

# Navigating the Career Ladder

A woman with glasses is holding a red marker, standing in front of a whiteboard. The whiteboard has several red drawings, including a circle, a horizontal line, a plus sign, and an arrow. The woman is looking down at the marker.

**Niyi Yusuf**  
Country Managing Director  
Accenture  
Dec 2015.

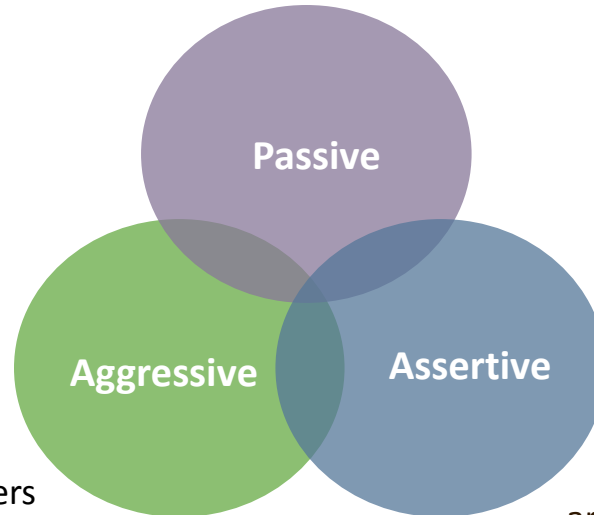
## First, Let's Look at Some Workplace Expectations...

Expectations	Definition
Etiquette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ understand organizational cultures</li><li>✓ act appropriately in business and social interactions</li><li>✓ ensure business protocols (code of business behaviors) are observed</li><li>✓ research norms, cross-cultural etiquettes, customs and non-verbal communication rules</li></ul>
Courtesy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ consider, respect and encourage others</li><li>✓ be democratic, friendly and understanding in all interactions</li></ul>
Impression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ appropriate dressing, hygiene, grooming, and manners</li><li>✓ be pleasant and helpful at all times</li></ul>
Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ manage customers and employees relationships</li><li>✓ with your coworkers – network appropriately, respect confidentiality, find a mentor and avoid gossips</li></ul>
Netiquette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ understand the company's use of internet, electronic mail/messages standards – sensitive information, personal messages, capital letters, emoticons</li></ul>

## Understanding Workplace Behavioral Types...

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- do not appear self-confident
- do not communicate needs and wants
- may have internal issues due to loss of respect
- may be indecisive and can damage career due to inaction
- avoids confrontation and eye contact



- may dominate or humiliate others
- speaks with an air of authority
- may be intimidating, rude and demanding
- say what they think without considering others
- may have trouble working with others
- can damage career due to their actions

- are comfortable using etiquette, making choices and decisions
- are generally calm, confident and feel they are equal to others
- speaks clearly, calmly, firmly and use the “I” phrase
- are relaxed and confident

## Despite the Dynamics of Workplace Expectations and Behavioral Types...

Yet, many myths still define the workplace

- ‘The Workplace is unstable and unpredictable!’



- Yes, Myth and a Fact
- In the corporate environment, it would be wise not to leave your career in the hands of destiny alone; **push it along and make sure it keeps growing...**

## Myth #1: Workplace Relationship

- 'In Nigeria, it's all about who you know'



It's not what you know,  
it's *who* you know

So, *who* do you  
know?

It is true that networking is a key factor to getting to the top but it's not the only factor.

So are **brains, experience, passion, drive, leadership ability**, and a dozen other qualities.

## Myth #2: You and Your Boss

- ‘Catering to your boss’s style and preferences is your guarantee to a successful career!’



The best way to handle your relationship with your boss is to have realistic expectations of your role and responsibilities as well as your Boss's and to **make sure you get the appropriate recognition and rewards** for your work in order to advance in your career

## Myth #3: It's Always About the Boss

- Managers and Supervisors enjoy more freedom and get more perks...

