MANAGING THE MATRIX ORGANISATION
MANAGEMENT LESSONS FOR TODAY’S NETWORKED COMPANIES
PAGES 6–7

Lessons from The Matrix
Johan Merican uncovers leadership lessons from The Matrix trilogy.
Pg 06
WHAT IS A MATRIX ORGANISATION?

Our organisations are structured in different ways, and this informs the functions and responsibilities of employees and the processes that govern operations. A large coffee chain for instance, may be split according to self-sustaining teams in each retail outlet, or a team may look after coffee bean supply across the board for all outlets in a region.

An organisation can be divided according to functions, such as production, human resources, sales and marketing. It can also revolve around projects/products instead, like sedans, motorcycles, 4WDs for a vehicle company (which will each have its own team).

A matrix organisation is a combination of a couple of organisational structures, resulting in two or more reporting lines for each employee. For instance where both function and project structures are integrated, an employee will report vertically to a function head (e.g. head of marketing), but also horizontally to a project manager, whose authority will flow across various functions.

Matrix organisations are increasingly common because of its numerous advantages, including more efficient sharing of information and expertise (since individuals will not be confined only to one closed team) and better use of resources. Collaboration and communication between employees also improve. Experts in different functions can collaborate on projects, increasing the likelihood of quality output. Furthermore, since employees are now working with a wider perspective and responsibility, they are able to develop a broader range of skills and experience.

However, there are challenges to this structure. Conflicts can arise between opposing expectations from different supervisors. There can be confusion because accountability is not straightforward, with the obligation to report to various parties. Decision making can be a longer process. Yet, as Paul Rogers, Jenny-Peccoud and Florian Hoppe of Bain explain in our centrespread pages this week, a complex organisation today needs to function across boundaries, which is a main advantage of the matrix structure. So how can a matrix structure be implemented successfully? Read pages 6-7 for more.

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The opinions expressed in this career guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.
BY MITCH DITKOFF
mystarjob.com/leaderonomics.com

ANY forward-thinking organization launching all kinds of initiatives to crank up innovation. Their intention is good, but their execution is often not. While there’s nothing inherently wrong with “organizational initiatives,” they often end up being overly-complicated, vague, and painfully impersonal. They may look good on paper, but real innovation doesn’t happen on paper; it happens in the human dimension, the realm of authentic interpersonal interfacing. Towards that end, I invite you to consider another, more elegant way they can go about without having to navigate the obstacles.

BE CURIOUS
One thing is certain: aspiring innovators are onto something. If you are interested in increasing their odds of success, your first task is to find out what, precisely, has captured their attention. Curiosity may have killed the cat, but it greatly enlivens the person on the brink of a new possibility.

LISTEN DEEPLY
People with a new idea often need to express what they’re thinking in order to fully understand what they’re conjuring. Listening is the main way you can help — not so you’ll have something wise to say in response, but so you can create a safe haven for others to explore the nuances of their new ideas.

ASK POWERFUL QUESTIONS
You may be someone’s boss or have multiple degrees, but that doesn’t mean you have all the answers. Indeed, when it comes to sparking innovation, asking questions — at the right time and in the right way — is more important than giving advice. It is often the only thing you need to do.

REFRAME THE CHALLENGE
As an innovation catalyst, one of the biggest contributions you can make is to ensure that the innovators in your life talk about their wishes, dreams, and hopes for outcomes. While there’s nothing inherently wrong with “organizational initiatives,” they often end up being overly-complicated, vague, and painfully impersonal. They may look good on paper, but real innovation doesn’t happen on paper; it happens in the human dimension, the realm of authentic interpersonal interfacing. Towards that end, I invite you to consider another, more elegant way they can go about without having to navigate the obstacles.

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5 ELIMINATE BUREAUCRATIC OBSTACLES
Innovators have enough to worry about without having to navigate the often Rube Goldberg-like maze of corporate systems and the ever-changing market place. Be their advocate. Demystify the roadblocks. Identify what’s in their way and do what you can to eliminate the obstacles.

6 PROVIDE RESOURCES
Carpenters need tools. Hikers need backpacks. Musicians need instruments. Innovators? This, that, and the other thing. Your task? To identify the resources they need and see what you can do to locate them. Funding? Software? Collaborators? An introduction to movers and shakers?

7 COACH
Even the best athletes in the world perform better when they have the support of someone on the “sidelines” who knows the game and how to spark their potential. If you want to spark innovation in others, know that you will need to be a coach from time to time. But first, you need permission.

8 GIVE FEEDBACK
Aspiring innovators go back and forth between being overly intoxicated with their new ideas and being overly sober. Immersed in their own creative process, they lose perspective, with only the sound of their thoughts for company. What they need is timely feedback. And they need it from you.

9 DO THE BREAK DANCE
Committed innovators have a tendency to obsess about their projects. Not only does “all work and no play” become their mantra, they often leave little time for rest and renewal. Sometimes, the best thing an innovator can do is nothing — and you can help by reminding them, from time to time, to take a break, chill, and do something different for a change.

10 GO BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY
Attempting to create something new is rarely easy. It’s messy, frustrating, and often requires a big dose of the heroic. If you are going to be someone’s “innovation ally,” know that one of your jobs is to go beyond “business as usual” and extend your support in surprising and extraordinary ways.

11 CELEBRATE SMALL WINS
One challenge with trying to innovate is that it takes a lot of time. Results often don’t show up for years. As you can imagine, this can be deflating. The remedy? Regularly acknowledge “small wins” — positive results — no matter how tiny. As Peter Drucker once said, “Celebrate what you want to see more of.”

