LILY SAYS

CHANGING FOR BETTER

This week’s centrespread pages dive into the topic of career change. As someone who has personal experience of this, I understand the internal battles that can occur before we shift career paths. We think about having to learn from zero, we have to be prepared to command less pay in the beginning, and often, there will be a lot of external voices (read: family and friends) questioning our move. This is especially so when we are shifting from a career perceived to be stable, “professional”, into something that is not part of the lawyer-engineer-doctor-accountant list.

For those earnestly seeking a career change for new opportunities and better application of skills and talent, however, passion and determination can fuel our engines, and transferrable skills make the journey smoother.

Huge success is possible for those who dare to make the leap. Opera singer Andrea Bocelli started his career as an attorney and Arnold Schwarzenegger, a body builder. Janet Robinson, CEO of the New York Times for 27 years, began as an elementary school teacher – a career she pursued for 11 years. The learning curve is certainly steep, but isn’t it true that learning is part of every working person’s reality? There can be wrong reasons for changing careers however, and other considerations to take into account. Eric Lau explains in detail on pages 8-9. Lau transitioned from marketing to training services, and has valuable advice to help manage a career change.

On page 3, we learn more about what it’s like to work as a life planner in AIA Malaysia, and on page 5, RHB Insurance’s managing director gives us a peek into his exciting career. Take the opportunity to put yourselves in their shoes and see if a career like theirs would fit your bill.

In Be A Leader this week, Roshan Thiran talks about powerful leadership that can literally change the world with lessons from Steve Jobs, the man that played such a key role in revolutionising technology. In Hard Talk on page 12, Anna Tan discusses the issue of praise – whether to give this or not to employees who are doing well. This Saturday, after what may have been a very busy week, take the time to recharge and I hope this week’s articles will equip you with great insights for your career journey. Video versions are also available on leaderonomics.tv

We love hearing feedback and suggestions from our readers. As always, you know you can reach us at mystarjob@leaderonomics.com. If you have any career questions to ask, send them to dear-careernomers@leaderonomics.com and we’ll get two of our panel experts to give you some answers. This week’s featured question comes from reader lynn who is considering a career change. See what our Careernomers have to say to her on page 15.

Wishing you all the very best. Have a great week ahead.

Until next Saturday.

LILY CHEAH
Editor, myStarjob.com

TIPS FOR REDIRECTING YOUR CAREER

FIND YOUR PATH
If you have not decided on a specific career focus, do some research and reflection. Take a look at industries out there, identify your interests, decide which career path you would like to embark on, and go for it.

BE REALISTIC
Yes, we should dream big, but dream within reason. If you are choosing to redirect your career to an industry that you have absolutely no experience in, make sure you do your homework and even pursue further studies if necessary. Learn everything you need to know about the industry and work on the skill sets which may be required for that new job.

BEEF UP YOUR CV
If you are changing careers, the one thing you really need to highlight in your CV is your skill set, especially skills that are transferrable. When listing your work experience, identify your achievements in previous roles to demonstrate what you are capable of.

NETWORK
Get to know key players in the industry. Take time to meet them in person instead of over the phone or via email. Find relevant events where you can rub shoulders with the right people. If you’re feeling brave, ask them for a catch-up over coffee or tea to pick their brains.

GRAB OPPORTUNITIES
Take advantage of training and learning opportunities available, even in areas outside your current scope. This way, you will be able to learn and develop new skills, and when the time comes for you to change career paths, you will be prepared.

CARREER TIPS

BE A LEADER

“Behold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out.”
– JAMES BRYANT CONANT

Steve Jobs’ mantra
Learn how to make an impact in your career with lessons from the Apple legend. Pg 6-7

Plan it out
Follow these seven steps to plan out a meaningful career redirection. Pg 8-9

To tell or not to tell?
Spend time to acknowledge and show appreciation to your promising employees. Pg 12

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A Day in the Life

By PREMA JAYABALAN
prema.jayabalan@leaderonomics.com

Ever wondered what it’s like to work in the insurance line? How do agents, or life planners, as AIA calls them, go about their jobs? The general perception of the profession involves notions of extreme persuasiveness, not always in a positive manner. However, with more and more individuals entering the industry every year, the role surely has a lot to offer that many people are unaware of. Raja Faisal Raja Musa, a thriving unit manager with American International Assurance Bhd (AIA) explains what keeps him in this line.

This Malacca-born dynamic manager had wanted to be a lawyer from a young age as he loved to talk and interact with people. However, he went on to pursue medicine at the behest of his elders. He completed three years of medicine in Australia, then he joined AIA in 2006.

"I started my own advertising business and I was doing extremely well. In fact, the rewards I got from it enabled me to invest in property. Everything was going so well and I was making good money," Faisal recalls. Then in 2006, after a risky business venture went bad, his booming business took a massive plunge. "I had to sell off my property to clear my debts and eventually, I shut my business down."

"I started thinking about how to get on my feet again. I am a person who likes to see results fast in any of my endeavours. At that time, the insurance industry was flourishing and I started doing some research on the Internet," says Faisal. And that is how he chanced upon AIA.

After much pondering and talking to an acquaintance about the organisation, he joined AIA in 2006. "That was by far the best career move I made in my life. I have been with AIA for more than six years now. I started off as an AIA insurance agent, now known as an AIA life planner. During the first couple of years, I worked really hard. My efforts paid off because by the third year, I was promoted to unit manager."

Life at AIA

As unit manager, Faisal recruits life planners and trains them. This training comprises product knowledge, communication skills and ways to build clientele. He follows them on their initial appointments to ensure that they provide efficient service to their clients. Besides this, Faisal also has his own database of clients whom he services, and at the same time he engages with new clients to increase his client base.

