How to Build the Ultimate Team

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In the article titled "Finance: Do What You Love" which was published in myStarjob.com on Oct 23, it has been brought to our attention that Ronnie Lim, executive vice president, head of consumer banking of Alliance Bank holds a Bachelor of Economics (Hons) from the National University of Malaysia, and not a Bachelor of Arts in Economics (Hons) from Universiti Malaya.

Under the heading Capital Market, the executive director of corporate resources at the Securities Commission is Datuk Teh Sia Mohd Jail. myStarjob.com regrets the spelling error.

Mystarjob.com, Saturday 20 October 2012

 TEAM LESSONS FROM TEAM AVENGERS

Y son and I went to watch The Avengers a few months ago. As I was watching it, I started to write notes on my Samsung Note on lessons that I’ve learnt. (FYI – I have this quirky tendency of looking for learning points in everything I see, read and do.) At the end of the movie, I had at least 10 different learning themes.

The Avengers is a story about how Nick Fury, S.H.I.E.L.D. director, has to assemble super heroes, who were each a leader in his or her own right, into a high performance team in a desperate attempt to save the world. If he failed to get them to work together, it would mean the end of the world. The question he struggled with was how to make a group of diverse super heroes who are egoists, work together? He has the super-ego Iron Man who worked alone. He has Thor with a hammer that referred to himself as a god of thunder. He also has Captain America, Dr Bruce Banner, a scientist, not to mention a monster crushing beast who, when he got angry turned into the Hulk. He has Hawkeye and the pretty Black Widow. How do you take a group of talented individuals and get them to execute flawlessly, winning which the world will end?

The starting point of leadership is vision. For any team to function properly and work together, the members need to embrace a common vision. If any member of the team does not buy into the vision, cracks will appear and the team will fail. The Avengers had to learn this very quickly. Nick, in his leadership, ensured everyone understood the primary goal and vision of the team – to save the world. Personal agendas, ego and goals must be left behind and the focus has to be on the team’s goal.

As I watched the Avengers, another important realisation dawned on me. No one can do it alone. Sometimes we all fall into the trap believing that we can do it alone. Truth is, we need each other and we need to be part of teams. We can’t live without relationships. In our deepest beings we know we are created to be in relationships with others. Somehow God created us with a longing for things we can’t possibly achieve alone, so let’s stop fighting it and accept the fact that we truly need each other.

Interestingly, throughout the film we see the super heroes catching each other when they fail. We need look out for another one when we make mistakes. Great teams thrive because each person plays his or her role, but also occasionally helps to cover gaps when one of the team members fails.

An important reinforcement of a lesson I learnt early in life is that teams that are friends with each other, do better work. As the Avengers spent more time with each other and became true friends, they became more effective. A key reason why most businesses don’t execute as high performance teams is the low level of trust and care in the workplace. Trust deepens as you become friends with your colleagues at work. This is done through true heart-to-heart connection and friendship. Fury provided the space and interaction to ensure friendships grew.

At Leaderonomics, we believe that friendship amongst colleagues is so important. In fact, it is important that you have a best friend at work. Research shows that having a best friend at work enables you to be more productive. It is the same with teams. Teams where everyone is a friend to each other outperform colleague-based groups.

Anyway, there are so many lessons to be learnt from the Avengers and our "Movie Wisdom" columnist Johan Merican will enlighten you with many other amazing lessons from The Avengers. We also have Vinesh Naidu sharing his experience with high performance teams in this issue and a great story about how the team at United Voice, a self-advocacy society, executes flawlessly in its card-making business with people who have learning disabilities. I always shed a tear or two whenever I visit United Voice.

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**FEisty Corporate Strategist-Cum-Author**

CHRIS ZOOK'S MISSION IS TO HELP OTHERS SCALE NEW PEAKS

By ANGIE NG angie@thestar.com.my

E ven a seemingly mundane job as bagging groceries in a supermarket can teach invaluable life lessons and values to kick-start one's career journey if one cares to learn from them.

Just ask acclaimed business writer and corporate growth strategist, Christopher Zook, and one will walk away feeling better and more energised no matter what job the person is holding now.

While growing up in Holden, Massachusetts, US, Zook's "first real job" was when he was bagging groceries at McCracken's Supermarket at the age of 15 in the place where he grew up.

He had other "earlier jobs" like taking lawns and delivering newspapers, but Zook says that working at the supermarket was his first real job "with a time clock and formal schedule and paycheck serving customers."

"My first job involved punching a time clock and putting groceries in bags and then, depending on the customer, helping him put the bags of groceries in their automobiles."

After that I moved up to stock boy putting products on shelves, and then senior stock boy, at the age of 16, where I could put prices on products and accept shipments from the trucks and direct other people eventually. I was, of course, also in school then," Zook shares with myStarjob.com during a recent trip to Kuala Lumpur.

Although the job may sound menial, he learned the values of hard work, to be on time, and dealing with customers. He also discovered that he could advance "if I focused and applied myself!"

"I also found that I liked earning my own money and took great satisfaction from my paychecks," he quips.

The teenager was in a way "a jack of many trades." He was also making pizzas, doing construction, learning to be a surveyor in the summer on a construction crew and working in a library Xerox copying room; jobs which he says "gave me an appreciation for all of the people who do the daily jobs that make our lives possible."

"They also made me want to do more in the world so that I did not have to do that for my life. It fuelled my ambition, but made me humble."

Zook says his first job and the other jobs he was doing when he was growing up taught him about humility and the importance of listening carefully and focusing on the customer, "not myself."

FOREVER GRATEFUL

"Moreover, doing these menial jobs made me appreciate all of the people in the world who are currently in those positions. Even today wherever I am, I seek those people out and go out of my way to thank them for helping me and teaching me a good job; whether in travelling, or restaurants, or anywhere," he adds.

And what were the most enduring moments of his first job?

"The most enduring moments were around being promoted and getting raises in pay. I found this very reinforcing and validated my hard work," he confides.

As for the highlights of his career path, Zook says there were many. "But the ones I remember the most are a few cases where I stayed with my core principles even when there was pressure to do other things from peers, or the situation, or because the right path in my mind was more difficult. It made me believe in the saying: 'Take the hard right over the easy wrong.'"