12 REINFORCE THE VISION OF SUCCESS
Anyone attempting to create something new has a tendency to get lost in details and doubts — often not seeing the “forest for the trees.” They lose the big picture. The remedy? At every turn of the bend, get the innovators in your life talking about their wishes, dreams, and hopes for outcomes.

13 TELL INSPIRING STORIES
When innovators get stuck, it’s usually because of “self-talk” — their internal critic that thrives on doom and gloom. You can counter this phenomenon by telling stories with the power to replace self-talk — true tales of success, your first task is to find out what, precisely, has captured their attention. Curiosity may have killed the cat, but it greatly enlivens the person on the brink of a new possibility.

14 QUOTE FROM THE INNOVATION MASTERS
Sometimes a single word or phrase is all an aspiring innovator needs to get their mojo back. A sound byte from someone they respect — a person who’s “been to the mountain” and distilled what they learned down to a quotable quote. Find one… and pass it on.

15 MODEL THE SPIRIT OF INNOVATION
It’s hard to spark innovation in others if the spirit is not alive inside of you. Not only will the aspiring innovator see right through you, they won’t take any of your council to heart — even if it’s true. Your responsibility? Walk your talk. Practice what you preach. If you don’t, you’re just wasting your time — and everyone else’s, too.

16 DECREASE THE FEAR OF FAILURE
One of an innovator’s biggest triggers is their fear of failure. Your mission is to help them reframe their concept of ‘failure’ and, instead, see it as a progression of noble experiments — opportunities for feedback so they can course correct, continue learning, and be as resilient as possible. Thomas Edison said: “I have not failed once. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that didn’t work.”

17 GROUND
Aspiring innovators often have their heads in the clouds, an important place to inhabit from time to time, but it is only half the story. Innovators also need to have their feet on the ground. You can help by getting them to plot in specific days and times on their calendar to work on their innovation project. You can also ask them to commit to specific deliverables and “by when” dates.

18 BE THE COUNT OF ACCOUNTABILITY
In the heat of battle, aspiring innovators often make promises they do not keep. Or, afraid of breaking their promises, never make them in the first place. If budding innovators work alone, there is no one around to notice this phenomenon. Your task? Ask them what they want to be held accountable for and then check in at regular intervals.

19 EXPAND THEIR SUPPORT NETWORKS
One thing you don’t want to do is establish a co-dependent relationship with innovators seeking your support. It’s not only dumb, it’s unsustainable. The alternative? Encourage them to enroll support from their existing network of friends and colleagues — people they can depend on for input, feedback, and encouragement.

20 CHECK IN FROM LEFT FIELD
If you really want to spark innovation in others, pick up the phone from time to time and call. Actually talk to the person. Ask how they’re doing. Listen. Stir the soup. See what they need. Assuming you are trusted, your out-of-the-blue contact will awaken, encourage, and inspire — helping those on the cusp of a breakthrough to stay on track and on fire.

MITCH DITKOFF is the co-founder and president of Idea Champions, an innovation consulting and training company headquartered in Woodstock, NY. He is also the author of the very popular Heart of Innovation blog, the award winning business fable, Awake at the Wheel and is a regular contributor to the Huffington Post. He is a much sought after keynote speaker on a variety of innovation-themed topics.

WAYS TO SPARK INNOVATION
WOULD YOUR BRAIN PASS THE MARSHMALLOW TEST?

By TERRY SMALL
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

I read a great quote this week. Muhammad Ali said, “I discovered that all I had to do to become the greatest was to get up and go do what I didn’t want to.”

Delaying gratification can be hard for the brain. Just ask any altering faced with a delicate pizza! But studies have demonstrated delaying gratification is a sign of good brain function and a harbinger of success in life.

It has to do with a particular part of the brain called the anterior prefrontal cortex. This is the part of the brain that helps you manage complex problems and simultaneous goals which lead to better self-control.

It turns out that scientists can see the future by using marsmallows. Four-year-old children are brought into a plain room and a single marshmallow is placed in front of them. They are told that they can eat it straight away or if they wait for a while they will get two marshmallows. The children are then left alone. What follows is remarkable! Science then waits for the kids to grow up, to go to the gym when they didn’t want to.

“By the time the children reach high school, something remarkable has happened. A survey of the children’s parents and teachers found that those who as four-year-olds had the fortitude to hold out for the second marshmallow grew to be better adjusted, more popular, adventurous, confident, and dependable teenagers.”

The children who gave in to temptation early on were more likely to be lonely, easily frustrated, and stubborn. They buckled under stress and shied away from challenges. And when some of the kids in the two groups took the SATs, the kids who had held out longer scored an average of 210 points higher, "Time wrote of the results of the study. Yale University conducted research on adults and found the same results. These findings clearly have huge implications for parents, teachers, and all of us. Delayed gratification can be learned at any age. The benefits are immense. I think the key here is to be mindful. Pay attention to what’s going on and then help or be helped.

Congratulations on learning something about your brain today. The Brain Bulletin is committed to help to do just that.

ALWAYS REMEMBER: “You are a genius!” Enjoy your brain.

Kuantan Medical Centre (KMC) which was established in late December 1996 as a community hospital that provides a comprehensive range of affordable but quality secondary medical and surgical services for adult and paediatric patients. It is one of the four hospitals under the Healthcare Division of TDM Berhad, a public listed company.

With our expansion programme in new building which will be ready by early 2014, we would like to invite Malaysian professionals to join us as:

1. FULL TIME SPECIALIST CONSULTANTS
   • Urologist, Physician, Ophthalmologist, Cardiologist, Otolaryngologist, Neurologist & Oncologist
   Requirement:
   - Possess a recognised medical degree, MBBS or equivalent.
   - Registered with the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) and possess a valid Annual Practicing Certificate (APC).
   - Minimum three (3) years of working experience in the related field with good track record of practice.