"My day typically starts at 8:30am. I am in the office by then and I run through the day’s appointments and meetings with my secretary. I then proceed to do some paperwork as I am required to sign off forms and documents. At 9:30am, I have my training sessions or if there are none scheduled for the day, I meet my life planners. They often come to see me for advice, to discuss details of our latest products or simply to talk through any problems and issues they are facing."

After that, Faisal is out of the office to meet with clients, who could range from existing customers who want information on new products to those who want to buy policies. He aims to meet at least two or three new clients a day. He spends ample time chatting with his clients to gauge their needs and requirements in order to propose a plan which benefits them whilst not draining their financial resources.

"My day ends after meeting with my clients. I always take my time with them as it is essential to get them to believe in AIA, our products, and to gain their trust, which for me, is the most important thing."

Growing Leaps and Bounds

When asked about the support he gets from AIA, Faisal has much to say.

"AIA provides him not only with product knowledge, but has also supported him throughout his tenure. He had "wonderful and charismatic trainers" who helped mould him into what he is today. Besides that, he was sent to the best of motivational and product training courses that helped him build confidence and acquire knowledge."

"When I first started, just like any other life planner, I had a fear of facing new people and explaining the products well without coming across as persistent and annoying. These were the challenges I faced besides the mountainous task of gaining a client’s trust. However, with the motivational courses provided by AIA, I managed to overcome these fears and with the help of my trainers, learned to present myself well. AIA is also very generous with its incentives and commissions. All life planners are looked after very well," explains Faisal.

Faisal’s moment of triumph arrived the first year he joined AIA. Due to his hard work and diligence, he was named the third Best Life Planner in the KL central region and came out fifth nationwide. It was because of this that he was promoted to agency manager in his second year. He is very thankful that AIA is result-oriented and prepares its life planners for a fast track of promotions. "Here, you are rewarded for your efforts and achievements, not for the number of years you’ve worked," he shares.

"For all those aspiring to join this line, Faisal’s advice is to be prepared to work very hard in the initial years. Thereafter, all the hard work will pay off and one will see more returns coming in and less hours of work required."

If you are interested in a career as an AIA life planner, visit www.aia-LifePlanner.com.my and leave your contact details.

Rewarding Work

"I remember this client who was a factory worker. Despite not earning much, he called me to his small house and bought a policy for his family. I was amazed that he was aware of the importance of insurance. About seven months after he bought the policy, he passed away in an accident. It was sad."

When I went to pass the cheque to his wife, amidst her grief, she smiled and thanked me for visiting their home seven months back and helping them obtain the policy. She said that had I not come, they would be penniless today but now she has enough money to care for her four children until she finds herself a job. At that moment, I felt so liberated and happy. No amount of money can buy those feelings. I realized then that this is indeed a noble job which helps other human beings in moments of crisis, even if they don’t realise it at first."

Faisal feels happy that he is able to help many secure themselves and prepare for any emergencies. He is glad to see people able to fend for themselves despite facing tragedies. Faisal recommends this career to anyone interested in an empowering career path.

AIA has equipped him with the necessary tools and trainings to help his clients prepare for their future, and on a personal level, to grow into a confident individual and a great representative of the insurance profession.
Leaders are not born. We believe everyone has the potential to become great leaders. We at Leaderonomics have uncovered the science to building leaders. Leaders are produced through proper cultivation by being pushed constantly to break their perceived boundaries. At Leaderonomics, we can help you build a strong leadership pipeline that will bring your organisation and your people to greater heights. Our leadership solutions include the following:

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Be A Leader.

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www.leaderonomics.com
VENTURING into the insurance world was never a dream or aspiration for Kong Shu Yin. On the contrary, this Perak-born enterprising man graduated in civil engineering from Universiti Malaya in 1985. Malaysia was struck by one of the worst recessions during that period. People were being retrenched everywhere and job opportunities for young and fresh graduates were scarce. Even experienced employees were finding it extremely difficult to land a job.

“…due to this crisis which hit our country badly, all experienced employees were finding it difficult to get a choice, I joined the company. So my entrance into the insurance world was never a dream but an insight on the market and garnering information on the service delivery platform which showcases my employees’ performance. The second report enlightens Kong on managing the largest items in the general insurance business, namely claims. These reports are prepared by his staff and submitted to him on a daily basis. “If I don’t see what I expect to see in these reports, I then go about finding out the reason for it. For example, if claims for a particular week are low, it does not necessarily mean that we are lucky that week to be hit with fewer claims. It may be due to a bottleneck in our claim registration or approval process,” explains Kong.

Kong takes his workers seriously. He believes employee engagement and the time to discuss department progress and personal career development with his employees. He believes that each and every individual has his/her own strengths and talents, and a responsible and good manager is one who is able to bring the best out of his employees. According to this dynamic managing director, human beings are social animals and there is a constant need to provide each other with support and encouragement at all times. Besides that, sharing feedback and criticism are also vital to steer someone towards the right path. Kong firmly believes that a leader has to be firm, strong and able as the prospects of the team depend on his/her leadership skills. “I am always content and happy that we in RHB are able to help our policy holders at their worst times when our helping hand means the world to them. People say that bankers will lend you an umbrella when it is sunny but take it away when it starts pouring, but that is not the case here. We, at RHB Insurance offer our umbrella as soon as it starts to rain.”

THE WORLD OF INSURANCE

When it comes to insurance, Kong has quite a bit to share. To Kong, the industry is a noble one. Being in it enables one to help others. Unfortunately, it is also often misunderstood by many. This is due to lack of awareness and probably because of unscrupulous practices by a handful of people in the past. “An increased level of regulations and the standards of corporate governance, not just locally but also worldwide, have resulted in increased confidence. You will notice healthy and steady growth in the industry over the past two decades,” Kong remarks. “The industry has grown slowly but consistently, and has almost doubled the GDP growth rate. It is relatively recession-proof.”