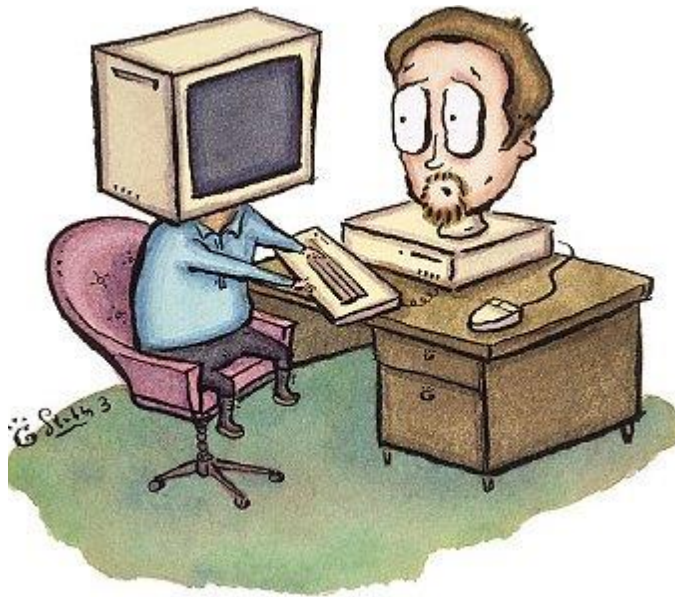


Many employees believe that managers have far more freedom to make decisions and take action than they have as individual contributors.

This is actually not true, Managers often have far less freedom to act alone than you might have anticipated. They have **multiple obligations and responsibilities along with many employees to look after**. Not necessarily with extra perks!

## Myth #4: I Simply Do Not Have What it Takes...

- It takes brains, deep experience, and connections, and I have none of those!



You can achieve work experience and connections over time if you're driven and aggressively pursue opportunities.

**Many successful executives aren't really geniuses...**



## Myth #5: Once you "make it"...

- Once you "make it," you're on easy street



Few people with the passion and drive to "**make it**," cruise once they do.

They tend to always be looking to the horizon for the **next big challenge**..

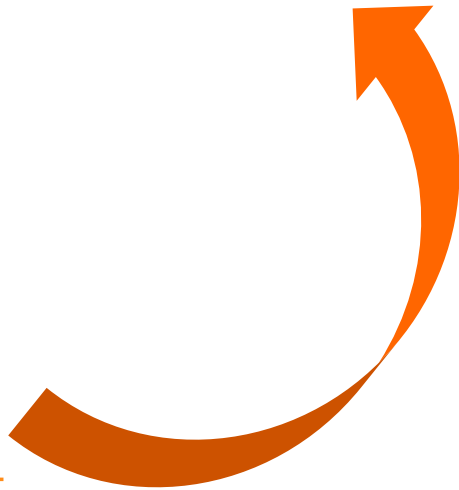
# The reality is that the concept of a 'Successful Career' is changing...

## Protean

- ✓ Frequently changing based on changes in the person and changes in the work environment
- ✓ Employees take major responsibility for managing their careers
- ✓ Based on self-direction with the goal of psychological success in one's work

## Traditional

- ❖ Sequence of positions held within an occupation
- ❖ Context of mobility is within an organization
- ❖ Characteristic of the employee



Dimension	Traditional Career	Protean Career
Goal	Promotions Salary increase	Psychological success
Psychological Contract	Security for commitment	Employability for flexibility
Mobility	Vertical	Lateral
Responsibility for Management	Company	Employee
Pattern	Linear and expert	Spiral and transitory
Expertise	Know how	Learn how
Development	Heavy reliance on formal training	Greater reliance on relationships & job experiences

## Hence, Today's Workplace...

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### ... requires us to

- **think as business owners** and continuously challenge ourselves. To succeed, we need to be **hardworking, generate ideas, be proactive, constantly develop, specialize and sell new skills**
- **contribute to the goals of the organization**, make our boss look good and make ourselves **valuable members** of teams in the workplace
- practice the fundamental virtues of **humility, integrity, self-discipline** and **sustainable goal achievement** which will make us indispensable to multiple decision makers
- be **decisive, intuitive, true to styles**, and **responsive** to our teams
- **be passionate and exceed** the expectations of our superiors/employers. That doesn't necessarily mean we have to work overtime every week or do other coworkers' work for them or be overambitious



*"If you go to work without ego and agenda, and make it about the job you have today and not the job you want tomorrow, sooner or later you will get tapped on the shoulder and be rewarded with new responsibilities and challenges."*

*Bill Green, Executive Chairman, Accenture (2012)*

# Career Fulfilment

- Career fulfilment, like everything else that lies along the lane of success, doesn't happen by accident
- Career fulfilment is the result of a lot of conscious, intentional, coordinated and consistent efforts. If you will succeed in your career tomorrow, you should necessarily engage some form of strategic planning today and begin to channel your efforts in a specific direction
- Career encompasses all forms of profitable and rewarding life endeavor including entrepreneurship



