

Openings: Satish Kumar, editor of *Resurgence* magazine, offers his thoughts on finding the joy of life.

"Miracles happen when you do not plan in advance.

If you dot all your i's and cross all your t's then you will find no miracles."

Spotlight: Every business venture can be summarised by the "3 Ps": planning, practise, and perfection. Planning covers everything from mission statements to time management, while practise focuses on implementing the plans and perfection speaks to achieving excellence. While these are often three chronological phases of a project, they are also coexistent aspects of day-to-day business life. When viewed from a daily perspective, it is the balance between the "3 Ps" that determines the vitality of your enterprise.

Balance is an ongoing process rather than an objective to be achieved. It is a state of equilibrium as well as the ability to maintain that equilibrium. It is a dynamic rather than a static state with every moment requiring a myriad of minute adjustments. It is only through coming out of balance that the impetus to find balance arises. When applied to the "3 Ps" as experienced in your daily operations, balance encompasses the complex dance every employee must follow so that the enterprise responds appropriately to its stakeholders.

The metaphor of walking and chewing gum at the same time captures the difficulty inherent in balancing the "3 Ps". A problem solving technique that is often employed is having individuals do just one thing at a time. Under the guise of specialisation or core competency, the enterprise is divided into groups of planners, practitioners, and perfectionists (e.g., analysts, salespersons, and quality controllers). On the macro level of the organisation, this appears to meet the challenge. Inspection on the micro level reveals that the individuals still must balance the "3 Ps" (i.e., analysts plan the planning cycle, practise implementing the plan, and continually refine the plan). A possible undesired side effect of this technique is people having the task of implementing a plan they did not create and may not support.

Enterprises depend on a division of labour between individuals and the synergy created through the differing expertise that each individual brings to the organisation. For most people, one of the "3 Ps" is predominant in their skill set and there are a few individuals who excel at each of the "3 Ps" equally. Leveraging the different skills people have is very necessary. The challenge is ensuring that emphasising one of the "3 Ps" does not cause the other two to atrophy. A planner can only be fully effective with a strong understanding of how to implement a plan as well as being capable of refining the implementation to constantly improve the product.

In breaking activities into planning, practise, and perfection and emphasising the need for a dynamic balance between the three, people gain a more holistic sense of their role within the enterprise. Difficulties in executing their daily tasks are related to their own actions rather than those of the amorphous "them" who impose issues upon "us". "We" are the enterprise: there is no one else.

Quote: While the source of the following quote cannot be traced, it is no less perfect.

*"Practice is not about achieving perfection;
rather it is about perfecting achieving."*

Musings: Throughout my childhood, I was blessed with constant opportunities to spend hours fishing. When the lakes were cool, thoughts of trout filled my mind, and as spring warmed into summer, salmon in the ocean straits lured me onto the sea.

One summer afternoon, I decided that it was time to go trolling for salmon. With no one to take me, and being too young to operate a powerboat on my own, I jumped into a rowboat and rowed out of the harbour. Once clear of the harbour entrance, I attached a Tom Mack No. 2 to my spin casting rod and reel and started to row.

Anyone familiar with trolling for pacific salmon can tell you that dragging a lure behind a rowboat outside a harbour entrance has little or no chance of catching a salmon. Still, it was the exact place I was called to be at that time. No matter what the outcome, the event was a success.

How long passed as I rowed along I do not remember, mostly because time did not matter. Suddenly, the zing of the reel announced a strike. Carefully, I played the line back in until I could reach over and lift an eight pound Coho salmon into my rowboat.

This great fish story, a true fish story, is a reminder that sometimes everything can be all wrong and perfect at the same time.