Tips and habits to advance your IT career

By @arielsanchezmor

V1.1 (added links)

Let's have some fun

- Take a pic of yourself seeing this recorded session! Tweet it out with #VMUGVirtual
- I really like interacting with people in Twitter and the #vCommunity – send me any thoughts from today, your cat pictures and your blog posts!

A bit about me

- Costa Rican in Orlando via SJO, Denver, NYC, PGH

- Advocate of the vCommunity (vBrownBag, vExpert, VMUG, Hackathons, vBeers, etc!)

- I want to help you present at your VMUG!

- vExpert PRO – I'll help you prepare for vExpert

- My job: Senior Technical Account Manager @VMware

- Office of the CTO, Ambassador

Agenda

- Realities of working in IT
- My career journey and what I learned
- The vCommunity and social media
- Tips and habits, odds and ends

Realities of working in IT

- IT can give you a comfortable living
- Work/life balance is difficult at the beginning
- Long hours and graveyard shifts get old
- Be mindful of your health!
- Always be aware of what's coming
- Your job will change every 5 years
- In IT, people take jobs to learn skills
- Same job salary increases don't match inflation

My career journey and what I learned

- *#1 NOC engineer, team lead in Costa Rica*

Pros: managers, team, tech, opportunities

Cons: some teammates, upward options, shifts

Big Breaks: travel, responsibility

Painful lessons learned: your career is your duty

#1 Tip: Documentation is a golden entryway

Book: Eat that frog

Eat that Frog highlights

- *21 tips in condensed manner for personal productivity*
- Complete your most important task first and well
- Write things down, Plan, Prioritize
- Laser focus on big impact tasks, 80/20
- Find and focus on your strengths, rather than being an all rounder
- Create large chunks of time

My career journey and what I learned

- *#2 IT coordinator in Costa Rica, different company*

Pros: salary, prestige, much bigger company

Cons: tough (but fair) boss, long hours, email

Big Breaks: scripting, negotiating

Painful lessons learned: managing people is hard

#1 Tip: Rely on your peers

Book: Winning, One Minute Manager

One Minute Manager, Winning highlights

- *Focus on leading effective and engaged teams:*
- Communication is simple if we take the time to agree with each other and commit.
- Candor is essential!
- Rewards have to align with performance
- Get your team to think aloud, debate & agree
- Hiring and letting go are important decisions
- So much more about thinking like a CEO

My career journey and what I learned

- *#3 IT Manager for 3 countries, still in Costa Rica*

Pros: prestige, mentoring, travel, team building

Cons: letting people go, more personalities

Big Breaks: excellent coordinators

Painful lessons learned: weight of responsibility

#1 Tip: Build relationships; Get out of the way

Book: none - I asked my director's advice

Ask your seniors for tips!

From: Ariel Sanchez
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2009 1:52 PM
To: Clay Jenkins
Subject: Kind of an odd request :)

Hi Clay! I have a small request you might help me a lot with. Everyone, and I count myself in, says you are great keeping track of everything, and I actually like that your e-mails are short but very punctual on what you need by when.

I am looking for a good book, or your own tips, that you have found work well for time management. If you could point me in any direction, I'd be a happy camper ☺ Some things have helped for me... leaving my inbox only with the pending items, I read "eat that frog" and it was great, "the 1 minute manager" was good too. So, anything you can share I'd be most grateful ☺

Ariel Sanchez Mora
IT Manager
San Jose & San Salvador

- Ask those you admire
- People generally are
nice about it!

Clay Jenkins MBA, CISSP, ITIL · 1st
Information Security and IT Operations Leader
Caddo Mills, Texas · 500+ connections · Contact info

Some of Clay's tips from 2009

- *Be human, not a robot leader. I try to get to know what's going on personally with people so that when something is bothering them, I know it and can understand and cut em some slack.*

- *Spend money when you must (and I mean on making people happy). I mean if they need pens or a lunch sometimes then do it. Don't ask your boss, just do it and keep your people happy.*

- *Be honest with your people. I hate keeping things (good or bad) from people. You tell people the bad and they respect you as honest and will follow you more.*