# Career Progression

## Career Progression

### Undergraduate

- Primary objective is to **excel academically** and demonstrate your ability to handle an assignment

### Transition

- Period between Graduation to NYSC; includes post-graduate studies (if any)

### National Youth Service

- Focus should be on finalizing all efforts to **position** in the direction of your desired career path (applying to jobs, attending interviews)

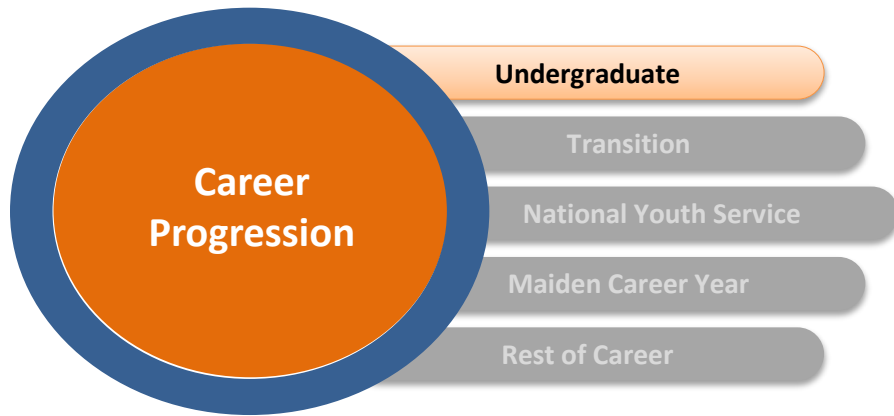
### Maiden Career Year

- Focus on establishing a reputation and delivering bottom-line impact (be clear about your job, what it takes to succeed, what is expected from you and how best to deliver results)

### Rest of Career

- Focus on sustaining reputation and delivering measurable achievements, helping others and giving back

# Undergraduate



## Objective:

- Excel academically and demonstrate your ability to handle tasks, assignments and projects

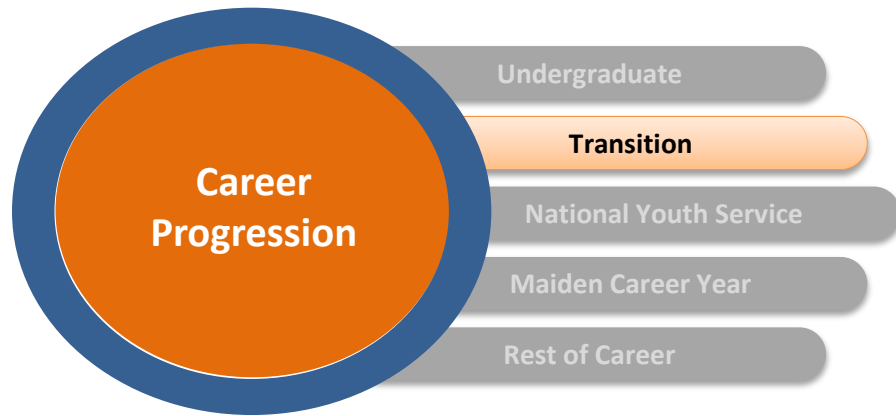
## Differentiators:

- **Extra-curriculars** are a must-have, the world is having less and less need for “one-sided” individuals
- **Leadership Development** is usually a point of differentiation for many graduates, **learn to lead!**
- **Self discovery** is crucial to excelling in this phase and making course corrections where applicable

## Key Expectation from this Phase:

- A **pseudo-plan for one’s career progression** (i.e the answer to the “**where do I go from here**” question)