By adhering to his value system, Zook went on to chart a sterling performance in his education. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and Economics at Williams College, a Master's in Philosophy (in Economics) from Exeter College, Oxford University, and holds Master's and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University.

Today, the 60-year-old Zook is a partner at global management consultancy Bain & Company, and leads the firm's Global Strategy Practice. During his more than 20 years at Bain, his work focuses on companies searching for new sources of profitable growth, in a wide range of industries.

He is also the author of four books with Harvard Business Review Press (HBRP) and is on the Times of London's list of Top 50 Business Thinkers in the world.

Zook's best-selling business book, Profit from the Core: Growth Strategy in an Era of Turbulence, was published in 2001. The book offers an approach to assessing and making the most of core business opportunities.

The book's sequel, Beyond the Core: Expand Your Market without Abandoning your Roots (2004) examines how companies that have fully exploited their core businesses can systematically and successfully expand beyond into other related or adjacent areas.

His next book, Unstoppable: Finding Hidden Assets to Renew the Core and Fuel Profitable Growth (2007) examines what to do when a company's growth formula of the past begins to approach its limits, demanding that the company changes its strategic focus and redefines its core.


BREAKING NEW GROUNDS

His latest book, Repeatability: Build Enduring Businesses for a World of Constant Change, co-authored with James Allen and released recently, is on how to be more adaptable and the hidden danger of unnecessary complexity in business which slows companies down and hurts their judgement.

Having made his mark as an author of such highly acclaimed books, is he planning for other titles?

Zook says he is currently working on several more ideas and one more book building on his recent book "Repeatability."

"One day I might try fiction," he muses. And where does he find the inspiration to write? Zook says he had always wanted to write but admits that he had to do so secretly initially.

"My father was a writer and I always wanted to write a book. But it was not until I was in my 40s that I felt I had enough to say. Since then I have written four books for Bain and am working on more. Writing books has sharpened my thinking and given me access to many people I would otherwise not meet," he enthuses.

Despite his busy schedule, Zook is a frequent speaker at a wide range of international and business forums including the World Economic Forum, the World Knowledge Forum, the Forbes' CEO Conference, the BusinessWeek CEO Conference, and the Economist Summit.

Zook believes his field of study in Mathematics and Economics is essential to his knowledge, tools, network, and also "especially to my confidence."

"I spent 10 years in university at Williams College, Oxford University and then at Harvard. I do not regret a second of my education. Hereceived a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and Economics at Williams College, a Master's in Philosophy (in Economics) from Exeter College, Oxford University, and holds Master's and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University."

"I feel every day is a chance to scale new heights, have new experiences, and continue to explore the world and learn new things. I move into new areas all the time, though building on my core. At this stage I cannot change completely to become a journalist or a rock musician. So I take small steps, but always in new areas."

He presently splits his time between homes in Amsterdam and Boston. Coming from such an accomplished achiever despite his humble beginnings, it will certainly do our young Malaysians well to heed his words of advice to them: "Follow your passion, work hard, be humble, and above all, always do the right thing no matter what."
A Leader Is A Team Player

Having won the FIFA World Player of the Year Award in 2009 and subsequently the UEFA Best Player in Europe Award in 2010-2011, Lionel Messi is arguably one of the best football players in the world. Messi however would be hard-pressed to work his magic without the support of his teammates.

Great leaders are team players. Michael Jordan, Walt Disney and Akio Morita all achieved great success because of the teams they worked and played with. They know that successful teams do and achieve more together. What would a film be like without its extensive team of directors, producers, artists and cast? The greatest scientific discoveries to date are all also based on a pooling of knowledge and resources.

Exceptional teams deliver brilliant work. A leader recognises this and believes that everybody wins when they work together.

Be A Leader.

We can help your organisation develop leaders. Write in to: people@leaderonomics.com or call 6012.343.7716

www.leaderonomics.com
Walt Disney was fired from a newspaper early on in his career because he was told that he lacked imagination and was not creative. Yet he turned that failure into the most creative companies in the world—Disney. In school, Thomas Edison’s teacher told him that he was too stupid to learn anything. Yet, he became one of the greatest inventors of all time and founded General Electric (GE). The first time Edison was working on his light bulb experiment and failed, he made notes of his failure. He then made adjustments and tried again and again and again. As he “failed” repeatedly, he took more notes, adjusted, and tried again. He kept learning from every experiment.

It took him approximately 10,000 experiments to invent the perfect set-up for the electric light bulb. To quote him “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” Michael Jordan, probably the greatest basketball player in history almost quit the game in high school when he was dropped from the senior team. He described that day as the worst day of his life. Yet, it marked an important milestone in Jordan’s life as he decided (after a lot of tears and crying!) that he would learn from his failure and make the team the following year.

All these stories on failure make one simple point—failure is essential to success. So, if failure is so pertinent to success, why do we not embrace it? In fact, why don’t we build failure into our organisations, our leadership development processes and even our product development processes? We are so big on “getting it right the first time” that we end up never allowing for the risk of failure, or space for innovation.

In my previous organisational roles, we built into the talent management process. Whilst I was working at GE, I was moved from role to role, being forced to experience numerous failures but encouraged to learn and grow from each of these experiences. In my first role, I was “fired” by my boss for a big boo-boo. In my next job at GE, I was put into a role that presented a huge challenge for me. I failed initially but did not give up and ultimately succeeded. In my third role, I was sent to the city of Dallas to work on integrating an acquisition. I failed in this role. In fact, I lost millions on a project that I was tasked to handle which never saw the light of day. Failures were common in my next few roles too. But in each failure, I learned valuable lessons. And ultimately, when GE sent me back to Asia to help turnaround a troubled entity, I was a big part of my portfolio. I realise that these failures were intentionally designed for high-potential individuals to accelerate their development. Talented individuals in many successful organisations are given stretch assignments and big roles where they are bound to fail. However, these assignments are generally designed to be learning experiences so that when these talents take on bigger, strategic roles later on in their careers, their “failure” experiences guide them to success. Naturally the bigger your role, the more devastating the effect is to the company. So, making mistakes early in your career actually benefits the organisation in the longer run. Organisations that build career systems that embrace failure as part of their development process, ultimately become successful leadership engines, producing world-class leaders.

