

Hot Dogs & Cold Feet

Once there was an illiterate man who was good at only one thing—that is, he enthusiastically made the best hot dogs in town and sold lots of them. His sales went up so he ordered more meat, got a bigger stove and put up an advertising hoarding. As his business was growing, the son, who had recently graduated from college, joined his father. Then something strange happened. The son asked, “Dad, aren’t you aware of the great recession that is coming our way? The global business sentiment is terrible. We should be prepared for the coming bad time.” The man thought that since his son had been to college, his advice should not be taken lightly. So the next day, the father cut down his order for the meat and buns, took down the sign and was no longer enthusiastic. Very soon, fewer and fewer people bothered to stop at his hot dog stand. And his sales started coming down rapidly. The father said to his son, “Son, you were right. We are in the middle of a recession. I am glad you warned me ahead of time.”

This is what happens when instead of focusing on our opportunities, we are more bothered about threats being painted by outsiders. It is said opportunities have a singular point of origin, and that point is our core strength. Core strength is never plural; it always comes in a single pack. The primary strength can be as simple as preparing yummy hot dogs like the illiterate man. And the beauty of single-mindedly going after that primary strength is that all our weaknesses sort out on their own!

For example, if I am already a ‘good’ team player but aspiring to become the ‘best’ team player who is widely respected for his interpersonal skills, then all I need to do is stay focused on my goal to perfect my **interpersonal** skills; all my ancillary skills will automatically pull up. How will the quality-control engineers like me unless I close my **technical skill** gaps that put a burden on them during the test phases? How will my fellow teammates count on me unless I **work hard** alongside them at all times? How will my project manager rely on me if my disregard for **processes** becomes an obstacle in his schedule planning? And how will my customer feel comfortable interacting with me if my **communication** is just not comprehensible? A similar logic inheritance can be deduced from the focus on any other skill that might be our calling.

All of us, be it organizations or individuals, have that one core strength that only

we are sure of. If we view our core strength as our biggest opportunity and strengthen it on a continual basis, there is no reason why we should not do exceedingly well regardless of our line of profession.