

## OPINION

## Long-term career plan for new workers

I'm a fresh college graduate, now in my first month with a medium-sized corporation. It's my dream to work in this industry. What's your advice for a new employee like me? — Time Travel.

Don't waste time. Study the company's policies and programs, including its performance appraisal system. Exceed the job expectations and in due time, you'll get many favorable opportunities that could increase your motivation and pave the way for a fast-track promotion.

That is, if you don't mind working your way up from the lowest level in the organization. Ordinarily, that means spending three years showcasing what you can do best. But first, your concern is to meet the terms and conditions of your six-month probationary employment contract.

If you can prove your worth, there's a good chance you can be a regular employee in four months. That is if your employer has a strategic human resources (HR) program that could improve your chances of getting high marks in your performance appraisal after the first three months.

Don't be distracted by external noise like applying for jobs elsewhere. Focus on your current job. Don't engage in office gossip or other non-productive activity. Aspire for a perfect attendance award, even if there is none.

Don't be sidetracked by comfort zones, which would be disastrous, and could delay your confirmation as a regular employee, or complicate your work relationships.

## PROMOTION SYSTEM

Have a long-term career plan in that organization, not elsewhere. Job-hoppers, especially for a fresh graduate like you, are frowned upon by many employers. Therefore, the best approach is to understand the current expectations of your employer and achieve them all with flying colors.

Understand the system and use it to your advantage. Many companies believe in meritocracy rather than seniority or length of service, which is used only when breaking a tie between and among several internal candidates. There's no other way but to work your way up with due deference to your boss, colleagues, and top management.

Here is a step-by-step guide that you can explore:

IN THE WORKPLACE  
REY ELBO

## ELBONOMICS: Setting a career goal is making impossible things possible.

One, understand the performance appraisal system. Internalize their specific requirements. What kind of system is in use? Is it the 360-degree appraisal that requires peer assessment from your work colleagues and team members? Does it allow self-assessment based on attitude, behavior, and actual job performance? A simple Management-by-objectives system?

Two, study the promotion policy in great detail. It goes hand-in-hand with appraisal. There's no use meeting the minimum requirements of the appraisal system if you just wait for an internal job vacancy to happen. You have to seize the day and create your own luck.

Seek out experienced people who were there before you. Don't be disappointed if their experiences are negative. Your situation could be different from others.

Prepare a personal promotion chart. Observe fast-trackers who were promoted recently. Befriend them. Know their secrets. Then draft a promotion roadmap starting from your current job up to the most likely senior position open to you.

Make a Point A to Point B goal that includes all requirements of the job, such as a post-graduate degree, performance milestones, awards, and other skill requirements. Now, plot all the steps in between. Then, mark your current place. Cross off each step as soon as you accomplish every stage of the process.

You can also include other skills that you may find unique to your situation, especially if they are difficult to acquire.

## RELATIONSHIP

Developing a long-term career plan is like being a movie actor, choosing the role, memorizing a script, and maintaining a good reputation. If you can dream it, you can achieve it. There's nothing wrong with that. That's your mission statement. Whatever you do, be the best person that you can be to your boss and work colleagues.

It may seem simple, but having positive work relationships is equally important, or even more important than the roadmap you're following. You may be the ideal candidate for a promotion, but if you are perceived to be a horrible person at dealing with people, then you may not be able to get what you want.



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## Debt-to-GDP ratio creeps up to 60.9% in Q2 from Q1's 60.1%

THE National Government's (NG) debt as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) was 60.9% in the second quarter, down from 61% a year earlier but rebounding from the 60.1% posted a quarter earlier, the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) said on Thursday.

The government set a debt-to-GDP ratio target this year of 60.6%. It aims to bring this down to 56% by 2028.

The threshold considered by multilateral lenders to be manageable for developing economies is 60%.

At the end of June, the NG's outstanding debt rose 0.9% from a month earlier to a re-

cord P15.48 trillion due to the impact of a weaker peso.

The deficit as a share of GDP was 5.3% in the three months to June, picking up from 4.46% a quarter earlier and 4.8% a year earlier. The reading remained below the government's 5.6% deficit ceiling set for this year.

In the first half, the deficit-to-GDP ratio averaged 4.9%, the BTr said.

The NG's budget deficit narrowed 7.24% year on year to P209.1 billion in June.

In the first six months, the budget gap widened 11.2% to P613.9 billion. In the first quarter, the deficit widened 0.65% to P272.6 billion. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

## Farmers cite delays in RCEF seed distribution

FARMERS said on Thursday that seed distribution financed by the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) is often delayed, and called for the fund to also support the development of better-quality seed.

In a statement, the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) said that recipients of the rice seed subsidy program have also reported mismatches between available seed stocks and their preferred varieties.

"If we focus only on the distribution of free seed, the whole program will collapse once funding from RCEF is phased out. All our efforts to promote and sustain the use of quality seed will go to waste," FFF National Manager Raul Q. Montemayor said.