Hence, my brother’s story illustrates why companies should build failure into the development of their employees. When my brother was young, he found the cocoon of a butterfly. He took it home and a few days later, a small opening appeared. He was thrilled and sat watching the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through the little hole. After awhile, he noticed that the butterfly stopped making any progress and it appeared as if it had reached as far as it could and could go no farther. My brother decided to help the butterfly with a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. With his help the butterfly then emerged. Sadly, the story does not have a happy-butterfly-ever-after ending. The butterfly that emerged had a swollen body and shriveled wings. My brother continued to help the butterfly because he expected that at any moment, it would expand its wings and fly off. Unfortunately that never happened. In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and deformed wings. It never was able to fly. In his kindness and haste to help the butterfly, my brother actually harmed it for life. He did not understand that the restricting cocoon and the struggle to go through a small opening was God’s way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings to prepare it for flight. The same can be said for building leaders. In our kindness to help our employees, we shield them from pain and failure. If you want to succeed fast, you need to experience as many failures as possible in the shortest possible time. Most often struggles are exactly what we need to mould our characters in preparation for success.

So, go out there and make mistakes. When you fail, pick yourself up and learn from the experience. Abraham Lincoln failed miserably on many counts but he made sure he learned lessons from each of his failures. Make sure you do likewise. We don’t learn to fail—we fail to learn!

By ROSHAN THIRAN
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Creating “Safe Zones” for Failure and Experiments

Without failure, big breakthroughs or new innovations do not happen. Learning from failure is what makes great leaders who they are. Thomas Watson, the founder of IBM once declared: “That’s where success lies—in the far side of failure.”

So, how do we create opportunities for our employees to learn through their failures? Firstly, we must understand that ‘learning’ opportunities for failure don’t mean creating anarchy in your organisation. It also does not mean just conducting three-day training programmes on innovation and failure. What it does embrace is the need to create places in your organisation for “failures” and for risk-taking. Provide spaces for your employees to experiment, take risks and fail where they will not suffer any damage or losses to your organisation. Google allows employees to use 20% of their time on new projects. At Leaderonomics, we have created a “growth team” where the team is encouraged to experiment on implementing new market-place ideas. Don’t just stop there. Share stories of your mistakes and failures with your employees. These stories will “humanise” a boss and encourage them to try out new ideas. Keep reminding them, though, that failure alone is useless. Failure needs to be coupled with learning. Once they understand that learning from failure is crucial, you can then watch them grow and develop into majestic butterflies.
By SIMON SINEK
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1. REPLACING WEAKNESS WITH STRENGTH

This one is common. “What’s your biggest weakness?”

The interviewer asks. “My biggest weakness is that I am a perfectionist,” we respond. Thinking we’ve outwitted the interviewer or dodged a bullet. Ironically, by not answering the question, we are making it more difficult for the interviewer, if he hires us, to put us in a position of strength. In the question, we are making it more difficult for the interviewer to ask. “My biggest weakness is that I am a...”

There are two common mistakes we make when answering the question - “What’s your biggest weakness?”

In an attempt to be clever or even be honest, we can end up doing ourselves more harm than good.

2. A LITTLE TOO HONEST

Some people when asked: “What’s your biggest weakness?”

get straight into the thick of it, “I’m really disorganised. It’s the one thing that holds me back sometimes.”

Though I appreciate the honesty, the answer lacks context. We may as well look someone in the eye and say: “I’m not the person you’re looking for because you can’t rely on me.”

The best way to talk about our weaknesses is to be honest about them, for sure, but in the context of the balancing strength. Here’s what I mean:

“Your biggest weakness?”

“I do my best work in a team. There is nothing I love more than working with others, the back and forth of ideas. I love it. In contrast, you won’t get the best work out of me if I’m always on projects that require me to work alone.”

Here’s another example:

“I’m the one who’s always looking into the future. The person you’re looking for because you can’t rely on me.”

Knowing how to talk about our weaknesses, it turns out, is crucial is the ability to bounce back and not repeat the same errors. It is an interviewer’s job to probe for possible shortcomings, and many won’t quit until you admit that you have a weak point. You would thus be wise to have a “lesson learned” story ready as an answer rather than admitting a character flaw under duress.

Always be prepared. Study the job description, the company, and the industry prior to your interview. More importantly look at yourself, and discern what characteristics you bring to this specific job, and how those will add value to the company now and in the future. Be honest and professional at all times! Good luck!

Source: www.wetfeet.com

HOW TO TALK ABOUT YOUR WEAKNESSES

STRENGTHS

Many job applicants confuse strengths with skills. Skills are abilities that can be cultivated with a certain amount of training, such as the ability to learn a computer programming language. Strengths, on the other hand, are personal attributes that you may have been born with and that have been cultivated during the course of many years. Strengths emanate from life experiences and perseverance in the face of adversity. An example may be a natural friendliness that makes meeting new people easy for you. If you lack the skill to work with a certain software programme, you may be able to learn it in a few months. Personal strengths are not as easily acquired by way of short training courses. Interviewers are usually much more interested in candidates who have all the strengths needed to do the job well than in interviewees who can only bring skills to the table. Skills can be taught, whereas strengths are intrinsically part of one’s character.

WEAKNESSES

Nothing is more suspicious or less impressive than a flawless candidate. Either you’re hiding some truly terrible flaw or you’re皇子, who will become apparent after you’ve been hired or your abilities have come so easily to you that you have no idea what it’s like to really work at developing a skill.

Show that you’ve already learned a few important life lessons, and you’ll sound more experienced, wise, hard-working, and human. Recruiters want candidates who demonstrate an ability to learn and recover from mistakes. What is crucial is the ability to bounce back and not repeat the same errors. It is an interviewer’s job to probe for possible shortcomings, and many won’t quit until you admit that you have a weak point. You would thus be wise to have a “lesson learned” story ready as an answer rather than admitting a character flaw under duress.