Relocated to Denver

- *#4 Junior SysEng, End User Support and DC Tech*

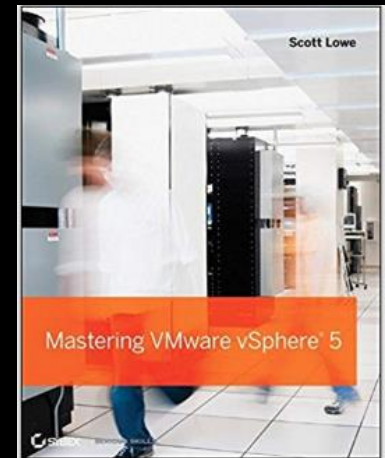Pros: Denver, learning, US Salary, career path

Cons: on call for syseng and datacenter ops

Big Breaks: VMware course!

Painful lessons learned: work/life balance

#1 Tip: Learn, document, spread

Book: Mastering VMware vSphere

 by Scott Lowe

Relocated to Brooklyn

- *#5 VMware SME (still same company)*

Pros: WFH, Salary increase, more fun at work & city

Cons: NYC is expensive, car and house are luxuries

Big Breaks: VMUG! Working with @edmsanchez13

Painful lessons learned: IT Admin Health

#1 Tip: Rely on the vCommunity

Book: *every other VMware Press book*

Relocated to Pittsburgh

- *#6 Sr Technical Account Manager for VMware*

Pros: no more on call rotation, + salary, VMware!

Cons: drinking from fire hose, 1 yr to feel adept

Big Breaks: Excellent teammates, culture, PGH=cool

Painful lessons learned: Being on time, $100 bill

#1 Tip: Stay true to yourself, homelab, geek out!

Books: The Greatest Salesman in the World

Asking for tips + "Managing up"

- Asking for advice should be additional from "managing up" and getting clear direction
- Talk to your manager on how to work together
- Consistently managers want:
- 1) Integrity
- 2) Speak up if there's problems
- 3) Honor your commitments with quality
- 4) Respect others (golden rule, be on time, etc)
- 5) Admit mistakes and learn from them

Ask your seniors for tips - on steroids

- VMware has an AskPat mailbox, so I asked him for book recommendations, and he replied :yay:

Recent Reading
Soul Keeping, John Ortberg – what is means to have a healthy soul

Most impactful book
Half Time, Bob Buford – from success to significance

Business books
Profit from the core – Bain/Zook – guide to building sustainable business advantage
Tipping Point – Malcolm Gladwell – being great in business setting
Good to Great – Jim Collins – relentless pursuit of excellence
Cross the chasm – Geoffrey Moore – what it takes to create a new product/category

Favorite Person read
Swimming Across, Andy Grove – long time mentor

Experiencing God, Henry Blackabee – challenging my view of God and eternity

Regular reading
Bible! Read a chapter of the Old Testament and the New Testament every day

Find who you admire on Social Media

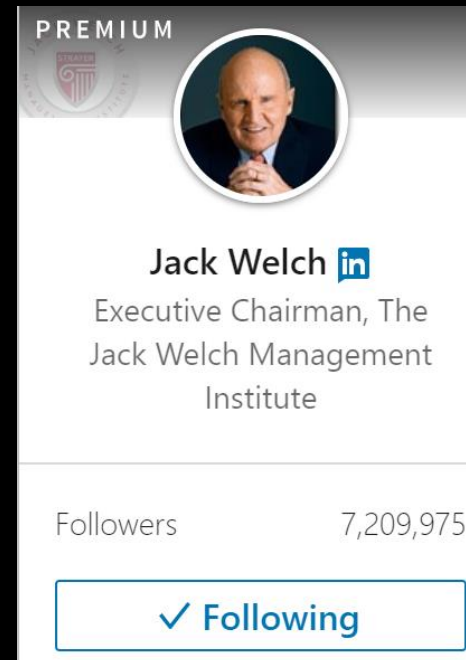- Pat Gelsinger is a world known leader, so he's been interviewed several times on career advice:

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/eight-books-expanded-my-thinking-pat-gelsinger/

https://developgreatmanagers.com/interviews/pat-gelsinger-incredibly-successful-executive-with-the-right-priorities/

https://www.businessinsider.com/career-advice-vmware-ceo-pat-gelsinger-how-to-be-a-ceo-2017-3

Social Media as a career tool

- There are still those who think social media is just facebook, ie, a waste of time
- If you're a manager, director and above, LinkedIn has lots of free articles from authors and CEOs

Pat Gelsinger
CEO VMware

| Followers | 11,876 |

✓ Following

PREMIUM

Jack Welch in
Executive Chairman, The Jack Welch Management Institute

| Followers | 7,209,975 |

✓ Following

Community

A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common

A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals

There are lots of IT communities!

vCommunity

The very welcoming people working with virtualization technology who you frequently meet at VMware user groups and conferences.

Typically they are active on twitter and they blog, and are characterized for being very willing to share information

Starting on Twitter

- Twitter: spreading info and short discussions
- -global directory of people, lots of techies
  -hashtags are powerful!
- #vExpert
- #VCDX
- #VMware
- #vCommunity

Ariel Sanchez Mora
@arielsanchezmor

Sr TAM @VMware #CTOA VCIX-DCV VCP-NV vExpert NSX&PRO @vBrownbag @vBrownBagLATAM host. Love my wife/fam/cats/TT, CR & Japan. #vFitbit #vAnime #GoPats Tweets=me

Orlando FL   arielsanchezmora.com   Born March 13, 1982
Joined February 2009

Edit profile

More ways to do vCommunity

- VMTN forums
- Reading and commenting on other's blogs
- LinkedIn/Facebook/Whatsapp/Telegram
- Podcasts and webinars (Geek Whisperers, vBrownbag)
- Share and use code through Github/Gitlab
- Assisting to VMUG and VMworld events
- Slack chats like VMware Code

VMUG is HUGE

- VMUG
Critical: reach out to the VMUG leaders, that they know who you are and **offer them to present in the future**

- **Leaders are <u>so important</u> to the vCommunity**

- Hang out in the common areas and talk to others

- Check twitter, <u>there's always a hashtag</u>

- Tailor the event so that you get what you want, but you also get pushed!

4 stages of participation

-lurk

-interact

-contribute

-mentor
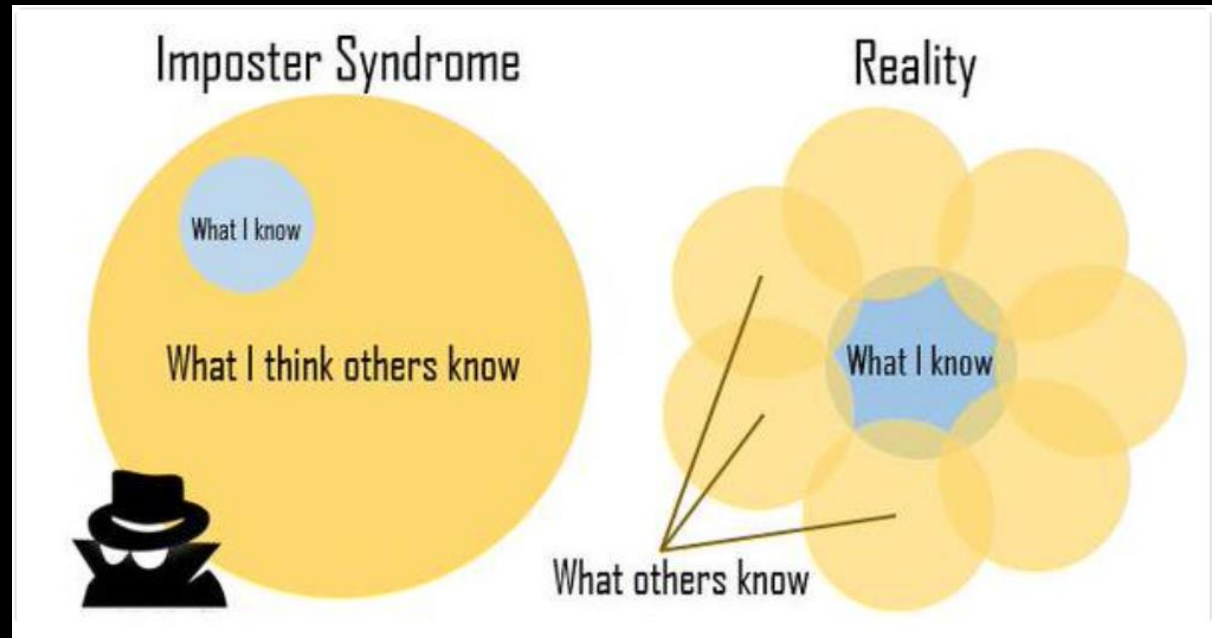
- You will learn so much more from teaching others
- Presenting itself is something that takes practice to do well
- Just try to get better each time. That's all!