# Transition



## Objective:

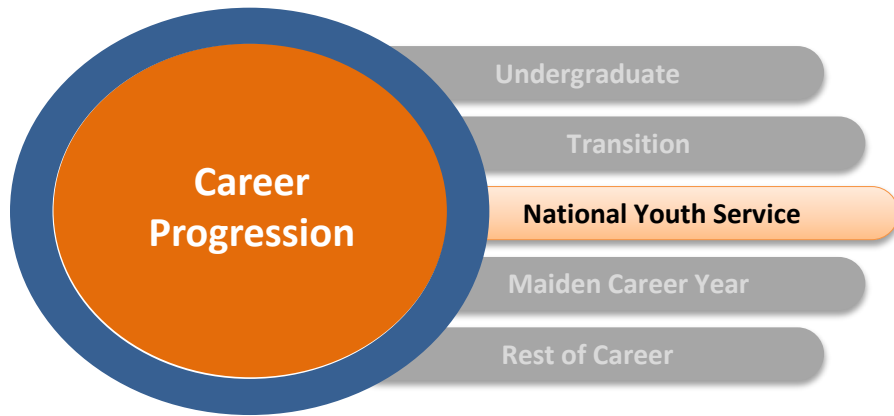
- Clarify overall life direction and position to execute vision

## Differentiators:

- **Aggressive Personal Development:** Read books, enroll for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), take a part time job etc
- **Networking:** Interact with role models in society and industry, ask questions around your chosen career path to understand the realities associated with your choice

## Key Expectation from this Phase:

- A plan for one's career progression (i.e the answer to the “what do I do next” question)



## Objective:

- Finalize all efforts to position in the direction of your vision (apply to jobs, attend interviews etc.)

## Differentiators:

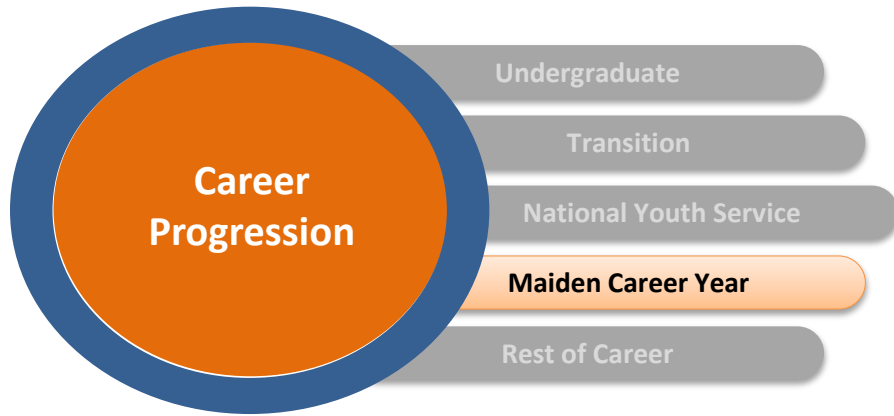
- **Aggressive Personal Development:** Find opportunities to grow and develop relevant skills – training, reading, take a part time job etc
- **Profile Building:** Focus on creating a profile that appeals to the industry of choice. Also engage in community development initiatives, volunteer for NGOs and generally take an active posture in contributing to society – this creates a favorable impression on the minds of recruiters

## Key Expectation from this Phase:

- A career ready individual



# Maiden Career



## Objective:

- Build visibility within your company

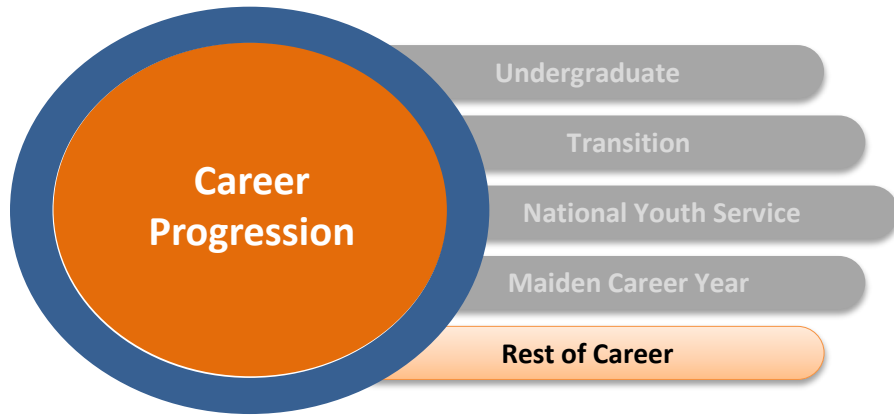
## Differentiators:

- **Over-deliver:** Go the extra mile on every assignment
- **Mentorship:** Be proactive about learning from the more experienced colleagues at work, learn to work hard and smart
- **Clarity:** Be clear about what is expected of you, always communicate your understanding of your assignments and validate same with your supervisors

## Key Expectation from this Phase:

- A company executive in the making
- A decision whether you want “To Be” or you want “To Have”

