Book Review: Top 5% employee habits found by AI analysis

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Everyone knows that success does not come easy. If we distinguish the most productive employees from others, we might see that the successful ones have specific attitudes and habits that help them strengthen their capabilities. As employees are a company's greatest resources, it is important to study the ways the top employees do their work, and how we can adopt something from what they do. Not all Top employees have talent to get all things done easily. Some might have, but others work hard to find the best way to solve problems at hand. Nevertheless, either by talent or hard work, or both, most achievers around the world always try their best to improve their performance and help companies accomplish organizational goals.

In this book, based on the survey data of 18,000 employees from 25 companies in Japan, the author, Shinji Koshikawa, compared the differences between the truly exceptional employees and other ordinary employees, and pointed out the great work habits of highly effective employees by using the results generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) analysis. Specifically, the book is composed of 6 parts which are: Preface: The five principles of the Top 5% employees that can be concluded from the results of AI analysis, Chapter 1: The misunderstanding of the 95% employees who behave the way they think it is desirable behaviors, Chapter 2: Concepts and work styles of Top 5% employees, Chapter 3: Powerful positive phrases or catchwords used by the Top 5% employees to create a strong teamwork, Chapter 4: Great habits concerning instantaneous actions of the Top 5% employees, and Chapter 5: Routines of the Top 5% employees that we can adopt from now on.

In preface, the author identified 5 principles of the Top 5% employees that always make them much more productive than others. In sum, for the 1st principle, the author indicated that successful employees are

those who concentrate more on results or targets rather than process. They also know that time is precious, so they use it wisely, and they pay attention to quality, not quantity. In the 2nd principle, the survey results showed that the Top 5% employees are those who think carefully before taking any action. They also accept that they do not know everything and are willing to learn something new every time they have a chance. In the 3rd principle, the author pinpointed that the successful employees generally look for what they are good at. They also learn from their mistakes and challenge themselves by choosing the more difficult ways to get more experience. Next, in the 4th principle, the results presented that the Top 5% employees will not change their attitudes easily. Normally, they will take actions themselves first and if those actions work, they will modify their attitudes later. Finally, in the 5th principle, the author showed that the Top 5% employees set the appropriate targets that are suitable for their potential, time, and budget. In addition, during the process, they always check the outcomes continuously and are ready to adjust their process when the results are not what they expected. They also have a broad vision and always try to bridge the gap between them and other related people such as supervisors, co-workers, team members, or clients.

Now, we are moving to Chapter 1 that specifies some misunderstandings among the ordinary employees who might think their concepts of work are right and desirable, but in fact, they are not. The examples of those misperceived concepts are as followed: 1) satisfied when getting the job done (but do not care about efficiency and are not interested in creating the new products or meeting the new targets); 2) do not pay attention to any feedback (because they have negative thoughts that feedback represents mistakes); 3) check and reply email all the time, and do not prioritize tasks at work; 4) spend (too much) time preparing unnecessary documents; 5) think that every information can find in the internet (not acquire important information from experts or books); 6) solve problems only for the time being (without pondering about the root causes of the problems and how to solve those problems professionally and permanently).

In Chapter 2, this book confirms the fact that unlike those 95% employees, the Top ones have different concepts and work styles that might be considered as their essential keys to success. Those concepts and styles include: 1) work to meet intended self-purposes and find themselves (do not work for social acceptance); 2) set personal goals in life to fulfill self-actualization needs, the fifth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs; 3) learn and improve themselves from prior mistakes (do not avoid doing something new due to fearing to make mistakes); 4) do not aim of perfection, only set the reasonable target and start taking actions; 5) brush up or develop their skills and competencies, and focus on providing top performance incessantly; 6) conduct performance evaluation self-assessment (use PDCA analysis) and look for areas to improve; 7) gain experience at work (not from certificates); 8) make a to-do list and start working on assignment early; and 9) organize and keep their office table clean and neat.

In Chapter 3, the author talked about some powerful positive phrases or catchwords used by the Top 5% employees to create a strong teamwork. Those phases or catchwords are, for example, "Do you have some free time?"; "It might be like that, but I think…"; "Thank you."; "It is a good idea."; "That is right, but it might be better this way."; "I agree with you, and you can add this to your plan too."; and "Let's try it together.". Next, in Chapter 4, the author also pointed out the importance of connection among people in an organization. The survey results showed that most Top 5% employees always have good connections with others and have some activities all the time (They do not stay at their desks for a long time.). Besides, the Top ones manage their work including replying emails, 3 times faster than ordinary employees, and after learning something new, they start taking actions 7 times

faster than others. They always challenge themselves with new experiences, usually prioritize their work, and submit all assignments before the due date too.

At the end, in Chapter 5, we should ask ourselves which ones of what we have learnt from the Top 5% employees that we can adopt instantly. The author suggested some interesting routines that we can follow easily right now which are: 1) spend time collecting useful information 5 minutes a day; 2) ask for guidance, advice, and support from mentors; 3) socialize as well as learn to give and accept feedbacks from others; 4) spend 15 minutes a week examining yourself; 5) increase your productivity by using information technology more wisely; and 6) build your connections and relationships at work over lunch.

In conclusion, this book provides us with some insights into the essential habits of the Top 5% employees that make them more successful in the workplace than any other. Some of their techniques can be adopted right away, but for other techniques, we might learn and obtain them gradually over time. Mostly, the concepts and work styles of the Top ones stated in this book are not too difficult to follow. We think most of us can apply at least some of them easily. However, the first thing that we should prepare is to accept our weaknesses and have a great willingness to improve our performance at work. If you have already had both and have been ready to change some of your work habits, it is time for you to make a move and prove it for yourself whether these techniques are usable and suitable for you or not.

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