



Instant Gratification: The Article With No Real Answer- Things to Think About

By Jordan Johnson

We live in a society that is fast-paced with instant gratification. How many likes can I get on Facebook? High-speed internet isn't fast enough. Two days for something to be delivered is too long. We don't even go through the process of grocery shopping anymore, we order, pull in and pick up. Everything is at our fingertips ready for the taking now. Even in healthcare, we can check in real time what the wait times are.

What has this environment and culture done to the "worker" and the "workplace"?

Let's start with adolescents. With so much information and options available, the ease of "quit" and "switch" are frequently exercised. When something is difficult or is no longer interesting, then simply quitting and finding something else engaging is the go-to option.

All the way through college age, there is no doubt attention spans have become much shorter. The PowerPoint used to be the go-to lecture tool; now it is a great sleep option for many. Colleges have figured this out and significantly increased their online course and degree options. They have also increased their accelerated track offerings, allowing people to graduate sooner than the typical degree track timeline. Non-traditional options with faster results.

What happens after graduation or when it is time to "get a job"? This is interesting because it is very different than 30-50 years ago or is it. The mindset today is for rapid acceleration and advancement in the workplace. The "big" job is supposed to be available much sooner if not now. This job should also be engaging and not boring. Monetary and "stuff" achievements should come much faster than they did for our parents and grandparents. Is this possible and is it sustainable? If so, at what cost?

The current movement and observation are to squeeze a "lifetime" in a shorter timeframe. Get to the end goal faster than the previous generation. However, what is the "end goal" and is there an end?

The Tech Companies have tried to accommodate to and for this model and expectation and now others have followed by offering flexible schedules more time off etc. However, the research shows that people don't take time off and are always connected to work via the phone or a computer. The why is simple—the push. Employees are pushing harder and faster but so are employers. Employers need more output, with greater quality on a tighter budget. At the core, think of it as simply sharpening a pencil until the pencil is no longer usable, SWITCH, get a new pencil. The game is to no when to find a different pencil sharpener, but still, there is only so much pencil, right.

Is this race one of fulfillment or simply trying to do it faster with quicker results? Are people happy or is there meaningful joy in the job. The data shows that 3-4 years is the average lifespan at a job. This is

very different from our parents and grandparents who stayed at one place for the 40-year service award. In my observation, interaction with others and personal experience the race to be faster and get it done quicker often takes away from the joy, happiness, and fulfillment often found in an extend or “normal” process/timeline.

I think the attention span effect comes into place; the excitement is in the pursuit now versus more emphasis on the stability/security then. More and more are intrigued by the opportunities that may be out there beyond the conventional 9-5. This could be that many now realize that the loyalty of the employer is not what it once was.

Here is the issue: it is not as simple as just quitting and it just happening. There are real risks and the possibility of failure. In addition, there may be an actual progression timeline to get to the “dream job.” Employers and HR departments are realizing that many candidates look good on paper and are now focusing on the fit in the culture. The fit can be difficult for those who simply want to flip the switch and make it happen now. This was something I struggled with in the very structured hospital administrative environment. Many places have not adjusted the overall environment and the “way we have always done it” prevails. The fit is ultimately where the fulfillment for the employee and employer lives. Performance and production are maximized when the fit is in sync and harmony.

In spending time with a spectrum of employees from the front lines to corporate executives, I am not sure a perfect and prolonged balance exists. Many want more money and power, those that have the money and power want more free time and less stress. Some are willing to do whatever it takes while others are waiting for it to be handed to them or they can hop on the coattails of others. I personally, just want to see nap time at work just as we had in kindergarten.

I am not sure it is even a risk versus reward issue either. Those that are willing to risk more do not necessarily get the reward. The smarter vs. harder theory proves this wrong more often than not. Too many have mastered the art of looking like they are working hard. The answer is in the priority of the motivators. We know that those with the money and power are necessarily happy, but we would like to give it a try.

Though the want is “now” and faster than before, the motivators have not changed really. Sure inflation has changed, and the price tags have gone up, but that is about it, right.

It must be viewed in tracks, and the tracks must have balance. Basically, you will go down a certain track based on your motivators. More importantly, what is done upon achievement at any level on a track defines us. Do we achieve and give back or achieve and want more. It is all relative perspective. In the rush of instant gratification and time management to maximize productivity, this is what is missed now more than ever. There is not enough time spent reflecting on the path left behind us and the track in front of us. This increases the pressure and the stakes and even the probability a roadblock. Prospectively, I guess it could be argued that increased momentum is harder to stop.

Research has shown that fewer young couples are getting married and having children. Is this because there is less stability now, fear of commitment, or because the “true” facts and costs are being looked at?

What are the consequences of the high-speed pace? We seem to hear the term burnout more than ever. We are a more medicated society than ever before from anti-anxieties & depressants to stimulants to increase energy and focus.

All of that said, what is the rush? Why are we pushing so hard? Are we pushing for ourselves or pushing with others?

This is definitely open-ended and more philosophical, but will hopefully cause thought and reflection.

Remember the only sure thing is that we are going to die, so what's the rush.