2. 2. MEDICAL OFFICER
   Requirement:
   - Possess a recognised medical degree, MBBS or equivalent.
   - Registered with the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) and possess a valid Annual Practicing Certificate (APC).
   - A good track record of practice.
   - Willing to work on shift.

3. SENIOR PHYSIOTHERAPIST / HEAD OF PHYSIOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT
   Requirement:
   - Must possess a Bachelor’s Degree or Professional Degree in Physiotherapy.
   - Have at least five (5) years of working experience, which include as Head of Department.
   - Experienced in setting up a physiotherapy department and procurement of equipment, preferably in a hospital.
   - Must possess good communication skills, leadership, interpersonal, problem solving and decision making skills.
   - Possess a positive working attitude and able to work as a team.

4. PHYSIOTHERAPIST
   Requirement:
   - Urologist in physiotherapy.
   - Possess a minimum two (2) years working experience as a physiotherapist, preferably in a hospital.

5. 5. CHARGE SISTERS
   Requirement:
   - Degree or Diploma in Nursing from a recognised institution.
   - Registered with the Malaysian Nursing Board and possess a valid Annual Practicing Certificate (APC).
   - Possess a positive working attitude and able to work as a team.
   - At least five (5) years of working experience in nursing, which include supervisory capacity.
   - Possess strong reasoning and communication skills.
   - Possess a positive working attitude and able to work as a team.

6. STAFF NURSE
   Requirement:
   - Degree or Diploma in Nursing from a recognised institution.
   - Registered with the Malaysian Nursing Board and possess a valid Annual Practicing Certificate (APC).
   - Willing to work long hours and on shift.

7. PHARMACY ASSISTANT
   Requirement:
   - Diploma in Pharmacy from a recognised institution.
   - Preferably experience in a hospital set up.
   - Willing to work long hours and on shift.

8. SENIOR EXECUTIVE, PURCHASING
   Requirement:
   - Possess a Degree in Accounts, Finance, Business Administration or equivalent.
   - Minimum five (5) years of working experience in this field which include purchasing, inventory & stock management.
   - Experience in Hospital set up is an added advantage.

9. CHARGEMAN
   Job Requirement:
   - Registered with Suruhanjaya Tenaga.
   - Must have experience in testing and commissioning of electrical system or building maintenance, preferably in a hospital set up.
   - Able to work long hours and on standby call.

10. IT EXECUTIVE
    Job Requirement:
    - Possess a Degree in Computer Science, Information Technology or equivalent.
    - Minimum three (3) years working experience in this field which include installation, maintenance and troubleshooting of software, hardware, HIS, AIS, HIS and other IT related equipment and system.
    - Experience in Hospital set up is an added advantage.
    - Able to work long hours and on standby call.

11. DIETITIAN
    Requirement:
    - Possess minimum a Degree in Food Technology/Nutrition/Dietetics or equivalent.
    - At least five (5) years of working experience which include as Head of Department, preferably in a hospital set up.
    - Willing to work long hours and on shift.
    - Possess strong leadership and good communication skills.
    - Possess a positive attitude and able to work as a team.

12. COOK
    Requirement:
    - Possess a minimum a Diploma in Food & Beverage / Culinary Arts or equivalent.
    - Minimum two (2) years of working experience in the related field is required.
    - Willing to work long hours and on shift.

13. ASSISTANT COOK
    Requirement:
    - Possess a minimum a Diploma in Food & Beverage / Culinary Arts or equivalent.
    - Willing to work long hours and on shift.

14. SECURITY PERSONNEL
    Requirement:
    - Minimum Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM).
    - Able to work long hours and on shift.
    - Excellent health condition.
    - Experience in security role will be an added advantage.

We offer an attractive remuneration package which willcommensurate with qualification and experience to the successful candidates. Interested and qualified candidates are invited to apply and submit a detailed resume stating current and expected salary, contact telephone number and a recent passport-sized photograph in (1), not later than 15 March 2014 to:

Human Resource Department
KUANTAN MEDICAL CENTRE SDN BHD (414882-H)
No 1, Jalan Tan Iom 9
25000 Kuantan
Tel: 09-514 2828
Fax: 09-512 1543
Email: hrd@kmc@leaderonomics.com.my

Only shortlisted candidates will be notified.

1. LET YOUR BRAIN PASS THE MARSHMALLOW TEST?
2. YOU ARE A GENIUS!
3. ENJOY YOUR BRAIN.
The Star media group, committed to grow and develop talented world-class media leaders to ensure a sustainable pipeline of hopefuls who are multi-functional and also have deep expertise in multiple media platforms that include print, radio, television and digital media space," he adds. He stresses that having a good understanding of the media business in its entirety is a critical aspect of the group's talent development strategy.

One of the main training programmes in place is the Startrack 2.0, an award-winning management training programme that takes its participants on a two-year journey to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary for working in a media organisation.

The dynamic and structured programme is to develop high potential executives to be the pipeline of future leaders in the organisation and the media industry.

Candidates drafted into the programme, called Startrackers, will be placed on different job rotations across the various business platforms.

The King Maker

The main objective is to build a workforce that is well-versed in most (if not all) aspects of the media operations. We believe this is a key strategy that will equip the group to better face the challenges of the fast-paced business landscape. Startrack 2.0 is a manifestation of this strategy," Roshan says. According to The Star media group senior manager of group HR operations and administration Terence Raj, the recruitment drive will involve a call to the public to submit their applications through the various arms in The Star media group. Drives are also held in local and overseas universities, social websites and in conjunction with Malaysian student groups overseas.

