

Re: Electronic Design – Project Management

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On Dec 6, 12:58 am, "Le Chaud Lapin" <jaibudu...@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Ian Bell wrote:

GOOD marketeers do not think like this. This 'them and us' attitude' will be the death of western product development. The "them and us" attitude starts when we are 5 years old and continues

for a lifetime. And it is not the engineers' fault. There is a pathology that underlies the the social dynamics of technology–oriented corporations.

WARNING: Long Elitist Rant Follows. If your I.Q. is under 88, stop reading.

I will characterize of both types of people, the engineers, and the sales&marketing types, then discuss the pathology on that results from these characterizations. These are generalizations, and generalizations, by definition, always have exceptions.

ENGINEERS:

Let's face it. We're not dumb, and we know it. We start off ahead.>From the very beginning, we excel in school. We're generally at the top of our classes. Bringing home top grades becomes so routine we take it for granted. The positive reinforcement from parents and teachers only serve to encourage us to polish whatever raw talent we were given.

We are not particularly socially adept, nor the most attractive in the crowd (the God Is Fair Principle). Some of our social awkwardness, if present is innate, but much of it comes from a cycle of ostracization by people who are 'different' from us, which is essentially everyone except the top 5%. The envy of such people serve to marginalize us.

We do not particularly look down upon people who are not like us. They are just people. But sometimes there is a clash of tastes – one can

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only listen to stories about who got drunk so many times before wanting to pass out from boredom. And they do not enjoy our attention to detail in old Star Trek episodes. But in general, contempt from us to "them" is usually reserved for those who earn it. We generally do not go around worrying that people not like us have to struggle with simple things like General Relativity. ;)

THE SALES AND MARKETING PEOPLE:

Let's face it. Some of them are really attractive. And they know it. A few have charisma. But looks and charisma have limited earning potential, unless you are an entertainer. From the very beginning, these people struggle with their grades. They ***know*** from the very beginning that they are *NOT* in the top 5%.

Those not like us generally regard us as having an inherent advantage over them. It becomes difficult for even the most friendly among the "other side" to not have envy every now and then. They struggle to get into the best state college, while we get upset because we got 20 points less than we thought we would get on entrance exam to one of three outstandingly reputable schools.

THE PATHOLOGY:

Now imagine you are humming long, earning your \$100,000.00US+ per year, wearing a slightly-smelling T-shirt because you "forgot" to wash it, and smiling because you finally figured out that new PSD algorithm. You look down at your socks and realize that, though both are white with blue stripes, the stripes on one sock are wider than those on the other. Oh well, it doesn't matter, your work is not a beauty contest. What matters is how well you can hone in on just the right part for a circuit and build the board with minimal cost. And the management agrees. That's why they have an extremely relaxed dress code (for you) and racks of Twinkies in the break room. They want you to be as relaxed as possible so that your brain does what it should.

Along comes a marketing executive. His hair is combed. His shirt is white, not smelly, with a tie hanging over it. He's getting coffee to be alert. He articulates his words. He doesn't interrupt you when you're speaking. He gives you eye contact, and though you cannot see his socks, you are pretty sure they match, each other, and the shoes. He's using words that seem to be a drivel of bombastic babble, and he is about to go to conference call to discuss for an hour what you already know the answer to. You notice that this seems to be a trend, all kinds of people who don't know what the hell is *really* going on spending hours and hours yapping as if they gearing up for brain surgery.

WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN?

Fear.

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They are terrified at the thought that this wonderful opportunity, this high-tech company, that pays them handsomely, \$30,000/year MORE than the top engineer in the company for basically walking around and talking a lot and using Word, Powerpoint, and Outlook. And making sure their socks match and their shirts do not smell. Only 10 years earlier, they were working as managers in relatively low-paying jobs. How times have changed! It is hard to believe. And to top it off, they've managed to convince the CEO that *more* marketing and sales people are needed. They need to build their team. Their is strength in numbers. So they go and find other people like themselves, people who don't know a bit from what a horse bytes on, and *those* people begin earing the big bucks too. And each month, when \$13,000+ is electronically deposited into their account, and they are on a beach in San Diego, drinking little fruity beverages while checking out the locals, thinking about the after-party that they are going to go to that evening in a company (V12) rental car, they reminisce about all those years where they struggled in grade school, in high school, in college, cheated occasionally just to get by while you took on "extra" work for "intellectual stimulation", and now they are on top, and they'll be DAMNED if they are going to let this go. God forbid if upper management actually discovered that their role was non-essential *before* it came time to do mass layoffs.

So they make their roles look absolutely critical by injecting themselves deep into the bowels of progress.

–Le Chaud Lapin–

Rabbit,

I may consider washing my shirt and combing my hair. I'm not that smart anymore.

Frank

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