Even on this growth path, Kong points out the exciting opportunities in the industry: “There are still a lot of opportunities and room for growth. The insurance industry’s penetration is still very low in Malaysia compared to other developed markets”. Making RHB Insurance Known

When asked about the challenges of the job, Kong replies, “One obstacle that I face in my job may sound a bit unusual to some. It concerns ways to make the RHB Insurance brand stand out amidst the different business units parked under the strong RHB brand. Currently, RHB Insurance is one of the smaller business units within the RHB group. I would like RHB Insurance to have a strong identity of its own without being overshadowed by the main group.”

The reason for this is that the public usually associates the RHB brand with banking. Therefore, my challenge lies in creating awareness and educating the public that despite being a renowned banking entity, RHB also has a solid insurance stand and offers a wide range of comprehensive insurance products and services,” says Kong.

RHB Insurance produces healthy profits and returns to its shareholders. But Kong aspires to build it into one of the top players in Malaysia and be recognised as one of the top 10 insurers in terms of gross premium and profitability in the next three years.

In order to achieve that, he needs to strengthen his distribution channels and service delivery platform. He has already seen a significant growth in his agency distribution as well as channels and plans to maintain the momentum. RHB Insurance is also in the midst of replacing its core computer system to strengthen its service delivery and add a new point of sales system to support its agency force.

PEOPLE ALSO PLAY A BIG PART IN ACHIEVING THIS GOAL

There is a strong demand for highly specialised skills and professionals such as lawyers, engineers, accountants, actuaries and many others. Many of these professionals who joined the insurance industry in the early days are now in senior and top management positions. I would encourage more of such professionals to make insurance their career choice. The current generation is into earning money fast and wants to climb the corporate ladder without any delay. Here at RHB Insurance, these dreams can be made into reality as hard work and dedication are always rewarded generously.”

If you are interested in pursuing a career with the RHB Banking Group, email career@rhb.com.my or visit to http://www.rhb.com.my/corporate_profile/career/
few months before Steve Jobs passed away, I received a book from publisher McGraw-Hill on jobs by communications coach Carmine Gallo. I started recollecting the “Think Different” Apple ad campaign. The ad was the starting point in Jobs’ revival of a company he founded, was fired from and later brought back to turn it around. The ad was memorable because it was essentially about Jobs’ leadership and his desire to “change the world.” The copy of the ad, read by Richard Dreyfuss, goes like this:

“Here’s to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The trouble-makers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They’re not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. And the only thing you can’t do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones that do.”

This campaign featured Thomas Edison, Einstein, Gandhi, Amelia Earheart and other Apple heroes. Jobs explained that “you can tell a lot about a person by who his or her heroes are” and his role models were people who “changed the world”. He travelled to India and came back a Buddhist with his head shaved and wearing traditional Indian clothing. Jobs began that trip wanting to “change the world” but he realised that “maybe Thomas Edison did a lot more to improve the world than Karl Marx or Neem Karolie Baba put together”. Jobs’ trip to India convinced him that his purpose on earth was “to put a dent in the universe” through innovation like his great role model Thomas Edison.

Studying Jobs’ leadership, I uncovered that he, like Mandela, Gandhi, Napoleon, Welch and other great leaders, began their leadership journey in silent retreat “finding themselves and their passion”. In fact, interestingly, I found six key steps which enable all great leaders across time to “put a dent in the universe”. The steps are as follows:

1. Take time to be with yourself to know yourself. Find out what you truly love to do and what drives you.
2. Define your vision of a better tomorrow and redefine it till the vision excites you.
3. Set and excite the world with the message of your vision.
4. Build a plan of execution to achieve this vision, including the mobilisation of people to ensure the vision becomes a reality.
5. Say “NO” to distractions and focus relentlessly on achieving the vision.
6. Execute! Execute! Execute! and keep executing flawlessly with high-quality, overcoming obstacles that come your way.

FINDING YOURSELF AND YOUR PASSION

Jobs dropped out of college, disappointing his parents in the process. But he was always curious claiming, “the minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes that didn’t interest me, and dropping in on the ones that looked interesting.” He attended a calligraphy class because he was passionate about typefaces even though he knew that this class had no “hope of any practical application in my life.” Yet 10 years later, this calligraphy class was the reason that the Macintosh had beautiful typography.

Jobs believed his philosophy of following his heart was a key part of leadership adding “you must have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become.”

Then Jobs went to India spending time with the surroundings and the Creator discovering his “calling.” In fact, Jobs, in an interview with the Smithsonian, postulates: "You must have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become."
I think you should go get a job as a bus boy or something until you find something you are really passionate about. I'm convinced that about half of what separates the successful entrepreneurs from the non-successful ones is pure PERSISTENCE. It is so hard. There are such rough moments that I think most people give up. Unless you have a lot of passion, you’re not going to survive. You’re going to give up. So, you’ve got to have an idea, or a problem or a wrong that you want to right that you are passionate about, otherwise you are not going to have the perseverance to stick it through. I think that’s half the battle right there.” And he was right. You have got to find what you love and are passionate about first.

DEFINE YOUR VISION OF A BETTER TOMORROW
Jobs always sees a future with possibilities. He looks beyond today and sees something better in everything. He saw computers as much more than dreary productivity tools. He saw the MP3 player as more than a Walkman.

On the iPhone, he remarked, “We all had cellphones. We just hated them, they were so awful to use. The software was terrible. The hardware wasn’t very good,” and so he challenged his team, “Let’s make a great phone that we fall in love with. We’re going to do it. Let’s try.” It was the same with the iPad. Jobs had a way of seeing a greater future.

