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PEARLS OF WISDOM

We interviewed industry leaders asking them to look back on their careers and share their wisdom on two topics: we asked each of them the same two questions

by Prof. Anatoly Zolotukhin, Bernadette Spinoy,
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What was the most difficult situation you faced in your career path and how did you manage this situation?

Prof. Anatoly Zolotukhin

The most difficult situation is when you have to change your job assignment due to force majeure circumstances. You should be patient and remember that patience is a plaster for all sores.

You should like your job, be patient and have an internal focus of control, and commitment to success.

Bernadette Spinoy

A majority shareholder wanted to withdraw from a key asset. He was also the biggest supplier of the third shareholder's JV. For Total, I fought for compensation. The third parties' CEOs asked my boss to replace me in the negotiation. He answered I had his full trust and they should not expect interference in the negotiation. This gave me leverage up to arbitration in New York, where a settlement was reached.

M. Zihni Aksoy

It became clear to me after a few years in the industry (with Turkish Petroleum) that a university education was not enough to achieve the goals I wanted as a professional. While working, I first got my MSc degree in the USA and then a PhD in Turkey. It was not easy to get both degrees without interrupting my professional work. There was only one way to do this; to work harder and harder every day - which I did.

What advice can you give to young professionals in order to achieve a successful career in the industry?

Prof. Anatoly Zolotukhin

Be motivated to do your job, gain the respect of colleagues and develop a tolerance for difficult situations. Your job is what can make you successful, your family and friends are those who can make you happy, and sport is what makes you healthy. If all three components are in place - you are bound to succeed.

Bernadette Spinoy

Your first bosses will help you to develop your skills and confidence.

- It is important to understand the business fundamentals, develop your intuition and a vision. The figures are merely the consequences.
- Step out of your comfort zone.
- Go beyond expectations. Give your opinions in the company's best interest and, once a decision is made, be loyal.
- A positive mindset and enthusiasm energises you and encourages others. Hard work is part of the recipe, along with continuous learning. Also, have some fun, and work in teams.
- Develop yourself, others and your passions. Make use of the woman or man in you.

M. Zihni Aksoy

My advice to young professionals would be to work more and harder every day, and to accept this as a professional philosophy. Success stories are written only by those who have a philosophy. ●