Always be prepared. Study the job description, the company, and the industry prior to your interview. More importantly look at yourself, and discern what characteristics you bring to this specific job, and how those will add value to the company now and in the future. Be honest and professional at all times! Good luck!

Source: www.wetfeet.com

Simon Sinek is an author who works hard to find, celebrate and teach leaders how to build platforms that inspire others.

Understanding Your Strengths and Weaknesses
Harnessing the Power of Teamwork

By VINESH NAIDU
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A TEAM is defined as “people working together for the achievement of a common goal or mission. The work is inter-dependent and team members share responsibility and build themselves accountable for attaining the results.” – Massachusetts IIT.

Leaders need to lead, motivate, encourage, and provide support within teams. The “science of building leaders” (the tag line of Leaderonomics) isn’t going to be worth anything if there isn’t a TEAM to lead. This is at the core of all our activities, whether you are living, working or playing in a community. We as humans are societal beings. Can anyone really say they don’t want to be team players? A “team” is a dynamic entity and does not exist in the same way or form in every context. How a team is set up, what a team does, and how differently one team set up are crucial questions we need to ask ourselves at the workplace. Isn’t it funny how you spend all your school years striving for individual honours and recognition, be it being on the Dean’s List or being the School Captain. Then, BOOM, all the job ads are asking for this alien concept – “Team player.” What kind of evil ambush is this, I hear you say?

A group of people in itself does not necessarily constitute a team. What gets a team together is when members of a team start complementing each other with the skills they have and begin generating synergy through a coordinated effort. This allows for the maximising of strengths and the minimising of individual weaknesses. When all these issues converge, it inevitably translates to better productivity at work and, that, ladies and gentlemen, is the holy grail, isn’t it?

Teams can take many different forms. Look at a few of these. Functional or departmental teams: This is the most common place we encounter at the traditional workplace where a group of people come together and meet to analyse customer needs, solve problems, promote continuous improvement and share information among others. A team in this form is where a member is recruited in directly to perform a certain role and the power of team work is necessary to harness the best talents in delivering the functional team’s goals.

What now do you call a medical surgery team? Or something more easily identifiable – a football team? We call this a cross-functional team. Each individual brings to the team a unique skill and experience, and the power of the team is witnessed in the collaboration of these individuals to achieve a particular goal (no pun intended!). And finally we have a self-managing team. With the advent of technology in this day and age, this structure of a team is becoming more pervasive. If you are an individual who works from home, works on the go and liaises with your group of people infrequently and only for limited purpose, but to achieve the same goal, then you are operating in a self-managing team.

TEAM BUILDING APPROACHES
Understanding the motivation of a team forms a crucial part of deciding how to help build the team. It’s always a question of “WHY” before you proceed to the “WHAT” and “HOW.” This is fundamental methodology across the board. The intrinsic incentive for positive team behaviours differs from team to team and has to be understood before you can build an effective and powerful team.

What are the similarities between the Ryder Cup (golf), the Davis Cup (tennis) and the Thomas Cup (badminton)? If you answered saying Malaysia only has a chance in one of these competitions, you aren’t totally off the mark.

However, that’s not the point that we are trying to make here. Whilst the members contribute their own skills, the OVERALL impact is on the team. The individual’s win or loss status determines the team’s win or loss status. We call this an independent team and we see this happening usually within the sales teams of organisations. It is very Adam Smithian in its fundamental form to believe that individual efforts will inevitably drive the common benefit.

Similarly, with Barcelona, Bayern Munich, the Selecao – the success of every individual is inextricably bound to the success of the whole team. No significant task can be accomplished without the help and cooperation of all of the members. No football player, no matter how talented, has ever won a game by playing alone. (Maybe Messi is an exception to the rule?) This is how an inter-dependent team is exemplified.

WHERE IS YOUR TEAM TODAY?

Bruce Tuckman, an American psychologist introduced us to the most popular method of breaking down the life cycle of teams. Identifying at which stage your team is currently will enable you to correctly strategise on how to lead forward successfully.

When you first pull together a group of individuals to begin the process of forming a team, everyone is at the forming stage. At this point, your group is still not considered a team. It is still a collection of individuals who are uncertain about roles, goals, and expectations. The group is jobable as a team, which is your job to seize this opportunity to form the team by setting up the rules of the game. We can see what happened when the forming stage under a new coach was not handled well by AVB at Chelsea – there was no agreement from the team. This made for a quick exit even before the team was able to form.

The first and most important step in building a cohesive and functional team is the establishment of trust. Teamwork must be built on a solid foundation of vulnerability-based trust. This means that members of a cohesive, functional team must learn to comfortably and quickly acknowledge, without provocation, their mistakes, weaknesses, failures, and needs for help. They must also readily recognise the strengths of others, even when the strengths exceed their own.

Following the forming stage, teams begin to storm. This becomes an anxious period as the team experiences conflict over goals and more often than not, personalities. Michael De Saintamo, author of “Teams and Teamwork” says “When two people meet, there are really six people present. There is each man as he sees himself, each man as he wants to be seen and each man as he really is.”

One of the greatest inhibitors of teamwork among executive teams is the fear of conflict, which stem from two separate concerns. On the one hand, many leaders go to great lengths to avoid conflict among their teams because they worry that they will lose control of the group. Others do so because they see conflict as a waste of time. They prefer to cut meetings and discussions short by jumping to the decision that they believe will ultimately be adopted anyway, leaving more time for implementation and what they think of as “real work.” Whatever the case, leaders who go to great lengths to avoid conflict often do so believing that they are strengthening their teams by avoiding destructive disagreement. This is ironic, because what they are really doing is stifling productive conflict and pushing important issues that need to be resolved under the carpet where they will fester. Eventually, those unresolved issues transform into uglier and more personal forms of discord. It thus becomes crucial to team that this storming stage takes place as it serves to clear the air before everyone can move forward.

When we get through the storming stage, teams begin to ease into the norming stage at which point we see the gelling of individuals crystallising. Teams begin to believe in their collective capabilities and start agreeing on processes and working styles.

Finally, teams then move into the performing stage in which unity prevails and team members work positively, creatively and productively together – in other words, the finished article.

