

Today is a turning point in your life. Today is a day that you can reflect on what you have accomplished. Today is a day full of opportunity.

Often, as I go about my day to day tasks I am asked: What do you find most fulfilling about your job? What's the best part of your workday? I have a whole list of things I think are wonderful, with the order of preference changing depending on what I'm working on at the moment. But one thing always remains at or near the top of my list – and that is meeting people. Curiously some probe further, wanting to know whether I've ever met Bill Gates...I guess when I talk about meeting people they immediately think about meeting someone with celebrity status.

For me, it is about meeting people like you – people who are engaged in doing something right now, that can possibly make a difference forever!...People who love a challenge, and embrace technology - regardless of the learning curve knowing that eventually it will become a friend – not only making your lives easier but making it easier as well for others.

Provide something of value to someone, and you have a job. Provide something of value to people, over and over again, and you have a profession. Provide something of great value to a large number of people and you have a fortune.

Today I see a room full of fortune seekers. I see people who understand that life is not about taking but about giving and creating value. I am happy to be in the company of winners!

Regardless of where you are in life – we all want to be better:
Better friends, better encouragers, better employees, better community leaders,
better parents.

Better but not perfect.

In a competitive marketplace, there's no such thing as perfect. By the time you develop perfect, your competition will have changed the landscape so much that what you had to offer would no longer be relevant.

Being better focuses on continuous improvement:
The question we don't always ask aloud but definitely do ask is "What must I do to become a better me?"

Training is of course one avenue that creates an environment within which you can become better at what you do. In this evolving digital economy and with a Government focused on achieving its goals for Vision 2020 Information Communications Technology is more than just an idea whose time has come – it is now the backbone from which all Government Ministries will be connected and eventually all appropriate Government information and services will be available on line.

This kind of integration and collaboration is no small feat but certainly becomes doable as more and more candidates like you choose to embark upon your own skills improvement so as to not only improve the way you do business but also enhance the experience of those depending on you for solutions.

Training has become the foundation of Microsoft's growth and thrust worldwide with online training served up as a staple as most people want to improve their knowledge and job skills in a time efficient way.

Training however, continues to be the most basic yet sometimes overlooked form of knowledge sharing that is necessary for an organization's success. Finding out what courses are available can be challenging and sometimes the courses offered do not address or take into account specific problems that may exist.

Fortunately for you this has not been your experience. Since 2001 YTEPP has sought to offer professionals both in the public and private sector, the opportunity for retraining in various ICT related software. The programmes are customized allowing the client the flexibility to mix and design a package that meets specific work requirements and identifies subsequent training needs.

YTEPP's presence has been felt in Trinidad and Tobago since 1988 where the programme was initially a World Bank initiative, designed to be a social intervention for marginalized groups in society. No longer a World Bank Project, YTEPP now falls under the Ministry of Science Technology and Tertiary Education with focus on its core 15-25 year target group. Programmes designed have included vocational skills, micro-entrepreneurship and career enhancement (with an emphasis on developing life skills).

Microsoft commends YTEPP on its role particularly in ensuring that technology reaches the rural areas of both Trinidad and Tobago through the use of its computer mobile buses. Although technology has led to significant advances in productivity and economic growth most of the world's population still have little or no access to it.

Microsoft is focused on building bridges and deepening partnerships – such as those with organizations like YTEPP - in shaping and participating in the future of technology, as well as with those who do not yet have access to the tools of the digital age.

Technology is an extremely powerful tool, and a grand enabler of human imagination, innovation, creativity, and productivity. Although it is not a cure-all when integrated with broader efforts to promote socio-economic development, it can empower individuals, foster local innovation and enable economic growth.

Microsoft Trinidad strives to maintain the highest standards in every aspect of business while looking for innovative solutions to meet the evolving needs of our customers. This means partnering with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, communities, and other businesses and organizations such as YTEPP on digital inclusion.

Creating innovation with real impact means listening carefully to what our customers want. We hope that we can play an integral role not only in helping YTEPP create its customized programs but that we could get feedback from users of our products and services towards improvement and better application. This kind of feedback is invaluable and allows us to create amazing products that are going to benefit as many other people on the planet as possible— this is the reason Microsoft exists. Innovation is the lifeblood of our business

We commend YTEPP on identifying and acting upon the need for this type of service particularly within the Public Service. Today we have graduates from the Ministry of Planning and Development, The Ministry of Trade and Industry, The Service Commission, The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Today I dare you to forget about your immediate places of work and get into the dream business...the incredible "imaginings business"...what impossible dreams will you pursue?

I encourage you to take a chance, cross the line, risk something...stand on the edge of your life and see what you are really capable of. The future is moving so fast. What seems like a crazy hypothetical idea one moment soon can turn into a reality. How can you apply technology to reshape your businesses? How can you apply technology to reshape your world? As knowledge workers you are the brain of your organization. The internet is redefining industries and decomposing borders. How will you use technology to create a better Trinidad and Tobago?

I want to share with you the words of a young author Matthew Stepanek, who was here on earth briefly for just fourteen years. He had a disease called Dysautonomic Mitochondrial Myopathy which caused occasional interruption of his autonomic, or automatic, functioning (for example, breathing, heartrate, blood pressure, body temperature, digestion, utilization of oxygen... etc) Yet in spite of this Mattie was a National Goodwill Ambassador for MDA, a public speaker for advocacy (disability and peacemaking) and a writer of poetry.

He wrote a poem aptly titled: The importance of Windows and while it wasn't dedicated to Microsoft...it could have well been...

Windows are very good things to have
They let you look out.
And see all the different things.
And they let you look in,
To see all the other different things.

Congratulations to all of you. I urge you to look out through the windows of your lives, look within and continuously reprogram your minds to see that all things are possible. Share the enthusiasm for your vision, never allow obstacles to disrupt your plans and go about daring to change the world!

Thank you