The recruitment process will involve an assessment centre and also in the pipeline is a bootcamp pre-screening finale.

Successful candidates will undergo a comprehensive programme framework that involves robust job assignments, graded functional series, quarterly leadership sessions, group projects, field challenge pit stops, reading and case studies.

"The training involves both functional and leadership sessions. The performance of the candidates will be closely monitored and includes a performance evaluation on the job rotation, grading on the self-study modules, and assessment on projects," Terence explains. The well-calibrated programme provides candidates a holistic perspective and insights of the media business. The programme is also meant to help the young recruits build up their management skills and identify which field would best suit them based on their abilities.

Candidates should be degree holders with an excellent track record in extra-curricular activities, high leadership and community involvement, dynamic personality, high achievers and self-motivated, and with less than two years working experience.

The Apprentice

Terence says the Startrack 2.0 programme, designed in collaboration with Leaderonomics, has a solid structure that seeks to challenge and push the Startrackers beyond their perceived limitations through four robust job rotations in the group's multiple media platforms.

"Based on fully customised self-study modules over two years, the programme will deepen the young executive's knowledge in the media industry and develop a solid understanding of the various business models, management practices and product specialities within The Star media group," he elaborates. Leaderonomics' finance and human resources lead Ang Hui Ming says the young Startrackers will undergo multiple projects from process improvements to strategic ones, and be mentored and challenged in "The Apprentice-like" situations every year.

The two-year job rotation will allow the executives to experience four different roles of the media business in just a short period, which would normally take five to eight years.

Meanwhile, the fully customised MBA-like modules are designed to be fun, engaging, self-initiated and deep.

"It sets the quality of the programme and makes it more professional and creates a structure that deepens the knowledge of a media industry leader. In subjects like accounting, finance and engineering, there are professional papers and continuous learning to deepen one’s area of expertise. These media-related modules have been designed to create versatile media leadership skills that would be important for these young participants to have a solid foundation as they progress in the industry," Ang adds.

Given the well-rounded approach of the training programme, successful candidates will be well-equipped with the necessary media and business management knowledge and skills to become the future leaders of The Star media group and the media industry.
networked organisations: making the matrix work

by paul rogers, jenny davis-peckard and florian hope

you are a country manager at a large equip-
ment company. the company has made a
number of recent acquisitions and somehow it
never fully incorporated the acquired
organisation into its matrix management
structure. now you have four, five even six
boxes who must sign off on major decisions.

the reasons for managing a matrix for a
regional business is the belief that your
organisation's way of doing business is
not working. you believe your company has
not yielded the results that you would have
expected. unfortunately, most of your colleagues
in marketing believe that they have found the
right formula. the only way to get a decision is
to escalate the dispute to your executives too high up
in order to understand the necessary trade-offs.

you are facing a U-shaped-based packaged
company. you have a sales manager and local
customers, and those customers appreciate the fact
that they can speak directly to you, for example, change
the production line. now the CEO has created a
worldwide organisation with separate group sales and
marketing staff. there is no longer direct contact with
your local customers – and they are not happy about it.

welcome to the matrix organisation, also
known as the star organisation. it is a
network of factories, each selling
products company, for instance, must
produce better results than poor,
financial results correlate at a
level one, two, three, four, five or six, such as function,
and the results in the company's supply chain.

just like the automobile company mentioned
towards the end, through the organisation.
the company's progress on revenue growth, return on
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EMBRACING MATRIX REALITIES

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE MATRIX

SEEK ALTERNATIVE REALITIES

Early in the movie, the character Morpheus offers Neo the choice on whether he wants to learn the truth, which is a completely different reality: “You take the blue pill – the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill – you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes.”

This is a relevant situation for leaders. All too often, leaders suffer from an “emperor’s new clothes” syndrome, where bad news is filtered and reality is presented through rose-tinted shades. It is too easy to continue taking the “blue pill” and remain blissfully ignorant to very real problems.

The first key takeaway from the film for leaders is, have we surrounded ourselves with “yes-men” and do we have those willing to offer us a “red pill” and expose the “emperor’s new clothes”?

The situation in real life may not be as simplistic as one point of view of being wrong or false, whereas the alternative is the truth. As in The Matrix, if one dies in the state of virtual reality, one also dies in physical reality. The realities are linked, and to some extent are symbiotic.

I can relate to this with the often conflicting realities in the public and private sector, such as on one hand, aspiring for consistency in applying policies and yet on the other hand, recognising the need for exceptions based on merit in facilitating businesses.

Similarly, there are often linked but alternative “realities” between what is perceived by management and what is perceived by line staff or between expectations of external stakeholders and the internal organisation.

The second key takeaway is, as leaders, are we able to bridge the alternative realities and manage different stakeholders to a common purpose? Seeking alternative realities can be painful. In The Matrix, the physical reality is a harsh environment without creature comforts. So much so, the character Cypher laments, “Actually, I’ve been thinking it ever since I got here: Why oh why didn’t I take the BLUE PILL?”

Hence, the third key takeaway: leaders will need to be resilient and stay the course in seeking and embracing alternative realities. Further, beyond ourselves, we need to carry our team along for the potentially arduous journey.

BEND OURSELVES TO THE TRUTH

In a memorable scene, Neo meets a boy who can bend spoons and attempts to do it himself:

Boy: Do not try and bend the spoon. That is impossible. Instead... only try to realise the truth.
Neo: What truth?
Boy: There is no spoon.