So persevere in the creation of your teams – the outcome is always worth the effort!
There was an idea to bring together a team of the smartest and strongest superheroes to counter a threat of epic proportions. In organisations, this is not necessarily the technical skillsets. Captain America seemed to recognise that it is better to balance technical and soft skills. A useful reminder to our career. I also believe in his way of constantly challenging the status quo while maintaining harmony with the people around him. Arthur Burian, Managing Director of Cold Chain Network

“My choice would be Captain America, for his personal values – loyalty, trust, courage, determination and passion to win. These are the same leadership qualities required as much from young and aspiring executives, as from management. These qualities like the essence of corporate values as well, will ensure strong, progressive and industry-organised organisations.”

Vignesh Badoo, Recruitment and Integration Manager of Cold Chain Network

“Iron Man has always inspired me in many ways. Yes, he may look bad-ass and arrogant on the surface, but he’s actually a nice guy who’s always ready to help anyone. He’s also a visionary and an innovative genius. He’s full of ideas, confidence and what I am most snobbish and walk around like he owns the world. However, behind that attractive personality lies a person who is a visionary and an innovator in his own right. He has a strategic and analytical mind that helps him to outthink his opponents. He is also a great communicator and an excellent negotiator. He is not afraid to take risks and always looks for the best possible outcome in every situation.”

Steve Miller, Head of Alliance Bank SME (Business Banking)

“Captain America is the best leader in the Avengers. Most of the Avengers are all cut-throat heroes on their own, but they come together and eventually learn how to work as a team and serve in roles that best suited their individual skills. Captain America seems to recognise that he is meant to have a champion team than a team of champions. There is a big difference.”

In the final battle scene, Iron Man calls on Captain America to orient the Avengers team. This is a shining, given the Avengers team accepts Captain America to lead in battle when he is clearly neither the strongest nor the smartest (compared with Hulk or Thor). However, Captain America is able to command leadership, even of policemen at the scene, by displaying natural charm under stress and the ability to respond to the situation. The utilitarian team members to their respective strengths. Similarly, leading of leaders is of course, not necessary the technical experts but those that feel best to mobilise and motivate the team. Such leadership is also displayed in the movie by Nick Fury himself not a superhero but able to bring together the Avengers team and motivate them to work as a team, albeit sometimes through a little white lie. Nick Fury needed that push in the right direction.

ATG Q&A: Why you chose the character?

AGENT COLLISON: You’re gone man!

AGENT COLLISON: It’s in your nature. Your heroes are scattered, your fighting forces fall from the sky, where is my disadvantage?

AGENT COLLISON: You lack connection. I don’t know thee...

Just as all the odds are against the good guys, a siding Agent Coulson confidently predicts the villain will fail: In fact, it is the death of Agent Coulson amongst others that brings a rallying point for the Avengers to pull aside their differences and work together to battle Loki. As in the case for organisations, it requires a common purpose and healthy, positive connections, to turn a team towards achieving high performance and results.

Behind that attractive personality lies a person who is a visionary and an innovator in his own right. He has a strategic and analytical mind that helps him to outthink his opponents. He is also a great communicator and an excellent negotiator. He is not afraid to take risks and always looks for the best possible outcome in every situation.”

Similarly, at the workplace, being able to bring together the smartest and strongest superheroes but assembling a group of the right push they can be exactly unbalanced even, but I believe with the right push they can be exactly the right mix Well. It’s part of me now, not just...
Hire people with passion who are aligned to your goals – Each of the Avengers is passionate about saving the world. As Nick Fury started bringing the team together, he clearly looked for passionate people who shared his vision – to help others and to save the world. Regardless of their idiosyncrasies, when you unite people who share your vision and desire to see the change your team is structured for, they will succeed. Hire passionate people aligned to your goals and you just can’t go wrong. Sure, things may end up messy and not as planned, especially when you have Tony Stark and Hulk in your team, but in the end, passion always wins.

Hire character not competence - Most of the time, our hiring is based on competence and ability. We fail to hire character. Nick Fury, the director of the Avengers, picked each Avenger based on the strength of his or her character. There were many other, more competent super-heroes and villains who were more powerful, skillful, and with more technical ability than Hawkeye and co. Yet, Nick picked individuals of integrity, values and of good character. When you hire, look for people with sound values and character, including people who have a strong desire to learn and grow. You generally will not go wrong.

You have to have a basic entrance standard - While it’s true that Hulk, Iron Man and Thor are different, they also share several key characteristics. They’re strong, fast, agile and good at beating the bad guys. If you are a boss and planning to hire, you need to have some basic standards. You need to hire different types of people but you have to be clear on what the basic level of expertise is that you are looking for. Likewise, as an employee, you need to be aware especially if you are in the corporate world, that to succeed you don’t have to be an expert in everything but you do need to have the basic skills in communication, influence, making a presentation and probably some business acumen. If you don’t, go and get them.

Recruit diverse people with specific skills that they will bring to your team - the Black Widow is smart and uses her femininity to get things done. Hulk gets things done but usually leaves a mess. Dr Banner is a scientist. Thor uses his hammer like no one can. He is also a specialist in all Asgard-related matters. Hawkeye is an expert archer. Iron Man can fly and shoot. While we need to have a basic hiring standard, it is impossible for anyone to be an expert at everything these days. Be sure to recruit people that bring deep levels of expertise in areas that your team does not have. I always hire someone who loves details and operations as my right-hand person. This ensures that she covers me in the areas that I have no technical depth in or may not be interested in.

Technical knowledge is good, being street-smart is better. Having both is just tremendous. It is important to have technical expertise in your team. Hire them and worship the ground they walk on. However, if they cannot meet customers or communicate effectively, they are not very effective. Having someone who has great communication skills, is street-smart and who knows how to get things done is also great. But if they cannot go deep or have the technical skills to execute, they again cannot go solo. So, hire people that have both. But if you can’t find them, then hire a bit of both types and make them work together. They will make an awesome team.

Hire the right people but give them the right processes and culture to succeed - Tony Stark is nothing without his Iron Man suit. Thor without his hammer and Captain America without his shield just won’t give you the same results. So, it is important for you to not only hire the people but build the proper processes, policy, protocols and culture around them so that they succeed. Give them the right tools and they will succeed.

