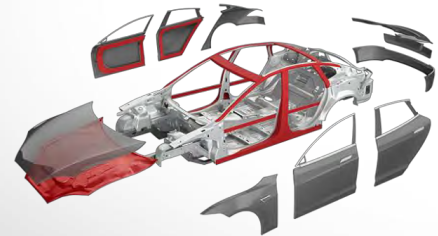
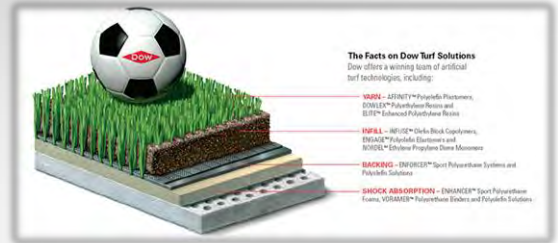
My first role at Dow

Basic Induction

- Non-negotiables: Safety, Ethics, Respect

Research Assignment Program

- **Core R&D:** focus on “longer term”; new concepts to solve current problems or create new technology
- **Polyolefins R&D:** new applications – market opportunities must be very large (1000s of MT)
- **Epoxy R&D:** new products or applications – market opportunities must be large (100s of MT)



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Key Experiences & Learnings...

- Meritocracy is a cultural aspect
- Teamwork & Collaboration
- IMPACT is critical
- Leading indicators of how you are progressing
- Need to have clarity of purpose & communicate what you want
- My first people leader role
- The annual review
- Experienced the “Highs” and “Lows”



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First Trans-Continental Project

Multiple players in Value Chain

- Brand owner
- Intermediate material (Dow's Customer)

Multiple locations

- US – East, Midwest & West Coast
- Far East
- Europe

Multiple Functions

- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Technical

Key Experiences



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Moving Back to India (After 20 years)

Transition to Business Role

Some observations

- Being on time can be a challenge
- Give me a “missed call”!
- Labor is cheap...
- Not used to saying “No”
- Use of “Sir” and “Madam”
- Positional authority – especially government in government offices
- Procurement has a culture of its own
- Some mistakes I made...



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Moving Back to USA (After 16 years)

- A new beginning....



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Key Takeaways

- There are many aspects to culture - and there are many similarities & differences across these aspects
- My ability to work effectively across cultures is an important contributor to success
- My career is a marathon but the environment around me changes rapidly (like I am in a sprint), so I have to constantly observe and adapt to the culture around me



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