## Rest of Career



### Objective:

- Maintain a favorable reputation across the firm and position yourself for promotions

### Differentiators:

- **Be Accountable:** Beyond going the extra mile on every assignment, accept responsibility beyond your pay grade and learn to execute such tasks
- **Sponsorship:** Find someone willing to be your advocate ...remains a sure requirement for career advancement
- **Networking:** Connect with folks within your firm, within your industry and across industries. Develop a professional support system that helps you succeed

### Key Expectation from this Phase:

- A fast rising professional

# The 21<sup>st</sup> Century WorkPlace .... Know Thyself!

The 21st Century Workplace is a **jungle** and it allows only the fittest to **survive**

- **Rules of the Jungle**: Different species, Different hierarchies, Different genders, Different food chains, Laws of nature (Written, Unwritten), *Survival of the fittest, Adapt or Die, Size does matter, You are the prey, Use camouflage, Rules of the Waterhole, Hunt or be hunted, Mark your territory*
- ✓ **Dolphins** – Graceful, Gentle & Kind, always where they should be
- ✓ **Crocodiles** – passing themselves off as alligators, these bleeding hearts cry over the injustice of your fate even as they eat you
- ✓ **Donkeys** – have a strong back, but a weak mind
- ✓ **White Sharks** – will swallow anything
- ✓ **Guppies** – fish that reduces competition by eating their own
- ✓ **Hamsters** – rodent and ultimate bureaucrats, spend hours spinning their wheels, getting nowhere
- ✓ **Humming birds** – don't know the words of the song and won't learn
- ✓ **Llamas** – would rather spit in your face than work hard
- ✓ **Sea Horses** – feminism's greatest victory – the male carries the eggs and gives birth
- ✓ **Skunks** – animals that raise a stink over every little transgression, real or imagined
- ✓ **Zebras** – the major debate for decades – are we black with white stripes or white with black stripes?



# Attributes in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jungle...

## Monkey

- **Hear No Evil**
  - Political
- **See No Evil**
  - Whistle Blowing
- **Do No Evil**
  - Ethics
  - Values



## Elephant

- Enormous
- Gentle – until provoked
- Memory
- Protective
- Herds/Packs
- Coaches, – Mentors
- Relationship building



## Leopard

- Run like the wind
- Change your spots
- Adaptability to habitat
- Stealth behaviour
- Choose your fights well
- Being alone
- Loving the chase
- Opportunistic hunting



## Owl

- Know the environment
- Check the lay of the land
- Be on your guard
- Be Political
- Understand the economics
- Use your nights well
- Solitary
- Hunting by stealth & surprise



## Attributes in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jungle...

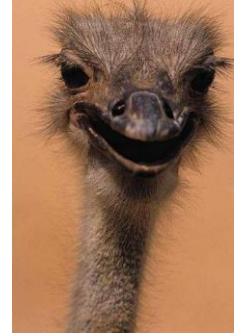
### Chameleon

- Use camouflage
- Always the prey
- Stay with what works for you
- Be part of a social grouping



### Ostrich

- Generally not very bright
- Easily annoyed
- Have a certain air about them
- Face your opponents heads on
- Will eat/digest anything
- Head in the sand
- Follow the leader



### Eagle

- Good view from the top
- Sometimes you fly
- Sometimes you glide
- Sometimes you swoop
- Sometimes you hurt
- Sometimes you loose
- Sometimes you win



