

Upskilling program targets first batch of 1,000

THE Philippine Business for Education (PBE) and Citi Foundation said they have entered into a partnership that will admit 1,000 young people to an 18-month upskilling program.

The JobsNext program seeks to enhance employability by offering training in artificial intelligence, engineering, cloud computing, and content production. The target is to train two residents per local government.

"We invested in this important initiative because, like PBE, we strongly

believe in the need to help young people pursue careers and become financially independent," Citi Philippines Chief Executive Officer Aftab Ahmed said in a statement on Thursday. "The youth, particularly those in the services sector and those holding informal jobs, were among the hardest hit by the pandemic."

"The JobsNext program is an opportunity for all of us in the private sector to come together to not only provide immediate help to unemployed Filipino youth, but more importantly, to collectively

shape a more resilient and future-proof workforce," he added.

According to a study issued by the International Labour Organization in 2016, the jobs of about half the workforce will be under threat from automation by 2025.

However, based on estimates made by the World Economic Forum, though many occupations will become obsolete, more jobs will emerge in their place.

"We are very proud of what the First Future project achieved in a span of six months despite the current challenges in

remote learning we are facing during this COVID-19 pandemic," PBE Director for Workforce Development Justine Raagas said in the same statement.

"This is just a small portion of what the First Future project can achieve, but with the help of our partner institutions, we can look forward to more companies adopting a competency-based hiring policy and we can look forward to more upskilled Filipino youth in the near future," she added.

Last year, PBE completed First Future 2.0, which supported more than

1,000 youth without college degrees in being admitted into the contact center industry. The program is part of Citi and the Citi Foundation's expanded global Pathways to Progress initiative.

Citi Asia Pacific and the Citi Foundation in September 2020 pledged \$35 million for philanthropic investment to advance employment and entrepreneurship opportunities among young people from low-income and underserved communities by 2023. — **Alyssa Nicole O. Tan**

OPINION

Helping workers achieve their personal goals

I hold periodic engagement dialogues with my workers to ensure that we're on the same page, and so I can understand their work issues. Last week, I had a talk with a junior supervisor who told me of his personal interest in protecting the environment. He is an avid hiker and mountaineer. He is asking if he can organize such activities for our company. How do we handle such a request? One of our concerns is that it might require us to set aside funds for the activity. — *Banana Boat.*

A patient in a waiting room heard a scream from the examination room. An elderly woman appeared soon after in an agitated state. "What happened to her?" the patient asked the doctor, who replied, "I told her she was pregnant."

"You can't be serious," the patient replied.

"Of course not," the doctor said. "But it cured her hiccups."

What lessons does this story hold for managers? There are many ways to cure worker disenchantment, and they are not limited to traditional solutions like increasing pay. After all, money is not

everything. You can motivate people by thinking of low-cost, common-sense measures that would appeal to them.

Recognizing that management can do a lot to help workers achieve their personal goals is the first step toward self-actualization — the apex of hierarchy of needs as proposed by American psychologist Abraham Maslow (1908-1970). Even today, dynamic organizations rely on identifying things that would help workers achieve their full potential through personal growth and peak performance.

CORPORATE PROGRAM

Requiring people to work hard without the benefit of self-actualization doesn't ensure success. Companies, with the help of the human resource (HR) department, should take the lead by establishing a corporate-wide program like putting up an interest club to cater not only to your manager but to other workers as well.

But what exactly is an interest club? It is known by other names like sports

and social clubs, which all share the goal of promoting employee engagement. In the case of your manager, who is interested in hiking and mountaineering,

what you can do is to come up with a comprehensive program on environmental protection. That means activities like tree planting and beach clean-ups, among other things.

You must be conscious of the implications on the company's health maintenance system, hospitalization and life insurance program. Whatever you do, ensure that everyone's personal interests are reconciled with the interests of the organization.

Another option is to assign interested employees to work on a conservation or environmental protection program as part of your corporate social responsibility efforts. Do this officially and make it part of their job description. Depending on the nature of their work, you may also designate them as lead workers for your energy conservation initiatives within the organization.

This means requiring them to supervise the company's cost reduction program by monitoring electricity or water

consumption. The job includes turning off lights during lunch breaks and turning off air-conditioning 20 minutes before the close of office hours. The activities are limited only by your imagination. All of this can be done with the help of department deputies and other volunteers.

Give them six months to run the program and monitor their success. After six months, reshuffle the team and expand the program to other volunteers to handle other related activities. Give them a share of whatever savings that the program has generated. Don't give cash as it may create a tax burden for the recipients.

Instead, give the successful volunteers a budget for a victory lunch. If the cost savings are substantial, offer them two nights of accommodation, meals and other expenses in a nearby province where they can go nature tripping. You can also allow them to use company vehicles for that purpose.

Give out free t-shirts or coffee mugs to commemorate their participation in the company's energy conservation program. That kind of intervention would not have succeeded had you not aligned the company's interests with that of the workers.

IN THE WORKPLACE
REY ELBO

ELBONOMICS: Give and take is the key to a successful work relations.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Harmonizing both work and personal interests is a win-win for the organization. When you help your employees achieve their personal goals, they are often motivated to do more for the organization. It's only human nature to acknowledge the assistance extended by the company to help them succeed.

The relationship between labor and management is often reciprocal and transactional. Scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. Employees give their best if the company offers something in return, which may not be limited to material things. When an organization offers nothing, not even small things, workers feel no loyalty and will often seek out better situations elsewhere.

An organization must create an environment that celebrates success based on the unique needs of every worker. It is as simple as that.

Have a chat with REY ELBO via Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter or send your workplace questions to elbonomics@gmail.com or via <https://reyelbo.consulting>



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