In Gallo’s book, he cited a story where Jobs was recruiting a top talent to Apple 30 years ago. This talent asked, “What is your vision for the personal computer?” For the next hour, Jobs painted a picture of how personal computers were going to change the world. He weaved his vision of how it would change everything from work, education, entertainment and everything. After hearing Jobs’ vision, he immediately signed up to work at Apple, a small startup.

Great leaders have vision. According to former Apple leader Trip Hawkins, “Steve has the power of vision that is almost frightening. When Steve believes in something, the power of that vision can literally sweep aside any objections or problems.”

ARTICULATE THE VISION
One of the key leadership lessons Jobs internalised is the CEO’s role as company evangelist and vision spokesperson. Leaders can dream big visions, but can they articulate that vision ensuring it’s appealing, vibrant, and gripping?

How did Jobs message his vision so perfectly? Firstly, he was passionate about the vision and his energy flowed from this passion. More importantly, he spent hours practicing and preparing, ensuring his vision was fully understood. A BusinessWeek article notes that Jobs’ articulation of his vision “comes only after grueling hours of practice.” And he communicates by simply allowing his vision to resonate. He connects with people by their inspiring speeches. Instead, his powerful agenda moved forward as they mobilised people together on a personal level. Great leaders have powerful one-on-one dialogues mobilising people to their cause.

FOCUSING ON THE JOURNEY
Jobs seemed to be all over the place with so many new ideas and innovative products. Yet, he was extremely focused and clear where his journey required him to go.

Jobs said, “the people who are doing the work are the moving force behind Apple. My job is to create a space for them, to clear out the rest of the organisation and keep it at bay.” He ensured that he removed hindrances from the focus.

Focusing on the most important issues means you have to say “NO to 1,000 things” including distractions, which is difficult to do. Jobs adds, “Apple is a US$30bil company, yet we’ve got less than 30 major products. The great consumer electronics companies of the past had thousands of products. We tend to focus much more. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are. You have to pick carefully.”

Jobs was clearly focused on a few key items that will truly “make a dent in the universe” adding “I’m actually as proud of many of the things we haven’t done as the things we have done.” Likewise, we too can learn to prioritise and focus on truly value-added vision-related activity.

EXECUTE FLAWLESSLY
It’s easy to execute on your vision when things go well. Usually, things never go to plan. Jobs recalled, “at Pixar making Toy Story, there came a time when we were forced to admit that the story wasn’t great. We stopped production for five months.” At Pixar, there was a “story crisis” for every film. And at Apple, according to Jobs, there was a crisis for almost every single major project or product. But executing flawlessly means overcoming these challenges and tribulations through discipline, as he claimed, “To turn really interesting ideas and flinty technologies into a company that can continue to innovate for years, requires a lot of discipline.”

Every Monday, Jobs has a marathon “process” meeting with his team. He says, “what do we do every Monday is we review the whole business. And we do it every single week.” Ram Charan, a famous business guru whom I interviewed recently on the Leaderonomics Show wrote a book on execution. The key message is the same as Jobs’ – execution is boring and tedious and repetitive. But it’s this rigour that ultimately enables organisations to be successful. Jobs understood the power of ruthless execution.

Finally, every journey will require overcoming obstacles. At 21, Jobs was the charismatic boy wonder who co-founded Apple. He was worth US$200mil by 25, but was thrown out of the company he founded by age 30. Jobs lost everything when he was kicked out of Apple and could easily have given up and thrown in the towel. But he started all over again with NeXT and Pixar not losing his passion.

Leadership is never an easy journey. It is hard work and filled with challenges. Before his death, Jobs said “remembering that I’ll be dead soon is the most important tool I’ve ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life.”

No one says leadership is easy but it is definitely worth the journey.
**Managing Career Transitions**

**Moving from Success to Significance**

**Check Your Motives**

Why are you considering a career transition? Is it merely to make more money or to escape the "boss from hell," or to change careers because you need a clear roadmap to get there? Figure out what you really like. What kind of job roles or industry resonates with your heart right now? Do you want to work for a company that is well known for its steady growth and stable environment? Or perhaps, you may want to work for a company in a different city or a different functional role. This is expected and the reasons for changing jobs vary, but the top two reasons are usually for a better prospect and work environment. People who truly find significance in their entire career journey, not only from one job function and you know it's time to move on.

**Identify Your Passion**

One of the worst things for working people is to be stuck in a job they dislike. Why are you considering a career transition? What are your key strengths? According to Marcus Buckingham, author of *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, people is to be stuck in a job they dislike. If you utilise your key strengths, you are more likely to succeed and excel in anything that resonates with your heart right now.

**Conduct Your Research**

Once you have identified your areas of passion and talent, do some research to identify possible job roles or industries that will align with your talents. For example, if your area of passion is teaching, you may want to look for teaching opportunities in schools or colleges. Or perhaps, you may want to consider starting your own business like baking cakes or selling baked goods. The chances are you will excel in these other roles and find fulfillment in your new role. This was done while I was still in my previous job.

**Punch the Calculator**

One of the more serious challenges in career transitions is the area of finances. In many cases, because you are embarking on something new that may not be related to your previous work experience, you may be required to take a pay cut. On top of that, you may have to settle in another location simply for the opportunity to transit successfully. People need to be well prepared for financial adjustments are you will experience. The chances of you losing your job for 10 years may not likely to be a reason to continue the same level of pay, if you decide to go into a customer service role in another organization simply because you do not have the necessary functional experience. The same applies if you decide to start a new business. Financial considerations are major. This is more so for those in mid-career and about because many financial commitments such as instalments for cars, homes and finances for children education are already Kissed. Financial adjustments are major. This is more so for those in mid-career and about because many financial commitments such as instalments for cars, homes and finances for children education are already Kissed.

