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Adapting to the Academic Environment: 5 Lessons from the Yogi

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Library System

Adapting to the academic environment*

*5 lessons from the Yogi

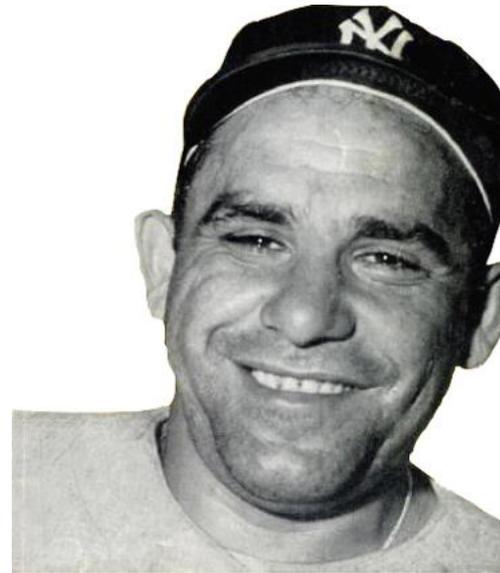
Jim Van Loon

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Introduction

- My background: corporations → academia
- My observations on contrasts, adaptation
- Enlightenment provided by:

...Lawrence Peter
(aka, “Yogi ”) Berra



Source: Baseball Digest, front cover, September 1956

1. Learning the ropes

Corporate

- Workflow, responsibilities often well-defined and well-documented

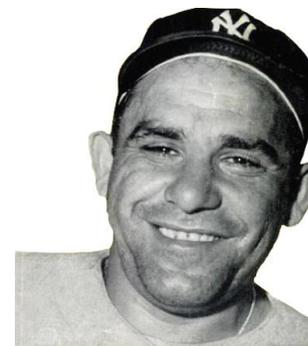
Academic

- Workflow, responsibilities often loosely-structured, undocumented, and changeable.

Adaptation

- Engage in some informal “process mapping” to determine how things get done
- Enlist colleagues and mentors for guidance

Yogi: "*You can observe a lot just by watching.*"



2. Articulating your position

Corporate

- Decision-making can be hierarchical
- Often the only person that you need to persuade is your boss

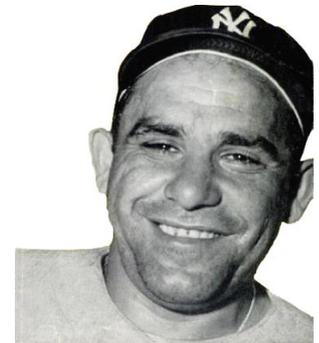
Academic

- Decision-making tends to be more diffuse
- May need to persuade multiple and varied audiences

Adaptation

- Develop skills and comfort level for engaging and persuading multiple audiences

Yogi: *“There are some people who, if they don't already know, you can't tell 'em.”*



3. Developing professionally

Corporate

- Development often follows naturally from good job performance
- Development paths well-defined

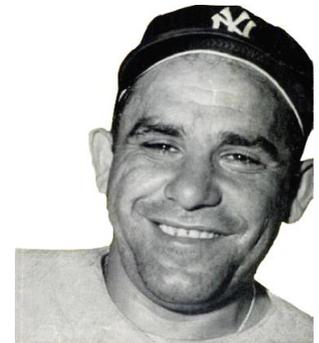
Academic

- Development also depends on considering/selecting from a broad range of opportunities
- Paths are unique and less-defined

Adaptation

- Learn to take an (pro)active and selective role in planning your career/professional development

Yogi: ***“When you come to a fork in the road, take it.”***



4. “Other duties as assigned”

Corporate

- Staff often have specialized roles
- Objective: efficiency through functional specialization

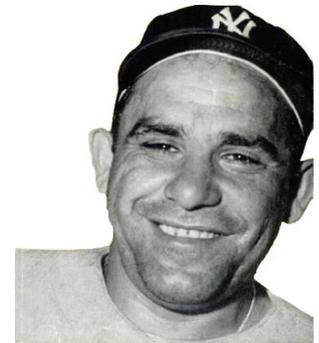
Academic

- Librarians often perform a broad range of duties for several academic departments
- Collection, liaison/outreach, instructions, ...

Adaptation

- Develop additional skills (both technical and soft) to successfully perform a broad range of duties
- Recognize need for flexibility

Yogi: ***“He hits from both sides of the plate.
He's amphibious.”***



5. Scanning the environment

Corporate

- Engage in environmental scanning to identify trends relevant business operations and strategies

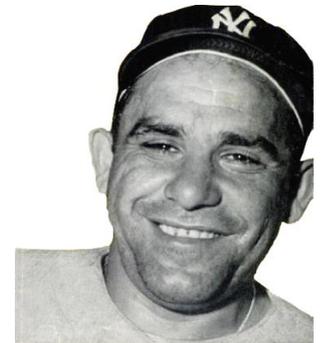
Academic

- Perform environmental scanning to identify trends related to users/usage, resources, services, and technology

Adaptation

- No contrast here!
- Scan for relevant trends using all available means, evaluate, incorporate into your practice

Yogi: ***“In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is.”***



Conclusion

- Acknowledgement: Yogi's wisdom sourced from brainyquote.com
- Caveat:

Yogi: *"I never said most of the things I said."*