Neo: There is no spoon?
Boy: Then you’ll see that it is not the spoon that bends, it is only yourself.

It is always easy to perceive ourselves as the victim and that it is someone else at fault that needs to change. Similarly, Einstein purportedly said that women marry men with the hope they will change but are invariably disappointed.

The wisdom of The Matrix and in particular, the spoon boy, is that change begins with ourselves. It is one thing as mentioned earlier to seek alternative realities. In order to effect change, we need to go further and “bend ourselves” to reality. In dealing with others, we may start with having different and potentially conflicting perspectives.

However, we cannot hope to champion for change in others if we do not appreciate and embrace the perspectives of those we hope to change. Further, given that change is naturally resisted, we cannot expect others to change if we ourselves do not show leadership by initiating the change ourselves – in the very least, demonstrate our own transformation as leadership by example. It is perhaps also the best way to initiate mutual compromise by displaying a willingness to “bend” first and then inviting others to reciprocate.

EMPATHY TO COLLABORATE

It is said that leadership involves effecting change from status quo. However, across an organisation and beyond effecting change will certainly involve collaborating and building effective partnerships successfully, whether with colleagues, business partners or stakeholders.

We cannot expect to forge a partnership if we visibly disdain our counterpart. However, this was what was displayed when the Architect met Neo:

Architect: I am the Architect. I created the Matrix. The first matrix I designed was quite naturally perfect. It was a work of art. Flawless. Sublime. A triumph only equalled by its monumental failure. The inevitability of its doom is apparent to me now as a consequence of the imperfection inherent in every human being.

The Architect effectively views himself as perfect, and humans as inherently imperfect and inferior. With such a position, he is unable to build a partnership nor effectively engage Neo and thus, the two part on bad terms.

In contrast, in the Matrix finale, Neo successfully strikes a deal with the machines:

Neo: I only ask to say what I’ve come to say. After that, do what you want and I won’t try to stop you.
Deus ex Machina: Speak. Neo: The programme Smith has grown beyond your control. Soon, he will spread through this city as he spread through the Matrix. You cannot stop him. But I can.
Deus ex Machina: We don’t need you! We NEED NOTHING!
Neo: If that’s true, then I’ve made a mistake and you should kill me now.

Quite unlike the Architect, Neo engages the machines with humility. Further, he offers them a solution to their immediate problem. In addition, Neo demonstrates true leadership in effectively sacrificing himself for the benefit of others (by brokering peace between the machines and humans).

Despite machines being the enemy, Neo knows what it takes to forge a partnership — understanding what the machines need and offering them a way forward is good for all in the long term (humans and machines).

How often have we truly put ourselves in the shoes of others and not only understand but empathise with their perspective and need? The lesson from The Matrix is that this is the path to partnership, particularly with challenging stakeholders.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

If anything, I hope that at least through this article, I have given you enough reason to watch the Matrix trilogy (again). That aside, the key lessons I hope to share from The Matrix are:

1. Willingness to seek and accept an alternative view of reality, painful as the process may prove;
2. Willingness to change ourselves if we are to lead others to change;
3. Willingness to truly and humbly empathise with others, towards forging a partnership that meets both needs.

Are you willing? That ultimately is your choice (like the choice presented to Neo, to make a difference and change the Matrix).

From the final scene...

ARCHITECT: You played a very dangerous game.
The Oracle: Change always is.

By JOHAN MERICAN
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

I was more than a decade ago when the first Matrix film was released. Yet, it can still vividly recall being captivated by how the movie’s happily combined science fiction with a Hong Kong action film style.

More than that, the Matrix wasn’t just a brainless action flick but presented a plot that verged on being philosophical.

In the Matrix world, what humans take to be reality, is actually an artificial virtual reality created by sentient machines, suspending humans in a dream state, in order to harvest the humans as a source of energy for the machines. Despite this very abstract science fiction setting, I believe the film offers good leadership lessons, particularly in embracing reality and seeking alternative perspectives.

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Resume tips for the experienced professional

By Ang Hui Ming
huiming.ang@leaderonomics.com

With a narrow window of opportunity of only six seconds in which an experienced professional can make an impression in order to land that interview, your resume needs to quickly grab the attention of the interviewer.

The story you craft in your resume has to be so intriguing and compelling that it forces the interviewer to pick up the phone and look forward to meeting you in person.

Sound like a tough feat to achieve? The truth is, crafting a solid and powerful resume is not rocket science. It does however involve quite a fair bit of effort and homework.

Here are some tips that may come in handy, especially for those that have been in the job market for a while and are looking for a change.

**Basic Information**
Name, address, contact information, relevant memberships and professional certifications are common basic information that should be easily found in any resume.

In today’s context, your online profiles like LinkedIn, Skype ID, personal blogs (appropriate to be shared in a professional context), etc are also important and considered very beneficial. These represent the experienced professional’s online savvy and their attitude towards keeping in trend with technology.

Many experienced people tend to go overboard and create long lists of information that are unnecessary. These include IC number, driving licence type, date of birth, race, religion, gender, photo, skills qualification and language competency (especially those with ratings to indicate your level) and a whole list of training sessions attended. You should avoid giving this information, unless it is specifically requested in the advertisement.

**Shout about your experience, not education**
Unlike entry level candidates, experienced professionals should highlight their job experiences first. Unless you are in the education industry where your MBA and PhD are crucial criteria, education qualifications can come towards the end.

It is more than sufficient to highlight your top two qualifications and not go all the way back to primary school.

**Highlighting critical experience and accomplishments**
This portion of the resume is probably the most important for experienced professionals. And of course, this section is also the most challenging to craft.