Rohan Thiran really doesn’t have a favourite Avenger. He believes that each and every Avenger is important to achieving Nick Fury’s mission. Even without a single Avengers, they may not have succeeded. So, he hopes that all bosses will realise how important every individual in their teams is. Maybe you can start by smiling at your team members more often and acknowledging how tremendously awesome they are.

1. “War isn’t won by sentiment. It’s won by soldiers.” – Leaders are highly dependent on their teams and followers. They must never forget that.
2. “Until the world ends we will act like it spins on.” – As Loki’s reign of terror was becoming a serious threat, Nick Fury said these words to ensure that he and the team are not focused on the negativity surrounding them. Regardless how bad the situation, leaders keep working towards their goals and don’t give up.
3. “I am burdened with glorious purpose.” – Though misguided, Loki’s words are an accurate reflection of all leaders who should desire to do something purposeful.
4. “So art has no quarrel with a boot.” – Loki reminds us not to get involved in too many petty issues that distract us from our mission and goals.
5. “There is only one God. I’m pretty sure he doesn’t dress like that.” – Captain America referring to Thor. He is right.
6. “No man is an island; a leader might need something a little old-fashioned.” – Sometimes the answer to our problems may be a simple answer, and a return to the fundamentals is often the best course of action.
7. “We need a plan of attack.” says Captain America. “I have a plan – ATTACK!” responds Tony Stark aka Iron Man.
8. “Your world is in the balance and you bargain for one man.” – While trying to rescue Hawkeye, Loki says these words to Black Widow. Leaders care for their followers and teams. Even if it means saving one person, they would do it. Do you care for your people?
9. “You lack conviction.” – Leaders will ultimately fail when they do not completely own the vision they have been given.

Recruitment Tips for Bosses from the Avengers

10 Leadership Quotes and Lessons from the Avengers

“HULK SMASH!” – Leaders often only need simple instructions and clear objectives. Hulk only needed a single word.

10 leadership quotes are included in this article.
By LILY CHEAH
lily.cheah@leaderonomics.com

UNITED Voice was registered in 2005 as Malaysia’s first society to be managed by individuals with learning disabilities. The members of this organisation include people with down syndrome, autism, attention deficit disorder, global developmental delay and cerebral Palsy.

They are a proponent of the method of self-advocacy, encouraging persons with learning disabilities to speak up for themselves, to express their own opinions and needs – to have their own voice.

EMPLOYMENT PROJECT
Since 2002, at its centre in Petaling Jaya, United Voice has been running an Employment Project to provide work for its unemployed members, most of whom have moderate to severe learning disabilities.

The goals of the project are to provide staff with income and importantly, to ensure the growth of their functional skills. “Our measure of success is the growth of each individual – to see development in both their behaviour and communication skills,” shares United Voice lead coordinator Yeong Moh Foong.

To make this happen, Yeong and her team, along with United Voice volunteers, design products according to the functional capacity of Employment Project employees. Together, they produce items such as greeting cards, key chains and cookies that can be sold for a profit.

Currently, the Employment Project provides employment for about 25 members of United Voice. Typically, there is one supervisor for every five members. These can be full-time staff of United Voice, or parents of members such as Sally Khoo, who has been helping at the centre since 2013. Khoo comes in four days a week with her daughter Khoi Lay Ling, a member of the Employment Project.

Others comprise volunteers from the public, like Koh Wan Gee, who has been with United Voice for four years, teaching members and project supervisors how to make key chains out of different materials using the Japanese weaving technique of “saori”.

A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR PRODUCTIVITY
On a working day, members are at their working spaces that are neatly set up with the equipment they require. For those designated to make cards, glue, and glitter are on hand for members to paste on punch-outs. Glitter is added for pizzazz. Designs are pre-printed on the cards so members can focus on adding the additional details. They work under the attentive guidance of project coordinator Fadzillah Bt Buang.

In the kitchen, members are in charge of combining ingredients into cookie dough and rolling the dough into balls, while supervisors operate the oven. They make cookies of varying flavours, including chocolate chip, almond and shortbread depending on the customers’ request. Once the cookies are out of the oven and have cooled, members pack them into containers and tie elegant ribbons around them.

The team can produce between 300 and 400 greeting cards a day, and fulfil an order for 50 small containers of cookies within two to three days. They receive orders from both corporates and individuals, and occasionally sell their products at bazaars. Whilst orders are not as consistent, they do tend to pick up in the months preceding festivals.

Productivity levels vary from individual to individual, as functional abilities differ. However, the dedication of United Voice to providing an environment of productivity and development for their members is unshakeable.

MEANINGFUL TEAMWORK AT ITS BEST
One of the handmade keychains for sale.

Workers adding finishing touches to cookie containers.

Employment Project cookies ready for delivery.

UNITED WE HAVE A VOICE

By Lily Cheah

Lily Cheah had the great privilege of visiting United Voice and hopes that their belief in every individual will be a sentiment shared by all Malaysians. To place orders or to find out how you can contribute to their great efforts, email unitedvoiceinfo@gmail.com or call 03-79540701.
How Approachable

Seven Ways to Make Yourself More Approachable

By WENDY LEE
wendy@chap-one.com

I used to work as a sales representative in a pharmaceutical company. There was this woman surgeon whom we dreaded seeing. She used to stare at her nurses and patients with those eerie eyes behind her thick multi-focal spectacles. She rarely smiled. In fact, I’m not even sure if she has teeth. She was not very approachable.

As a result, no matter how good her skills were, no one wanted to go near her. Personally, I avoided her as I didn’t appreciate that she gave the impression that the whole world owed her something. The fact that she didn’t smile added to the negativity that surrounded her.

Remember this: No matter how good looking or skilled you are, if you look intimidating, unfriendly, or preoccupied; if you look unlikeable or unapproachable, people will choose not to talk to you. As a result, a lot of good opportunities will just pass you by. If you want people to be drawn to you, then you will also need to be approachable!

