

Innocent Maturity

A little boy went into a grocery store and reached for a soda carton. He, then, pulled it towards a payphone. Back in the day cell phones had not invaded our lives as much as it has today—few places still had payphones. The boy climbed onto the carton to reach the phone buttons and punched in the digits. The store owner quietly observed and listened to the conversation.

Boy: “Lady, can you give me the job of cutting your lawn?”

Woman: “I already have someone to cut my lawn.”

Boy: “Lady, I will cut your lawn at half the price.”

Woman: “I’m very satisfied with the person who is presently cutting my lawn.”

Boy: (sounding more persistent): “Lady, I’ll even sweep your curb and your sidewalk. This way, on Sunday you will have the prettiest lawn in all of Florida.”

Woman: “No, thank you.”

With a smile on his face, the little boy placed the receiver down. The store owner who was listening to all this walked over to the boy.

Store Owner: “Son, I like your attitude and your positive spirit. I’d like to offer you a job.”

Boy: “No, thanks.”

Store Owner: “But, you were really pleading for one.”

Boy: “No, sir. I was just checking my performance at the job I already have. I am the one who is working for that lady!”

The story is apt for professionals of the new generation. Most of us, just like the boy in the story, believe in self-appraisal and expect a fair measurement of our contribution by the company.

Interestingly, the story is equally applicable to organizations also. The market is filled with a demand-supply mismatch, particularly in the technology industry.

Knowledge workers have multiple opportunities to exercise their choice if they are not satisfied with their organization. However, if the organization's appraisal is not good, it has nowhere to go!