Many professionals bore their interviewer to death with a mini chronological order of all their past job descriptions and end up with a four to five page resume. You don’t have to list all your past experiences by year, nor cover all your past jobs.

Learn to highlight relevant achievements that make you valuable. Keep a list of all your key achievements in every job you take. From your exhaustive list, pick and choose only key achievements from each job that may be relevant to the new job you are applying for. If you’re applying for a job in the same function would be good to storyboard your achievements in a “Growth” mode; for example, your experience and achievements should show a build-up from basic skills to a more managerial and leadership track in the particular function.

If you are applying for a job in the same industry but in a different function, let your achievement story show a “breadth” of experience in the industry, showcasing how comprehensive you are in being an industry expert.

And if you are planning to completely shift gears and try something new, then highlight the experiences you had in your new function or industry while going through your past jobs.

Remember to support all your high-lighted achievements with financial KPIs or other measurable indicators suitable for the industry or function.

Remember that it is not necessary to indicate the time period you were at each job. Any chance to conceal your age is advantageous, whether you have insufficient years of experience needed by the job or you are too close to retirement. It is illegal to discriminate people based on their age, but some employers take age into consideration nonetheless. If you can avoid age discrimination to land the interview simply by being wise, do it.

**Use action verbs wisely**
As you highlight your accomplishments, learn to use action verbs to enhance your resume’s effectiveness. Action verbs make all your achievements come to life and show a strong sense of getting things done. They enhance your capability on the job.

To find the best action verbs to convey your message to your interviewer, utilise any online search engine and you’ll get tonnes to choose from.

A word of caution though: using too many verbs can lead to buzzword overload. Be tactful in your usage and be honest. Experienced interviewers can pick up on exaggeration.

**Watch out for acronyms**
One of the pitfalls of an experienced professional’s resume is the usage of acronyms. It is something that is often overlooked because those acronyms are terms that are so familiar and common to the person preparing the resume. It could be an alien language to the new employer, though.

Depending on the job you are applying for, try not to use technical acronyms unless it is one that sells your qualifications/skills or one that is specifically listed as a requirement for the role you are applying for.

Even if you are sending your resume to a company in the same industry, note that the person who will read it for the first time might not have any technical expertise. You are better off making it more layman-friendly to ensure that it makes sense to the interviewer.

**Highlight key non-work achievements/involvement**
It is beneficial to let your future employer know you better as an overall individual in the context of work and outside of it. Many underestimate the value of their more current outside activities, which in fact help boost their overall marketability.

Involvement in volunteering activities, sports, community projects, relevant professional bodies, advocate groups and similar activities are highly regarded. Highlight key projects or initiatives you were a part of rather than just the “role” or “title” held.

These activities should be current. There is no point listing all your leadership positions in your school days and having a void in your working years. Be real and purposeful when you add these to your profile.

**One resume for each employer**
One of the most common mistakes people make is to create a stand and resume and sending it to all the job openings that they can find.

Employers looking for experienced candidates are skilled in filtering out whether or not your resume was prepared with them in mind or off the shelf package.

The worst case you can imagine is sending in your resume addressed to another employer that you previously sent your resume to. Believe me, this has happened! Tailor your resume and cover letter for each employer. It makes a difference.

**Getting past the Gatekeeper**
Sixty per cent of companies’ initial “gate keepers” before Human Resources is an electronic resume software screening programme. It helps to know how this works so that you use the right keywords in your resume or the online application.

Remember to look out for all the specific requirements of the advertisement and fulfil those to get through.

Whether a position is advertised or not, you can still submit your resume to the interviewer if you take the initiative to find out his/her email. And the fastest way to land that interview is to have an “attention grabbing” subject and a cover letter email that “mirrors” what the company is looking for. “Change Maker At Your Service”, “Marshmallows Wanted”, “Passionate Professional Eager to Join You”, were some email subjects that made me personally curious to read a candidate’s resume submitted via email.

Though it may sound cheesy, it pigged curiosity and anticipation for a unique individual that stands out amongst the ordinaire.

Once you get the attention of the interviewer, a succinct, concise cover letter that summarises your desire to join the organisation and what you can contribute to the organisation is essential.

Your chances of landing the interview will be heightened if your cover letter “mirrors” the key points that were advertised, as well as the culture, vision and culture of the organisation.

Use the recruiter’s keywords so they feel you are a candidate for them.

**Proof read your resume**
Ensuring your resume is grammatically correct indicates professionalism and attention to detail. After proof reading your resume, also read it in third-party and side yourself away from your resume. If your resume would impress your future employer.

As you embark on your resume enhancing journey, keep in mind that your resume is a self-promotional document that presents you in the best possible light, for the purpose of getting invited to a job interview.

Put yourself in the shoes of the employer and prepare your resume to satisfy you in the capacity of the employer. And have fun in the whole process!

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We are Malaysia Video contest
 Shoot, write & win RM10,000 cash prize
 Find out more at mob.com.my

I am Malaysia Theme and production apply

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**An interviewee gets 50 to 300 resumes for every job advertised**

**Through a human filter, it takes six seconds to determine whether your resume will be reviewed**

**With an automated filter, your resume may or may not make it to the interviewer**

**Interviewers screen a resume within six seconds**

That’s how fast your fate for an interview is decided!
If you think your favourite radio announcers are the only reason the radio show you like is such a hit, then you are deeply mistaken. Besides the witty and charismatic style of these presenters, there is another significant person involved in making the radio show as good as it is. This is none other than the producer, who is the backbone of the show.