Here are seven ways to increase approachability with your behaviour:

1. Get Friends to Take Candid Snapshots of You
Bite the bullet and get your friends to take candid videos or photos of you. Don’t state where and when so that the photos will display your natural tendencies. Analyse them together with friends or family. Their feedback may not be the easiest information to swallow, but it will give you a clear perspective of how you are right now, and where you are on the approachability scale.

2. Watch Where You Look
Stop fiddling with your smartphone, and there is no money to be picked on the floor. Don’t look down. Your eyes are not only your windows to the world, they are also how people perceive you. At the train station, it is common to see people looking down, sideways, or just staring into space. This is an unspoken language for – “I’m not interested in anyone except the voices in my head. So leave me alone.” Do you want to look approachable? Look up and scan the room, and don’t be afraid to make eye contact with people.

3. Start Smiling
If you are frowning, people will just assume you do not wish to talk. Once you catch someone eye, smile. Give just a small modest smile, the kind that says: “Hello, I see you.” Not the one that says: “Eye contact! Let’s check each other out!” A warm inviting smile will put anyone at ease. It also makes you look like you are enjoying yourself at a function. Do not grin, and don’t plaster a fake smile on your face. People will see right through that. When you are genuinely smiling, your face should be lifted in symmetry with wrinkles around your eyes, also known as crow’s feet.

4. Don’t Fidget
It is okay to feel nervous in a crowd, but you cannot appear to be so. Fidgeting has to be one of the most common giveaways and is easily detected by observers. Biting your nails, playing with your hair, constantly touching your face, are nervous actions that make you appear distant and lost in translation. Fidgeting is a response to either boredom or anxiety. When you are anxious, your body will have an elevated level of stress hormones, prepping your muscles for a sudden exertion. The energy has nowhere to go. Hence, leg shaking and foot tapping are ways to partially relieve that. Composed stillness, on the other hand, presents you as someone who is calm and confident. So stay still and smile!

5. Use Your Eyes
A twinkle in your eyes is worth a million unspoken words. When you are talking to people, don’t simply stare but look with a smile. Practise smiling with your eyes. Soften your eye expression and make your eyes smile. Get in front of a mirror and practice smiling without using your mouth. You will see an instant difference!

6. Let Down Your Barriers
Check your silent signals. Make a mental note every time you feel the urge to cross your arms or your legs. Try to avoid this at all times. Many people unconsciously have a “closed off” body language and they communicate this by crossing their arms or crossing their legs, by looking down, frowning and generally giving the impression that they don’t want to be disturbed. The same goes for having one arm in front of you, holding a drink, clutching your bag. All these unconscious gestures are partial barriers that give off the impression that you don’t want to be disturbed. Try to avoid all these unconscious habits.

7. Make the First Move
Nothing makes you look more outgoing and approachable than by actively seeking people out and talking to them. If you are in an environment where you don’t know anybody, the longer you wait alone, the more uncomfortable you are bound to feel.

Wendy Lee is a professional brand/image consultant who believes that with style, there must be substance. She and professional make up consultant, Li Wei, as part of mystarjob.com’s Image Matters team, will be bringing you all the essentials you need to look and feel your best.
Do Gooders breaking a sweat at Shelter 1.

TEAMWORK! Teamwork! Teamwork! Teachers drill it in students; employers often stress its importance. Many people are aware of the concept, but how many can say they have truly experienced teamwork weaving its magic? The Star media group employees can testify to that.

As part of its Do Good. Volunteer initiative and the company’s Employee Volunteer Programme, The Star recently organised the inaugural The Star media group Do Good Day which saw 430 employees working together to make over 10 welfare homes in the Klang Valley, Penang, Ipoh and Kuching.

To realise the mission of providing better living conditions for these homes, the volunteers—or Do Gooders as they were called—were divided into 10 teams with each team comprising of more than 40 volunteers from different departments. Coordination, cooperation and collaboration were necessary to achieve this tough challenge that had been posed to them. In addition, the teams were also challenged with a limited budget, a tight timeframe and busy work schedules. Faced with these challenges, the teams stepped up to the plate and for the first time ever, colleagues who may have spent years with The Star but never had an opportunity to work together, were working hand in hand with a determination to help the home they were assigned to.

A project that no lone person can achieve, this has brought about excellent team camaraderie among staff. Complementing each other’s strengths and weaknesses, team members have achieved a noble collective effort in contributing to the betterment of society.

The result of their sweat and toil? Residents from 10 cosy and comfortable welfare homes can now proudly call them their “home sweet home”!

■ Do Good. Volunteer. is a social initiative by The Star in collaboration with Leaderonomics, which aims to promote volunteerism. Log on to dogoodvolunteer.com for a list of volunteer opportunities.

GREENING YOUR BRAIN

What the Do Gooders have to say...

“Although I was the team leader, I never felt the need to lead. Everything was done by consensus, and the working committee just rose to the occasion each time we faced an obstacle. We all left our ranks behind and got our hands dirty together. No one was out to score points, as we were clear on our focus. We worked with our hands, and were driven by our hearts.”

Soo Ewe Jin, deputy executive editor

“‘Our team leader has built trust among team members. The clear understanding of our roles and expectations made our team collaboration successful. The key success factor of our team’s achievement is the engagement while the collaboration comes naturally.”

Anandan Thangasamy, assistant manager, mailroom

“The team members were cooperative, especially on the days when we carried out the painting and cleaning duties. Of course there were hiccups like short handedness or tardiness, but these were addressed by other members who stepped up and took over the duties.”

Jade Chan, journalist

20 MORE BRAIN FOODS

By TERRY SMALL

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This was a headline recently in USA Today: “Alzheimer’s Cases Expected to Rise at a More Rapid Rate!” 16 million Americans are expected to be hit with this brain disease by 2050. The article goes on to say that this increase has the potential to collapse the health care system. Scary stuff! To quote a previous Brain Bulletin—"If your brain goes, what’s left?"

What is causing all this? Neuroscientists seem to be looking very closely at the foods we eat. Here are 20 more foods that science says are extraordinarily good for your brain’s health. The ORAC (antioxidant capacity per 100 grams) is listed after each.

■ Terry Small is a brain expert who resides in Canada and believes that “anyone can learn how to learn easier, better, faster, and that learning to learn is the most important skill a person can acquire.”