### Pig

- Lazy and Dirty
- Dangerous
- Selfish



## In order to survive in the 21st century workplace...

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You have to be

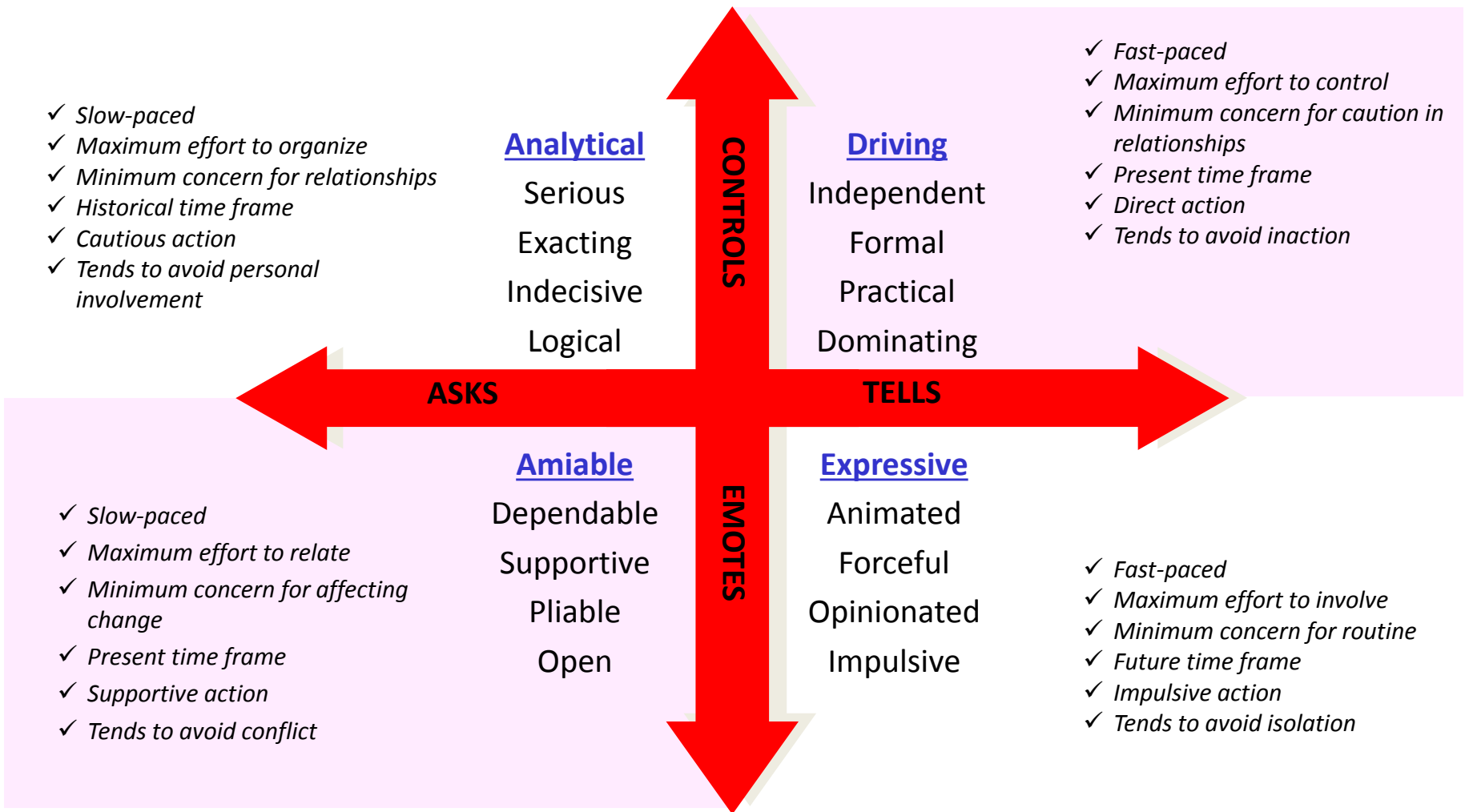
- on top of your game
- very clear on what you want to achieve (and gain exceptions for your ideas and opinions)
- more creative about reaching your goals (think outside the box)
- more competitive (learn how to balance imagination and logic)

*Play the Game or change the Game by becoming an entrepreneur*

***... to leave your  
footprints  
in the sand of time, you  
better  
wear your working shoes***



# Understand the Four Social Styles...



## ...which will enable you to interact more effectively and achieve personal goals

	<b>Driver</b>	<b>Amiable</b>	<b>Expressive</b>	<b>Analytical</b>
<b>Basic Need...</b>	<b>To win</b>	<b>To avoid pain</b>	<b>To be adored</b>	<b>To be right</b>
<b>Wants...</b>	Control	Approval	Recognition	Respect
<b>Their Questions...</b>	What	Why	Who	How
<b>Strengths ...</b>	Decisive	Listens	Enthusiastic	Thorough
<b>Weaknesses...</b>	Insensitive to others	Resist taking a stand	Too impulsive	Poor imagination
<b>Makes Effort to Be...</b>	Efficient	Cooperative	Interesting	Accurate
<b>Provide them with...</b>	Results	Safety	Fun	Details
<b>Let them save...</b>	Time	Relationships	Effort	Face
<b>Emphasize your...</b>	Options and Probabilities	Assurances and Guarantees	Testimonies and Incentives	Evidence and Service
<b>Avoid being...</b>	Defensive	Pushy	Rigid	Vague
<b>Decision making...</b>	Quick and Goal Oriented	Slow and People Oriented	Fast and Intuitive	Unhurried and Thoughtful
<b>Remembering their...</b>	Goals	People	Future	Process