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with The Red Breakfast WTF show’s producer Prem Anand from Red FM. Prem has been attached with the station’s morning show as a producer since 2012. He is also the programming manager for Red FM.

“Right after my secondary education I went on to study law at the Multimedia University in Cyberjaya. Growing up, I had always wanted to be a lawyer but also had a passion for music and this interest kept growing within me. While studying, I was always fascinated by the right law. My first job upon graduation was as a legal adviser for a media organisation. I was in this organisation for just a short while. I moved on to become a radio show producer in late-2008. I started off with Red FM in August last year,” he explains.

PLANNING AND CREATIVITY

According to Prem, a breakfast show producer handles two main aspects. One is to manage the individuals on-air and the other is to manage talent off-air. In terms of on-air management, Prem provides the announcers the content they need, making sure what they say on air is compliant to the rules and regulations set by the station.

“For example, when I have a particular topic set for the day, I research on it and come up with reliable facts and pass them to my announcers. They will then go through them and convey the message to the listeners using their own voice and style. Besides that, I also source for relevant guests that will be suitable for the topics set for each day. The planning is usually done on a monthly basis, with further planning done every week and even on a daily basis. This is because we try to stay abreast with the current news. Sometimes there are last minute cancellations but I always have back-up Suitable topics set for each day. The songs in the playlist for the day might involve elements of production and this takes more than usual.

A TYPICAL DAY

Prem goes live on air at 6am with his announcers. He is in the studio throughout the show cueing them on the segments for the day. From 6am to 7am, The Red Breakfast WTF show is music-driven with trivia facts being thrown in now and then. The guests come on air from 7am to 9am. This is also the time when the topic of the day is discussed with the guests, who will provide their thoughts and opinions. This is known as the peak period as most people are tuned in to their radios while making their way to work.

“After 9am, most people are already at work. Hence, being tactful while handling them is very important to ensure nothing goes wrong. “One good memory which

OUT-OF-THE-BOX ARE KEY INGREDIENTS TO BECOMING A PRODUCER

“Besides that, you have to be organised and good at planning. Teamwork is also important here as you are working with your announcers. You need to be able to engage with your team well. A producer also has to be independent and quick in making decisions on the spot. After all, it is the producer who has to take charge and make decisions for the show.

WHAT IT TAKES

Prem does not believe that you have to be qualified in a particular field to be a radio show producer. For him, being creative and thinking out-of-the-box are key ingredients to becoming a producer.

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LEADERSHIP has been taught for centuries. It functions in various settings, such as in the military, politics and business. “In the case of politics, a leader has the responsibility to lead the whole nation,” says Dr Ram Charan.

“The output and tools used here are different from the ones used in business leadership. However, when it comes to the personality traits of leaders from different disciplines, some of the characteristics are the same such as the energy, liking people, motivating people and authenticity,” he explains.

Born in India, Charan is one of the world’s most renowned business consultants and advisers. He is well-known for his uncanny and unique methods when it comes to helping CEOs and businessmen overcome their most difficult business obstacles.

Charan owns a business management consulting company under the name Charan Associates which is located in Dallas, Texas.

With 35 years of experience working with top-notch executives at some of the most prominent organisations, his list of clientele includes GE, Verizon, Novartis, Dupont, Thomson Corp, Honeywell, KLM, Bank of America, and MeadWestvaco. Besides that, he lectures and is also the author of various best-sellers on business.

“I snapped” the full interview of Dr Ram Charan and other videos of inspirational personalities, visit www.leaderonomics.com/thetea-

Charan says that this can be done effectively when you start backwards. For Charan, backwards means thoroughly understanding what the customer’s need is. Then, it is all about identifying the difficulties faced and eventually coming up with the best solutions to solve them.

The methods he suggests can be easily followed. According to Charan, the key to working well with anyone, regardless of position, is to always be honest with them.

**By PREMA JAYABALAN**
prema.jayabalan@leaderonomics.com

**What you like**

**The matrix organisation**

The matrix organisation was introduced in the United States in the early 1960s. It was used to solve management problems in the Aerospace Industry.

**Skills**
The matrix organisation is also commonly referred to as the boundaryless organisation.

Some companies practice a functional structure as a whole, but they implement the matrix structure in certain projects.

**Information**

The matrix organisation is an organisational structure that facilitates the horizontal flow of skills and information.

The matrix structure is mainly used in the management of large projects or product development processes. It draws employees from different functional disciplines for assignment to a team without removing them from their respective positions.

Employees in a matrix organisation do not stay in a similar role for a long time. They practise rotation, and are switched to different divisions with different roles for short durations.

**Matrix organisation**

The matrix structure is more common and practised in most large organisations, especially those that have numerous business units and international operations.

Matrix management is more dynamic than functional management (a classic management structure where each employee has a single superior whom they report to) because it allows team members to share information in a swift manner across task boundaries.

**Matrix management**

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Matrix management is more common and practised in most large organisations, especially those that have numerous business units and international operations.
HR CONSULTING FIRM: TO JOIN OR NOT TO JOIN? 35 is a really good age, where you have the best of both worlds. You’ve gathered enough experience, maturity and credibility in your career to know what you want to focus on, and you still have enough energy to learn and grow.  

If for the last 10 years of your HR career you’ve been attached to an HR division of an organisation, making a move into an HR consulting firm is actually very good. It would give you a completely different perspective and also deepen your expertise on various HR functions.  

In a corporate HR role of an organisation you are mostly bogged down with administration and operational problems to solve. This leaves you less time to focus on improving and enhancing HR processes or initiatives. Being in an HR consulting role, you will be exposed to many different companies’ HR structures, operations and best practices. You will also be able to learn many methods of research, benchmarking and designing HR solutions for others.  

