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### ***The case against narrow-mindedness***

By Paperitalo Staff

Over the years, I have seen many a professional who thinks only about his or her own field of education and interest. Call it professional narcissism. This is a mistake.

This appears to have been caused by ideas set early in these professionals' careers. Most likely, in their secondary education they became interested in a certain course of study, which they then pursued at a university. The devotion required in order to achieve perfection during these periods of education left little time for interests in other fields. By the time they reached employment, their habits were set--their interests included their profession, their family, a hobby or two and that was it.

Where the mistakes to this narrow-mindedness are visible is some years later, when the company or institution where the individual is employed falls on hard times. Sometimes jobs are lost, sometimes careers must change. Those with wide-ranging interests survive and thrive, even in fields where they were not professionally trained. Those who are narrow in their thinking find themselves in for a shock.

Today, it is highly unlikely that one's first employer will be their last. In an era where businesses are transformed, destroyed and re-incarnated, career survival is often tenuous. The ones who poorly deal with this are the narrowly focused and those in denial that such things can happen. They wake up, but too late--they are not prepared for the final paycheck from the employer they thought would last a lifetime. Many spend months in shock, and some never recover.

Do yourself a favor. Learn all you can about your company and your industry. Prepare yourself, not for a situation often called the worst, but for a situation that the ready see as an opportunity. It is vital to your mental health, your family and your pocketbook.

You might be a slovenly bureaucrat if--you schedule routine doctor and dentist appointments in the middle of the day (maximizing the time you spend away from the office) rather than early or late in the day. We want to thank Dene Taylor for this week's contribution.

For ethics this week, consider fraud and theft. Can you recognize it? What has been your experience? Please let us know--we would like to write some future columns on this subject. We will talk next week. ##