Easy ways to start

- You feel you need to learn more? Volunteer at work to help in the difficult VMware projects

- You're learning enough? Take notes, sanitize the data for internet, and blog about it

- Can't really test and do stuff at work? Homelab! VMUG Advantage is a great value

- $12 domains.google.com Blogger, wordpress.com, GitHub pages, Medium, etc

vCommunity is a sounding board

Ariel Sanchez Mora
@arielsanchezmor

I'm doing a career advice session for @MyVMUG tomorrow. I'll share what has worked for me, what people have taught me & lessons learned from doing all those @vBrownBag interviews. I'd love for you all in the #vCommunity to send me some of your career and life tips as a reply here

vCommunity is sharing

Dan Barr @vDanBarr · 19h
Replying to @arielsanchezmor @MyVMUG and @vBrownBag
"Good enough" isn't. "It works" doesn't.

Dave Glading @VM_Dave · 17h
Replying to @arielsanchezmor @MyVMUG and @vBrownBag
Build your network. Attend local user events and don't be afraid of talking to people and introducing yourself

Cheryl @SillyCee · 2h
Replying to @arielsanchezmor @MyVMUG and @vBrownBag
It's okay to brag about your accomplishments.

Ivaylo Ivanov @ivgivanov · 19h
Replying to @arielsanchezmor @MyVMUG and @vBrownBag
Listen -> Understand -> Reply

vCommunity is sharing

Chris Schott @itdweeb · 3h ⌄

Replying to @arielsanchezmor @MyVMUG and @vBrownBag

Be flexible. Don't be afraid to stand your ground, but you don't have to die on that hill. You won't always be right. You will make a mistake. You will break something. Compromise. Learn. Keep moving forward. Build your network. We've all been there.

Matt Crape @MattThatITGuy · 18h ⌄

Step 1) Start doing the job you want before you have it. Want to become an evangelist for a company? Start blogging about them.

Want to become and SE? Be able to talk about each of the company's products and how they fit into enterprises.

Step 2) Broadcast that knowledge

vCommunity is sharing

- Since 2016, I've done several interviews for vBrownBag to members of the vCommunity

Help organize meetups, local or online

- All of these, twitter hashtags!
- -vBeers
  -vBrisket
  -vCurry
  -vChicken
  -vCoffee
  -vAnime
  -vFitbit
  -vGamers (vgamers.gg)

BENEFITS

- All of this will bring you
  -Friends!!!
  -Contacts for when you need help
  -"Resume" to apply for vExpert and others

- -New knowledge - keeping up to date!
  -Knowing who knows about X
  -Access to career mentors

Vendor award programs

- vExpert
  Veeam Vanguard
  EMC, Cisco, RedHat, etc
  Free licenses and subscriptions
  Swag
  Private events
  Beta and feedback groups
- - The networking in these groups is invaluable!!

Important habits

- Being active in the vCommunity teaches you:
  - You could be doing things better
  - There is value in having frank good-intentioned discussions with colleagues
  - Knowledge hoarding is a negative attitude
- - The more you share, the better it is for everyone, but especially **yourself**!
- - You can only do new things if you stop doing old things. Unreplaceable means unpromotable!

Thank you!