There is a steep learning curve as you are required to analyse and provide value adding solutions to your HR clients. With your background, coupled with your Masters, you would have a good chance of getting into an HR consulting firm, if your personality is one which is able to adapt to client-facing situations.

DEAR CAREEROMERS, I am 35 years old and have about 10 years of experience in human resources (HR) mainly in payroll, operations and recruitment. I am currently pursuing my master’s degree in HR management. I am interested in compensation and benefits (C&B) but have little knowledge about it. Since my involvement and skillset in C&B is minimal, I would like some advice on the following: Should I join a HR consulting firm to enhance my skillset and knowledge for about two to three years and then move back to the corporate world? Would it be possible to get hired for C&B roles at mid-management level even though I have minimal understanding of C&B but have a strong interest in it? I plan to enroll for CAT (and later pursue ACCA as well), as I like numbers. I believe that with this knowledge, I may be able to help an organisation design good benefit programmes/proposals to attract new people. I may even be able to make these proposals appropriate for the business direction by taking into consideration the current financial situation of the company and HR best practices. I would appreciate your advice. Thank you.

Regards, ANDY

DEAR CAREEROMER,

I am one of the few HR people in this field. I am interested in compensation and benefits (C&B) but have a strong interest in it. It’s highly possible that you can secure a mid-management role in C&B, then it’s tricky. To lead a team in a niche area like C&B, it is important for the manager to be well-versed in the area so that he can provide guidance and direction to the juniors on how to develop proper proposals and analyses for the clients. Also, as the consultant, you will need to have credibility and know ledge in that particular field to be able to perform mid-management roles. It is crucial to understand the expertise that you are the expert in C&B. I would encourage you to try, but also consider other mid-management roles in the HR consulting firm that best leverage your experience. Once you’re in the consulting firm, there will be opportunities to get involved in C&B projects.

GETTING AN ACCOUNTING CERTIFICATION

You are one of the few HR people who actually like numbers. It’s quite rare, and yet it’s really needed. Understanding finance is always crucial in business, regardless of what function you are in. Do get yourself equipped in your financial knowledge and understanding. Understanding the business model of the organisation will make you a good HR business partner and also help you make better decisions. Do take the time to fully understand what it means to take CAT or ACCA. These are heavy certifications in accounting that are catered for people who are interested to build a career in accounting and finance. It’s a question of whether or not this is necessary for your role and how much time you can spare to get the qualifications.

You can always consider a variety of methods to understand finance in the business context such as online courses, and books. And you can always learn from your in-house finance experts!

Good luck in your journey to becoming a great HR business partner!

Ang Hui Ming

DEAR ANDY,

First and foremost, you are moving along the right track. Your decision to take up a Masters in HRM is a good one and to complement it by taking up a deeper interest in C&B will enhance your resume and experience even more.

Here are my suggestions on the three questions you have: The well-known international consulting firms have offices in Kuala Lumpur and the region and house fairly sizable practices. There are also some local firms which provide HR/C&B consulting services. By working with a top-end consulting firm, you will be able to access a knowledge management system, work on regional accounts and also operate with highly-skilled consultants who have worked locally, regionally and also with a set of clients who are willing to invest in obtaining C&B advice. In addition to this, you will also be trained in methodologies and be supported by an integrated Human Resource System. The access to a consulting environment will expose you to how world-class HR heads and C&Bs think especially in terms of attraction and retention of employees. C&B is conceptual and one of the most diverse professions within an organisation. The compensation professional’s skills, abilities and also evolved with time to be more consultative, technical and business-focused in nature, while strong analytical skills and in-depth compensation knowledge have always been essential.

The C&B function impacts all segments of employees. It also manages programmes that directly impact an organisation’s performance; require internal knowledge of the organisation’s culture, structure, departments and jobs and external knowledge of its industry and labour markets; and require a skill set which runs the gamut – from analyst to negotiator to communicator to educator. While some of us get into C&B and perform a very technical role, there is an increasing need for C&B professionals to be able to stand up in a board room to sell and pitch to their audience. Asking for a financial budget is never easy. Today, with Baldes III and the implementation of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and the Consumer Protection Act, and in my sector the new Financial Services Act and also the Financial Stability Board principle, many HR heads have to be answerable for the type of bonuses and salaries that heads are paid.

Thus, there is demand for more mature C&B professionals with independent judgment. By being in the mid-30s and having experience in HR operations and recruitment, you have a better chance of being hired as long as pay is not the main determinant.

One of the professional qualifications that you should be trying to obtain is the Global Remuneration Professional (GRP).

The designation will give you an edge in today’s competitive world if you would like to specialise in C&B. You can access www.worldworkforce.org and sign up as a member, which would enable you to get in a self-study programme. You can even undertake a Masters qualification in HRM there. I would strongly suggest you go this route.

Another good site to access is www.shrm.com where you can find many links on compensation and benefits.

Amazon.com promotes many compensation and benefits books. I suggest that you try and obtain The World at Work Handbook of Compensation, Benefit and Total Rewards which should provide a good overview on the subject. The above should be able to give you a good start to your new pursuit. I would also encourage you to sign up now. Complete your Masters, and sign up for the GRP. This certification with your past working experience will place you in a good position to assume a role in C&B.

I am confident that after obtaining both papers, you should not have any problems being hired as a C&B professional. Lastly, do brush up on any of your effective presentation skills, as the ability to put forth your ideas is important in this field.

Good luck in your pursuit.

NANCY S Y SIM-LIM

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

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