## 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

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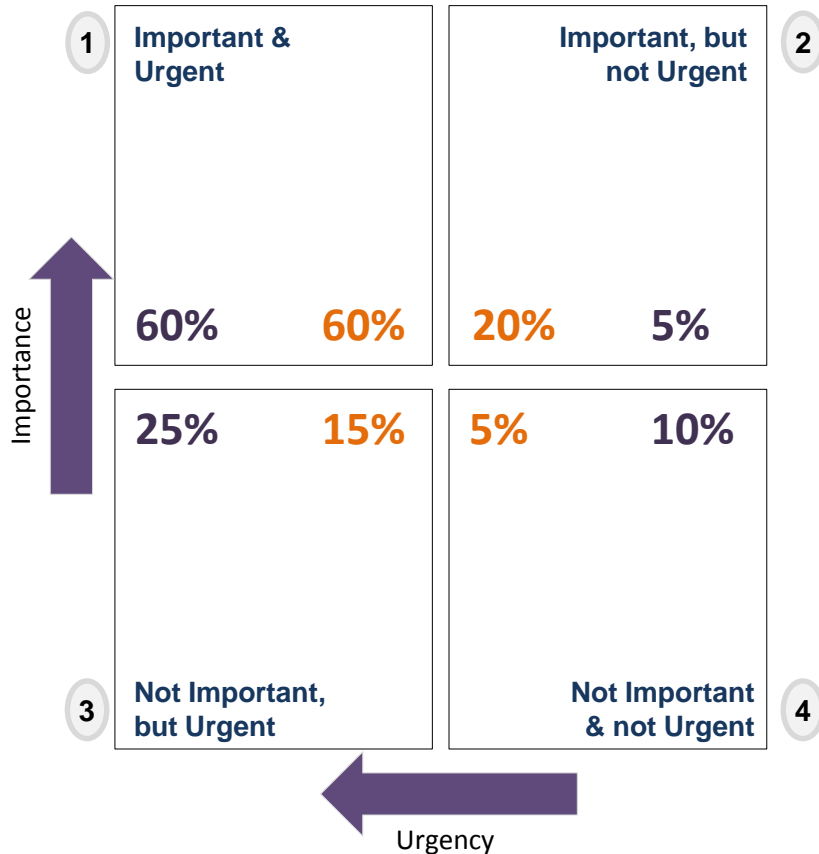
- Be proactive - Understand your circle of concerns but focus on your circle of influence
- Begin with the end in mind
- Put first things first - Focus on the important before it becomes urgent
- Think win/win - Abundance Mentality. Grow Good Corn
- Understand, then be understood
- Synergise - leverage individual differences to create a whole that is greater than parts
- Sharpen the saw - continual and constant self-improvement