RCEF, which receives P10 billion a year from rice import tariffs, sets aside P3 billion of this total for the propagation and distribution of inbred rice seed, overseen by the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice).

PhilRice distributes an average of 3.3 million 20-kilo bags of certified seed to about 1.5 million farmers each year.

"Aside from quality seed, farmers also need support for irrigation, fertilizer, credit, farm

machinery, crop insurance, marketing assistance and other key interventions which may not all be covered by RCEF," Mr. Montemayor added.

He said RCEF should not be seen as a stand-alone program but rather as "part of a comprehensive and integrated support system for rice farmers."

RCEF is a component of the Rice Tarification Law of 2019, which liberalized rice imports but charged importers a tariff on their shipments. The tariff was initially set at 35% for Southeast Asian grain, but has since been reduced to 15% on grain from all sources.

Citing the Philippine Statistics Authority, the FFF said that the average yield for rice has not hit five metric tons per hectare, the level at which demand for imports might recede.

"Domestic output has not kept in step with the growth in population, and the country has become increasingly reliant on rice imports," it added.

The 35% import tariff set by the Rice Tarification Law, or Republic Act No. 11203, was cut to 15% by Executive Order No. 62, with the government citing the need to contain inflation stemming from high rice prices. — **Adrian H. Halili**

## Job quality remains an issue as joblessness dips

THE Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE) said underemployment remains a concern even with the decline in joblessness, after jobholders who said they are seeking more work rose to 12.1% in June from 9.9% in May.

Labor Secretary Bienvenido E. Lagunesma said in a statement on Thursday that the rise in underemployment was due to "seasonal factors," without elaborating.

DoLE is working with the Trabaho Para sa Bayan Inter-Agency Council, chaired by the National Economic and Development Authority, to implement the national employment masterplan.

"Through strategic partnerships with the private sector and targeted interventions, we aim to transform challenges into opportunities, ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are shared equitably and that no one is left behind," he added.

Meanwhile, the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) urged the government to improve job quality, including the share of the workforce holding regular-employee status, to ensure economic growth.

"FFW holds that the high percentage in the service sector includes the

prohibited 'labor-only' contracting and contractual job arrangements which workers (consider) abusive and exploitative," FFW President Jose G. Matula told *BusinessWorld* via Viber.

"FFW recognizes the significance of these numbers but remains concerned about the quality and security of jobs, particularly in the services sector," he added.

Another labor group, Kilusang Mayo Uno, called for better job quality.

"The jobs created by the Marcos Jr. administration are of low quality and temporary. The majority of these jobs are in construction, wholesale and retail trade, and food service. Notably, there has been a reduction in agricultural jobs," Secretary-General Jerome M. Adonis said in a statement.

Mr. Adonis called for the government to implement a liveable minimum wage, which it estimated at P1,200 per day.

"It should also develop a genuine program for creating long-term regular jobs that align with the goals of national development," he said.

"Workers should assert these demands through various means:

forming unions, engaging in dialogue, and staging widespread protests to advance their call," Mr. Adonis added.

The unemployment rate in June dipped to 3.1%, the lowest in two decades, the Philippine Statistics Authority said on Wednesday.

Jobless numbers amounted to about 1.62 million in June, against 2.11 million in May.

The employment rate was 96.9% in June, equivalent to about 50.28 million individuals holding jobs, compared to 95.5% in May, equivalent to 48.87 million people.

The Labor Force Survey found that the service sector remained the top employer, with 58.7% of the workforce employed in the industry, followed by agriculture with 21.1% and industry with 20.2%.

"The labor market continues to demonstrate remarkable strength and resilience... This positive trend is driven by robust economic growth, particularly in construction; wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; and accommodation and food service activities sectors," Mr. Lagunesma added. — **Chloe Mari A. Hufana**

## AmCham firms to join SM J.O.B.S. advocacy

AROUND 800 members of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (AmCham) are expected to take part in SM Group's job fairs after the two entities entered into a partnership.

In a statement on Wednesday, AmCham said that the partnership is a result of a memorandum of understanding signed with SM Group's Jobs Opportunities Building Skills (J.O.B.S.) advocacy.

Under the agreement, 800 AmCham members will participate in SM's job fairs, and thousands of employees within AmCham's network

will be provided with upskilling opportunities.

"AmCham has always pushed towards upskilling our workforce as we see how crucial it is to the sustainability of business," AmCham Executive Director Ebb Hinchliffe said.

"The SM J.O.B.S. advocacy's two-pronged approach to empowering the Filipino worker is quite an effective way to reach people and provide opportunities nationwide," he added.

The partnership will give AmCham companies' employees op-

portunities to attend courses like digital marketing for e-commerce, cloud foundation, business analytics, and computer security.

"SM will continue to hold job fairs across the country to match job opportunities with the right skills and talents," Teresita Sy-Coson, lead of the J.O.B.S. project under the Private Sector Advisory Council, said.

"By providing a venue for employers and potential employees, we are doing our part in pushing job acceleration," she added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabilo**

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