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**Formulate a Game Plan**

Once decided, you need to intentionally work towards your career transition. You need a clear roadmap to get there. Think of it in steps, figure out what you need to do to reach your goals. It requires a leap of faith. A leap requires a substantial step. In other words, it's time to jump! It requires a leap of faith. A leap requires a substantial step. In other words, it's time to jump! It requires a leap of faith. A leap requires a substantial step. In other words, it's time to jump!

**Talk to Trusted People**

A famous saying goes, “It’s the multitudes of suggestions, not one that is there!” We don’t have to ask others to “ążor hout” our aspirations. Others need to be given the opportunity to challenge and verify our assumptions. For example, if you are a good cook and want to start a small eating outlet, you don’t need to ask others if they would come and have a meal. Instead, have your home, cook for them and ask for their feedback and ask for their opinion. This way, we will not have a decision to be made. If possible, identify a trusted mentor, preferably someone older who has more experience and allow the person access into your heart to speak the truths and help you on your circumstances clearly.

Career transitions are normal. An average person changes employment between five and 15 times in their entire career journey, not only from one company to another but also within the same functional role. This is expected and the reasons for changing jobs vary, but the top two reasons are usually for a better prospect and work environment. People who truly find significance in their entire career journey, not only from one job function and you know it’s time to move on.

The chances are you will excel in these other roles and find fulfillment in your new role. This was done while I was still in my previous job.

**Fear Robs Us from Realising Our Full Potential**

Fear is a natural emotion of human beings. As human beings, we have the tendency to feel scared of one or more things. This is normal and healthy. However, it is important to understand that fear must be overcome in order to achieve success. The reason fear is often mentioned is because it is a natural emotion that we all experience at some point in our lives. It is important to recognize that fear does not have to hold us back from achieving our goals.

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By TERRY SMALL
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

NEUROSCIENTISTS predict that within 15 years brain disease will kill or disable more people than cancer and heart disease combined. There is a lot that you can do to keep your brain sharp and healthy at any age! The scientific literature is filled with articles on the many benefits of dark chocolate. The University of California discovered that cocoa has the same disease-fighting anti-oxidants found in vegetables. How good is that?

Here are a few interesting notes:

- Harvard researchers recently found that people who eat chocolate live on average one year longer.
- Chocolate contains psychoactive chemicals that make you feel good.
- Chocolate may guard against lipid peroxidation that can warp and destroy the fatty membranes of brain cells and turn blood fats toxic.
- Consider having one square of organic, dark chocolate a day - 70% or higher in cocoa.
- Moderation is the key here. An even better alternative is to avoid processed chocolate and use pure, unsweetened, organic cocoa and add it in shakes, smoothies, and baking.

It is possible to enjoy your food while making sure your brain gets what it needs to stay sharp. Which brain do you want? Have a great week and always remember: "You are a genius!"

By SU-ANN CHENG
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

IDENTIFYING YOUR PASSION

There is a fine line between taking pleasure in a hobby and identifying your passion. Passion is something that you feel strongly about, something that ignites your enthusiasm and perhaps, something that defines you.

We do not always realise it, but identifying our passion comes easier than we think. We all have something that we fiercely love. But we are often held back by fear, familiarity and finances. Nevertheless, do we really want to end up years down the road in a job we are stuck with just because we fear the unknown or simply fall into a comfortable zone from a dependable routine? Financial security may have a stronger hold than any other reason, but doing what you love does not necessarily mean starting your own business or a complete change in career paths.

CAPITALISING ON YOUR TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

For some, doing what you love could simply mean cashing in on the valuable experience and skills gathered from previous jobs. Job titles are often multi-dimensional. If you dissect each job or task that you have had, you will discover an array of specific skills. Some of these transferable skills will pave your way towards new careers that will best utilise them. For instance, you may have had the opportunity to train workers or speak to large crowds and you may just realise that those skills will make you an effective motivational speaker, trainer or even a teacher. Identifying the transferable skills that you have in you may just be the key to unlocking your passion.

JUST DO IT

Ultimately, to do what you love means having the courage to take the leap. Figure out what is it that you want to spend your time, attention and energy on and work on that craft. Making a living out of your passion does not always magically happen at the drop of a hat. It would be a mistake to think that once you take on the challenge, world-changing success will fall onto your lap. More often than not, a career change will throw curve balls at you. Many of the fears people face during career changes come from the pressure of immediate success. But mistakes and failures do not mean the end; instead, they pose chances for growth and learning. Almost everybody – from genius innovator Steve Jobs, multi-billionaire entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson to Hollywood royalty Will Smith – have had their share of trials and tribulations. However, it should not go unnoticed that most of these famous icons have persevered in their journeys just to be able to do what they love.

Failure, as Oprah Winfrey puts it, is "another stepping stone to greatness". The good news is you will be doing what you love and will never have to wonder, "What if?" Besides, even if you were successful at a job that you did not like, how rewarding could that really be? There is also the fear of not knowing or learning enough, but at some point, you will need to just take the plunge and the sooner the better. The problem with wanting to be fully-prepared and learning everything is that you will not know what exactly is coming until you take the first step.

Doing what you love takes courage because you have to start before you are ready. The trick is realising that you will never be ready and there will be no end to learning. This does not mean venturing into the unknown blindly as that would be foolish. Take one small step at a time. Set out goals and a master plan, but be prepared for detours and roadblocks along the way.