We can only be effective (not just efficient) if we begin with the end in mind

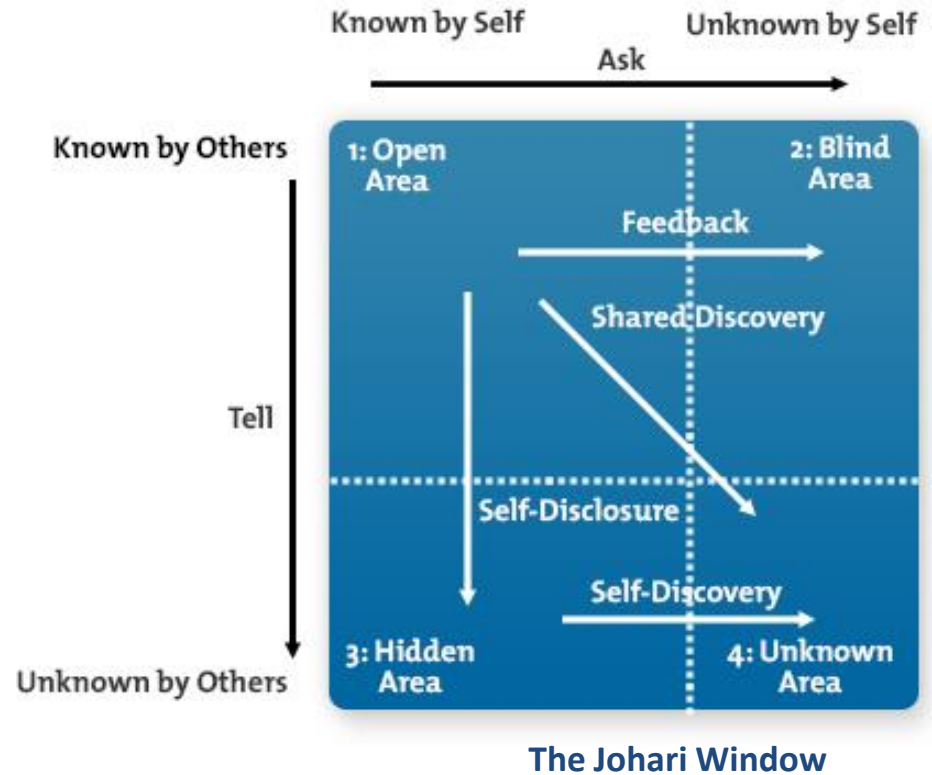
**5 Ps** – Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance

# 7 Habits of Highly Effective People – know thy self and time management

Time Quadrant



- Average Person's Percentage Time Allocation to Quadrant
- Superior Person's Percentage Time Allocation to Quadrant



## Avoid the 6 Myths

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- The Position Myth – I cannot lead if I am not at the top
- The Destination Myth – When I get to the top, then I will learn to lead
- The Influence Myth – If I were on top, then people will follow me
- The Inexperience Myth – When I get to the top, I will be experienced and be in control
- The Freedom Myth – When I get to the top, I will no longer be limited
- The All But Nothing Myth – If I can't get to the top, then I won't try to lead.

Source: John Maxwell

It all boils down to **3Rs**

- Respect for Self: Focus, Goal Orientation, Hardwork, Physical Fitness, Eat Well, Dress well, Continuous Learning, Competence, Character
- Respect for Others: Humility, Caring, Social Skills, Service, Connect & Connecting
- Responsibility for all your actions (Social Media?) and success: Integrity, Reflection, Commitment, Contributions

## Understand the 3 Rs

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- Respect for Self: Focus, Goal Orientation, Hardwork, Physical Fitness, Eat Well, Dress well, Continuous Learning, Competence, Character
- Respect for Others: Humility, Caring, Social Skills, Service, Connect & Connecting
- Responsibility for all your actions (Social Media?) and success: Integrity, Reflection, Commitment, Contributions

## In my journey, I have found these 15 C's of leadership

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1. **Competence** – Fashola, Fola Adeola (top of mind)
2. **Character** – Dependability, reliability, trustworthy, integrity and ethical character. (Taxi driver - Mr. Umeh Usuah - MON + FCT House - for returning N18m/laptop)
3. **Conscientiousness** – Diligence & Hardworking. Achieve Extra-ordinary outcome
4. **Compassion/Caring** – care and listen to others. Humility & Respect for others - Wangari Maathai Kenya–1<sup>st</sup> African woman Nobel Peace Price Award 2004 - environment conservation & sustainability
5. **Commitment** – to a purpose. Focus – Circle of Influence. Practice – 10,000 hour rule!
6. **Confidence** – in yourself, your ability, product and services
7. **Communication** – clearly communicate the vision
8. **Connect** with people. Be Accessible
9. **Connection** - Create a good network that you serve & will serve you
10. **Credibility** - Malala Yousafzai –youngest ever Nobel Peace Award, PMB & Corruption
11. **Courage**
12. **Consistency**
13. **Contentment**
14. **Contribution** – contribute positively and recognise the contribution of others
15. **Continuous learning & development** - The world is dynamic, develop new skills and ideas to remain relevant<sup>9</sup>

## Useful Next Steps

**1** Develop a high-level career plan / vision (where do you see yourself in 5, 10 & 15 years from now?)

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**2** Identify your current career position and decide what to do differently in order to achieve your vision

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**3** Acquire learning resources (books, podcasts, videos, online courses etc)

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**4** Get a mentor

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**5** Review your progress every quarter (3 months)

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**See You at the Top ...Insha Allahu**



**Ma Salaam**