- **I'll leave you with a full, revised version of Clay's management philosophies. It's a whole presentation by itself** ☺

- **Reach out on twitter! @arielsanchezmor**

- **Blogs.arielsanchezmora.com will have a blog post related to this talk as well**

Clay (and Bob's) philosophies

- **Management Philosophies**

Remember that these are just philosophies, not rules. Please use them to guide your decisions, not make them!

When working with subordinates, **if your gut tells you it isn't going to work out, it almost never does.** If your instincts tell you they are not a fit, they probably aren't.

Clay (and Bob's) philosophies

- **When you are in management there is no excuse.** If the end results are not what you wanted, there is something you could have/should have done differently. This doesn't mean that you beat yourself up over it. It <u>does</u> mean you constantly review your actions (when the results are not good) and decide what could you/will you do different the next time. Make sure all your decisions are based in reality. Understand the people/teams you are dealing with and make sure your plan fits well with their strengths and weaknesses. All too many plans fail with the excuse "if only they had done what I asked"; don't let this happen to you.

Clay (and Bob's) philosophies

- **All IT managers are authorized to "push back"** on requests from our internal customers if they believe it is in the best interest of the company. If they do so, they are then required to invite the customer to escalate to their supervisor. We cannot always say "yes" to every request but we should make it clear that a "no" is not necessarily the final answer.

Clay (and Bob's) philosophies

- **Hold employees accountable.** Clearly set the guidelines, rules or direction and then challenge them <u>every time</u> they veer from the path. Any other approach sends mixed messages.

- **Good people are hard to find.** If you have a valued employee with personal circumstances making it difficult for that person to work for Stream, get creative with schedules or working environment to allow that person to continue working for you.

Clay (and Bob's) philosophies

- **If you see something that doesn't seem or feel right, don't assume management knows about it – raise a flag and escalate it.** There are few things worse than uncovering a serious problem that has existed for a while and is known by people in the department who didn't raise an alarm because they assumed management knew and was okay with the situation. If something is not right, take the initiative to alert the right people and make it right. I liken this to "if you see a piece of trash in the hallway pick it up; don't leave it for the janitorial staff", "if you see lights left on at the end of the day, turn them off", etc.

Clay (and Bob's) philosophies

- **Promote from within (especially in management) –** If you have a team you trust you can always promote from within. It make people feel better and shows there is opening for opportunity. If you have to go outside to find the skills then you should have developed your internal people better. Only go outside when you need something you don't have (don't make it a practice).

Clay (and Bob's) philosophies

- **Treat our people as professionals and expect them to act as professionals.** If they don't, release them.
- **If you are working extraordinary long hours: for the 1st 6 months it is the job; after 6 months it is the person.** It is okay when a person works long hours because that is his/her work style but they should not blame it on the job. I have never asked for martyrs and don't necessarily respect martyrs. I respect the person that has established the proper balance between home, family and work and gets the job done without negatively affecting home and family.

Clay (and Bob's) philosophies

- **Say "yes" graciously and quickly.** When a customer (internal or external) asks you for something, quickly analyze the request and situation and decide if you are going to end up honoring the request. If the answer is "yes" then give it willingly with a "great customer service" slant. Too often we say something like "oh well, I guess if we have to we will but it won't be easy and will really take a lot of time and effort". When this happens, we end up performing the task while the customer walks away without feeling they have experienced "great customer service". In other words, we end up doing the work but not really getting credit for it.

Clay (and Bob's) philosophies

- **"No surprises" - keep your supervisor well informed.** No one likes to be blindsided. Make it your mission to ensure your boss is properly alerted to possible problems and issues. Make sure he/she hears it from you first rather than from his/her boss or a peer.

- **Incredible focus –** Doing one thing well is much better than doing many things poorly. If you have too many things on your plate to do them justice, work with your manager to reduce the items you are focused on to a manageable level.

Clay (and Bob's) philosophies

- **Not getting burned by the same problem twice –** getting burned once by an unforeseen event or happening is life; getting burned twice is negligent.
- **"To Do's" that are needed by other team's project will always take a high priority.** When trying to assign priorities because a team has more on their plate than they can handle you should usually give the nod to needs presented by other teams. There is nothing more frustrating to a team (and costly to the department) than to hit a wall and lose momentum due to needing resources or help from another team.

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