The first step is always the hardest, but once you get past the initial fears and anxieties, your passion, energy and commitment will drive you on auto pilot. And so, the secret is, there is none. Anyone can do what they love; there is no secret formula. Persist with passion and positivity. Find where your passion lies and you will never have to work again.
DRESSING UP DAD
AN EARLY TRIBUTE FOR FATHER’S DAY

1. **Light Pink is Good. Dirty Pink is Yucky**
   As you age, not only your body shape change will change. So will your hair and skin colour. Regardless of your skin tone, avoid dirty and murky colours. Unless you wear foundation, dirty colours age you and make you look sickly. Try on two shirts of the same style but of a different colour—one that is beige brown, and another beige white. You will see the difference.

2. **Gunny Sacks and Tights Are Not for You**
   You should wear your clothes, not let your clothes wear you. The bigger your outfit, the sloppier you look. And even if you have six-pack abs, great butt and are able to fit into tight jeans, trust me, they will not match.

3. **Leave the Past Behind**
   Just because flat fronts are in, don’t pull out your old R-Ramlee trousers from your closet. It is not the same. When certain looks cycle back around, they will always return with a contemporary twist—notice that the hemoines of the modern flat fronts do not flare out, and they are now a little longer than their previous version. So, invest in new styles to ensure you look updated. Not outdated.

4. **Have Variations**
   While there is no need to own 50 pairs of shoes, you should have a good variety of outfits. Show the world you are at the top of the game by presenting variations of yourself. Instead of wearing your usual black suit to an informal office dinner, try a dark brown corduroy jacket, and match it with khakis and loafers. An effort to present yourself differently shows that you are contemporary and style-savy.

5. **Keep Everything Clean**
   As the saying goes—cleanliness is next to godliness. Clothing aside, pay attention to your personal hygiene. Unkempt ear and nose hair is unsightly. So shave regularly, shampoo often, and add a dash of perfume before you leave the house.

6. **Time for an Overhaul**
   Look to the left of your wardrobe. We tend to always pick items on the right. Whatever that is hanging on the left and has been untouched for the past three years, will remain untouched for the next three years to come and more. So, it’s time to go out there and get yourself some fresh items. Trust me. A brand new shirt can boost your ego and lift your spirit.

7. **To Conclude...**
   It is true that dressing well as a father requires extra effort. But think about this. You are no longer representing just yourself. At work, you represent your company, your boss and your colleagues, while at home you represent your family. So, do your best to show off your masculine sophistication and your extraordinary sense of style. Take this month leading up to Father’s Day as an opportunity to sharpen up and give those around you a pleasant surprise!

**BY WENDY LEE**

mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

Y 66-year-old father can pass off as a 55-year-old. Probably because you can hardly spot any white hair, although mum would insist it’s her daily dose of tender loving care that makes him look younger than his age.

But to me, it just boils down to how he grooms himself. It has been more than 20 years since I last left my hometown in Penang and started my working life in Kuala Lumpur. But I still remember how he would meticulously sidepart his hair with his favourite Brylcream; how he would tuck his Arrow shirt in; how he would never miss accessorising his pants with his gold-buckled belt.

So, to those of you who are celebrating fatherhood in a month’s time on 16 June or have been a dad for some years now, groom yourself well! What you wear, how you smell or carry yourself, will be deeply etched in the minds of your children in the years to come.

Here’s looking at how to up your value by looking suave and sharp!
Some development opportunities. Let them know we believe they have the leadership maturity to take on board what is in store for them. “We must also manage their expectations by offering them candid feedback about their past performance. Let them know we believe they have the potential to take on bigger roles and we want to provide them with some development opportunities. The question is: “How many of our managers are skillful at managing expectations and giving constructive feedback?”

Implied promise of a promotion “What if the HIPO treat this as a promise to promote him or her?” Conversely. “While it is desirable to tell people they have been identified as a HIPO or successor, it is important they don’t imply a guarantee of promotion or automatic rise in the succession chart.”

Leaders playing favourites “What happens when talented people don’t make it to the talent list? They will be dejected and leave.” Contrast with: “I am all for engaging our talent but we identify HPOs is not water tight. People will accuse the leaders of playing favourites, and our chosen ones would not be seen to be selected based on merit!”

Lack of formal development programmes Concerned about the lack of formal development programmes to raise HPOs to true rising stars, “After we tell them, what do we do? They will expect to go through leader-ship training and have access to career advancement opportunities which we do not quite have in place yet.”

WHY IT CAN BE DONE! Alas, hearing many variations of the above, I am of the belief that development is not just about offering access to training or confering a leadership programme badge. Depending on individual developmental needs, there are many other ways to support a talent, e.g. short term assignments, experience to lead a project, opportuni-ties to lead cross-functional teams. Let us go to your talent demon-strate their leadership capabilities by allowing them to grow in a secure, risk-free environment and you may be surprised how your organisation develops as the individual rises. They will find the talent in them-selves even if you don’t sell it out for them.

Personally, each time I wrap up a talent review meeting, I am not per-turbed with the resistance “to tell”. As long as the session has gener-ated questions which were thought provoking and created some construc-tive tension, the session has achieved its objective. In a naive way, I still subscribe to the cliché “We disagree to agree.”

Bottom line – it is possible to assess a person’s potential and talent. Here, I lay out two simple tips.

Performance and potential A talent review typically involves assessing employees alongside the two Ps, namely Performance and Potential. Performance is the degree to which an individual has met the expectations in the current role. It is also the track record which the person has chalked up say, for the past two to three years. Potential, on the other hand, is harder to determine. It can manifest in various forms where the HIPO demonstr-ated the requisite leadership behav-iours as established by the company.

Leadership criteria One way of assessing potential is to match it against a set of leadership criteria or competencies such as Development Dimensions International (DDI) 10 High Potential Factors like propensity to lead, receptivity to feedback, passion for results and so on.