Remember, though, one prune has an ORAC of 5770!

In the next Brain Bulletin I will tell you about an interesting bit of brain research that found that you can improve your memory by 25% instantly! Remember: “You are a genius.”
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BOOMING CAREERS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

1. A career that has been projected to be in great need for the remainder of this decade is a cardiovascular technologist. These specialists conduct a variety of tests to do with the condition of the heart. This may not come as a surprise, with the increase in popularity of unhealthy food and habits.

2. Similarly, there is also a need for health educators, to instill healthy habits into communities, organisations and individuals, and to aid in planning towards such a lifestyle.

3. Translators are equally in demand, with 29% and higher projected growth. Due to the surge in international business, along with the ease of travel, translators are a crucial element of international trips, predominately to those countries without the widespread usage of the English Language.

4. As the spread of cultural norms sweep various countries, it is becoming more and more apparent that families are taking in animals as pets and treating them like a member of the family. With this rise, comes the need for veterinarians. It is expected that this career will also grow over 29% for the remainder of this decade.

5. With the expansion of cities around the globe, and the maintenance of rural communities the distance between the two can get greater and greater. Coupled with the advancement of technology, an alternative to the traditional learning medium has occurred – distance learning. This form of education makes use of technology to recreate a virtual classroom. With the boom of this option in rural areas comes the need for distance learning coordinators, educators who schedule curriculum for courses taught at a distance.

6. With the knowledge of earth’s limited resources, comes the need to find options that may last. Sustainability specialists do just that, through the development of projects, initiatives and collaborations, as well as research of current statistics regarding resources.

7. Due to the prevalence of serious diseases, such as cancer, there is a great need to identify and detect these diseases. Cytotechnologists are in demand. These experts are able to identify various pathological conditions through the viewing of cells at the microscopic level.

8. Finally, this career boom is to be expected, due to the various stresses of everyday life, along with work deadlines, the need for coffee to keep individuals awake and alert in times of need is great. That’s right, baristas are in demand.

Source: O’NET, www.onetonline.org
RETURNING HOME

DEAR CAREER-NOMERS

We have four experts on career management, HR and office issues who will address your questions weekly. We refer to them as Career-Nomers - experts in career matters who will help you in your career journey. So if you have any burning questions to ask, send it to dearcareernomers@leaderonomics.com and we will get the panel to answer your questions.

I am 32, a project manager and I have been working on projects in Australia for the last seven years. I am Malaysian and graduated in Australia in 2003, and am keen to return to Malaysia but it's really hard to find out what jobs I can get if and when I am able to sustain a living for me and my young family. There have been many criticisms about Malaysians working overseas and how they should come back. I am keen to come back but the question is, how? How do we find jobs? How do we sustain a living starting from the bottom again? Any advice would be great.

DEAR ERIC,

With seven years of experience in Australia, I am confident you would be able to bring back a lot of knowledge, experience and skills that employees here would be keen to receive. With that in mind, you should start preparing your resume, giving a clear overview of the experiences you had, along with the skills you possess. If you have taken on any interesting or large scale projects, this would have hundredsof extra pairsof eyes and ears on a lookoutfor you.

Two key questions to think about:
1) WHAT DO I WANT TO DO?
Think about where you can contribute in Malaysia - an organisation in the same industry or a job that requires the same skills you have, but in a different industry, perhaps. For a start, it may be easier for you to come back to a position that you are currently in because it would be easier for employers to gauge your potential based on your past performance in Australia.

2) HOW MUCH WILL I NEED TO SUSTAIN MYSELF AND MY FAMILY?

Talk to your friends and family about living expenses here. Make sure you speak to those whose lifestyle is as close to the one you desire for your family to get an accurate estimate. With the little I know about what you do and a brief glance at your company website, I understand your concerns that there may not be a similar organisation that is as large with an opening for you. Nonetheless, there are a few things that you can do to help yourself as you explore your opportunities back here.

1. Google for companies that are similar to your current company (assuming that you would like to remain in the same line of work). Then contact them directly, sharing with them your resume.
2. Look specifically for overseas companies that have a footing in Malaysia as they sometimes may be willing to pay a little more for their staff.
3. If they know of any openings for areas you are interested in. Even if they don’t, they may know people who do. At least you would have extra pairs of eyes and ears on a lookout for you.
4. Post it on Facebook (if your intentionsto return can be disclosed). Once again, you would have hundreds of extra pairs of eyes and ears on a lookout for you. We have seen over and again how fast news spreads on social media! The key idea is to really get the word out that you are looking for a job back here. Once you have a few job interviews, it’s a job interview and maybe offers, you can gauge if your earning potential here can sustain your desired lifestyle. And if needed, rethink.

Elisa Dass

DEAR ERIC,

I don’t know what you specifically want to do but you will find that project management skills are in demand in Malaysia across sectors, whether in construction, ICT, consultancy or corporate transformation/change management projects. The typical start to job search would be through online resources or Malaysian job sites, the likes of myStarjob.com, and more.

Go search crazy on job recruitment sites like myStarjob.com, saturday 20 October 2012

However, given you’re not very familiar with the job scene, I would encourage you to connect with HR people in the sectors you’re interested in. Being based in Australia, I hope you took advantage of the Graduan-MASCA Career Fair in Australia from Oct 6 to Oct 13, covering cities like Melbourne and Sydney. TalentCorp together with TalentCorp together with many companies continue to grow strongly and with interesting job opportunities. While there may be some Malaysians who question the merit of encouraging other Malaysians to return, rest assured that employers are keen to employ the right talent, whether they’re already based in Malaysia or returning from abroad.

All the best,
Johan Merican

The opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of myStarjob.com
Coming up in next Saturday’s issue . . .

The World of Graphic Design

Career lessons from Grammy award winning designer Stefan Sagmeister

We take a look at a Day in the Life of Tung Eng Hwa, manager of Editorial Art and Design for The Star Publications

Top 10 lists ways to make your workplace more creative

Audrey Tong says it’s never too early to begin developing leadership skills in Starting Young

George Kohlrieser writes about the 10 biggest mistakes leaders make and how to avoid them in Be a Leader

Also next week