A dearth of talent has stalled many organisations in their growth and expansion ambitions. The talent review is a start to identify the stars of your company and how your organisation has equipped itself in the competitive talent landscape. Once you have identified the stars, don’t stop there. Have a conversation to engage them. Let them know how much you value them and how the company views them. In all cases, manage your HIPO’s expecta-tions and never make a promise you cannot keep. Ensure their devel-opment plans are execut-ed beyond tokenism, for we must start engaging our talent. Not only will you not only be losing your next generation leaders but also doing your competitor a favour by grooming their future leaders.

DO YOU LET EMPLOYEES KNOW HOW GREAT THEY ARE?

By ANNA TAN

mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

Looking back, it reminds me of the tribal chiefs, the Annual talent review. As he rummaged through the pile of talent profiles sent in advance by the tribal chiefs, he was delighted to see solid bench strength and strong succession planning. He also noted that many of the people who were solid performers last year made it to this year’s list, i.e. the cluster in the nine-box Talent Grid.

He recognised them from the etchings which bore their names and faces on the real person. As he delved deeper into the various tables, his smile melted into a deep frown. “Shall we tell these folks how great they are? Or resort to silence in answer to the elusive question of: ‘Shall we tell these folks how great they are?’ Or resort to silence in answer to the question raised by chief Lara of the Kenyan tribe, ‘Dear chief, will we ever make it through the talent review year after year. We have identified a number of high performing successors. The question is: ‘Shall we tell them or not tell them?’

There is no bigger taboo than the expectation to be selected. The real reason is: ‘What if the HIPO treat this as a promise to promote him or her?’ Conversely, ‘While it is desirable to tell people they have been identified as a HIPO or successor, it is important they don’t imply a guarantee of promotion or automatic rise in the succession chart.’

Mismanaged expectations “If they turn out to be not as talented as we thought, they would not have the leadership maturity to take on board what is in store for them. ‘We must also manage their expectations by offering them candid feedback about their past performance. Let them know we believe they have the potential to take on bigger roles and we want to provide them with some development opportunities. The question is: “How many of our managers are skillful at managing expectations and giving constructive feedback?”

The THE GOOD, BAD AND UGLY OF TALENT CONVERSATIONS is a 10-page download which rank and file employee who started her career as a bank teller. She was recently promoted to vice president and heads retail banking in a reputa-ble local bank.

Her 16-year career has seen her bagging two promotions and sev-eral banking diplomas. What a feat has chalked up say, for the past two to three years. Potential, on the other hand, is harder to determine. It can manifest in various forms where the HIPO demon-strated the requisite leadership behav-iours as established by the company.

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From the countries participating in the Long-Term Orientation Index based on the CVS (ITO-CVS), China was ranked first in long-term orientation with a score of 113. It was followed in succession by the East Asian countries of Hong Kong (96), Taiwan (87), Japan (80) and South Korea (75).

The United States was ranked 17th with a score of 29, while India was ranked seventh with a score of 63. Australia was ranked 14th with a score of 31. The lowest ranked countries were Nigeria with a score of 16, and Pakistan, 0.

DEVELOPING LONG-TERM ORIENTATION

There are two particular characteristics identified in long-term orientation societies that are worth noting. These are humility and self-control.

1. HUMILITY

Hofstede refers to some market research conducted by a Japanese corporation that showed the importance of humility in the section on gender stereotypes. He finds that “in long-term-oriented countries, or those with a Confucian tradition, humility is seen as a masculine virtue. In cultures with other dominant traditions, humility is seen as more feminine.”

With this observation it is important that we remember that feminine societies are not defined as such because they have no masculine characteristics, but because social gender roles have a greater tendency to overlap.

Nonetheless, Alexandre Havard in his book Virtuous Leadership makes it very clear that the virtue of humility is anything but weakness or resignation, and is an attribute that has acquired a pejorative connotation.

He states, “The humble person often is seen as devoid of ambition and nobility and unworthy of honour... The humble man sees himself as he really is. He acknowledges his weaknesses and shortcomings, but also his strengths and abilities.”

2. SELF-CONTROL

Self-control is the second characteristic identified with longer-term orientation. Havard opens the chapter on self-control in his book with a quote from Peter Drucker that says, “I no longer teach the management of people at work... I am teaching, above all, how to manage oneself.”

It is the ability to carefully manage the tendency we have for immediate self-gratification, by subordinating that passion or desire so we don’t jeopardise the ultimate goal we are trying to achieve.

We see this played out every day. A small business owner would like to pay himself a higher salary, but knows it would negatively impact cash flow and hinder the businesses ability to pay its debts on time. A major corporation resists the temptation to launch a new product that is not quite ready for the market, because it doesn’t want to sacrifice its brand reputation that has taken years to acquire. A government chooses to stay the course, rather than react to declining popularity in the polls.

These conflicts occur every day, and they demonstrate how culture impacts the way we respond to them, and why virtue is such an important and reassuring quality of leadership.

Responses to the GLOBE study by managers and leaders showed a strong correlation between long-term orientation (or “future orientation”) and the practices of uncertainty avoidance, institutional collectivism and performance orientation.

Ashkanasy et al. in their book Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies, state that these organisations had a greater tendency for encouraging their members “to consider the collective interests in making decisions about how to manage information, technology, and knowledge, and in reducing uncertainty”.

In relation to the six implicit leadership theories, future orientation cultural values were significantly correlated with team-oriented leadership, participative leadership, humane-oriented leadership, and self-protective leadership, primarily because these encourage members to be “part of a shared leadership belief system.”

What’s the Bottom Line?

There some excellent leadership models that contain specific characteristics helpful to leaders suited to a range of different cultures including Confucian cultures. However, some leaders are running so fast responding to short-term crazes and waves, focus on the desired market position you hope to sustain in the long run and encourage people to work towards that.

How to Instil a Culture of Long-Term Orientation in Your Workplace

By Premya JAYABALAN

premya.jayabalan@leaderonomics.com

In your organisation, email people@leaderonomics.com

How to instil a Culture of Long-Term Orientation in your workplace

1. PRACTICE HUMBILITY:

By practising humility, an organisation can ensure it works to its strengths and capabilities and that it constantly looks for new ways to improve and overcome its shortcomings. Similar to how a humble person can see himself/herself similar to all others and not put themselves in a position that may deter them from improving, an organisation can also adopt a culture that promotes humility to its benefit, to allow itself to work on its strong attributes and constantly strive to overcome its weaknesses in order to grow further.

2. PRACTISE SELF-CONTROL:

Despite the urge to become bigger, better and smarter faster than others, an organisation should nurture a culture of self-control in its people. This would ensure that all people work together towards achieving a sustainable legacy built on a solid foundation rather than working as individuals achieving short-term praises and salary wages.

3. ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY:

The more people feel responsible and accountable for their actions, the more passionate – and careful – they’ll be in the way they conduct their tasks. Accountability, once introduced and enforced fairly and consistently, can give people a sense of pride and meaning in what they do.

4. FOCUS ON MARKET POSITION:

Instead of following short-term crazes and waves, focus on the desired market position you hope to sustain in the long run and encourage people to work towards that.

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5 SECRETS TO BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER

By TIMOTHY KOK

Datin Seri Idris Jala is no stranger to Malaysians. Having worked in a few major organisations (such as Shell and Malaysia Airlines), he has completed many transformation and turnaround projects. Now known to many as the turnaround maestro, he shares with us five secrets to becoming a successful transformational leader:

1. ATTEMPT THE IMPOSSIBLE

The first secret is what Idris describes as attempting the game of the impossible. “Do something that everybody else says cannot be done,” he challenges. When Idris was entrusted to turn around ailing airline Malaysia Airlines, he gave a seemingly impossible task to his top managers; to make the Australian and New Zealand (ANZ) routes profitable in nine months. His top managers told him it was an impossible task; he was slapped with the label of being a ‘hard-ass’ who would never give up.

2. DISCIPLINE PLUS ACTION

Becoming a successful transformational leader requires discipline of action. According to Idris, both “discipline” and “action” are crucial ingredients. “If you do not have action, you will only keep thinking, but nothing gets done. Whereas if you act on something without discipline, you are merely acting sporadically,” he explains.

To create this environment of reflection, ideation and decision making, Idris has been known to run “labs” – a concept he also implemented in his previous organisations to tackle hard issues. A lab is formed by having 20 to 30 people handpicked and “locked” inside a room for a month to solve a problem, during which the lab members would brainstorm, research, debate and develop detailed action plans to address the problems at hand.

3. BE A CHAMELEON

There are many leaders with many different leadership styles. Idris believes that a transformational leader should practice situational leadership. At the beginning of any transformational journey, a leader should be highly directive. As followers become more competent, the leader should shift to a more empowering role. Only then will the leader be able to increase the morale and commitment of the followers. When that happens, productivity and competence will keep improving.

4. BUILD A WINNING COALITION

The phrase “no man is an island” best describes the next secret to becoming a transformational leader. In any transformational journey, a leader should always look for what Idris describes as a “winning coalition”. Especially in business, a leader should always have the mentality of creating a winning coalition when it comes to understanding stakeholders’ requirements, investor relations and staff engagement.

5. DIVINE INTERVENTION

The final wisdom Idris shares in his interview with The Leaderonomics Show is what he calls “divine intervention.” “Because more than 60% of what happens has got nothing to do with us [and is] uncontrollable. In fact if you were to list down all the major things that happened in your life, I guarantee you that most of it happened out of your control,” he exclaims. But how does one obtain divine intervention? Idris outlines three ways:

1. Be a good human being – The essence of a good leader is a good human being.
2. Practise the right ethics – Always operate from the “white” and not on the “grey” areas.
3. Practise self-renewal – Every leader should find time for solitude and reflection.

These five elements have contributed to Idris’ turnaround successes. Are you facing a situation that needs a transformation? It begins with daring to do the seemingly impossible.

To access the full interview of Datin Seri Idris Jala and to access other videos of inspirational personalities, visit www.leaderonomics.com/theleaderonomicsshow

The Leaderonomics Show

By TIMOTHY KOK

timothy.kok@leaderonomics.com

RESUME

The majority of Generation Y job hop often based on career advancement opportunities rather than salary advantages.

Statistics by the US Department of Labour show that in the United States, workers Shift career paths three to five times in their working years.
Dear Careernomers,

I am a 29-year-old engineer who previously worked (under contract) at a government agency and realised that it was leading me nowhere. So I quit and spent 2012 unemployed. Recently, I was hired into the same industry but this time, I am in the private sector.

I am now to what I may be doing in the future? How can I properly transition from what I'm doing now to what I may be doing in the future? What is my dream job? What should I do with my life? How can I be an easier transition.

I want to end up in an even worse position than before, with the new expectations of a new role and a steep learning curve.

With the right foundation, it will be an easier transition.

Good luck.

Shoba Kesavan

The opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of myStarjob.com

Lynn

Sincerely

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What is my dream job?

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What is my dream job?
AIA’s CEO shares about his fulfilling career journey in the insurance industry.

See Hoy Chan’s vibrant workplace and impressive new office.

Top 10 gives 10 wacky ideas to create a cool and fun workplace.

A great leader will demonstrate love when exercising leadership, says Roshan Thiran in Be A Leader.