IT'S A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT

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SUSTAINABILITY TIP: ARTICULATE A PERSONAL PURPOSE

OVER the last few months, I’ve bumped into folks who were noticeably spent. One individual had been steadily pulling long hours at work and was so exhausted that she ended up in the hospital. I remember asking, “Is this sustainable?” to which she replied “No, but I think it will get better.” I’m sure this isn’t a foreign condition for many Malaysians. I recognise there are seasons in our career that genuinely require slogging and I’m as much of a fan of hard work and getting the job done as Boomers among us. However, when negative physical and emotional repercussions set in as a result of prolonged periods of high intensity work, it makes me stop and think about personal thresholds and when too much is really too much.

I’ve been chewing on this idea of sustainability in our careers (hence the theme for this week’s pullout). How do we make sure we’re not just gearing up for a career sprint, but that we’re able to sustain performance in the long-term?

One answer I found was surprising. Here is the thought: In order to avoid burnout, we must articulate a personal purpose that is not the same as our organisation’s purpose.

Tim Casserlie and David Megginson in the book Learning from Burnout: Developing Sustainable Leaders and Avoiding Career Burnout put it like this: “Individual and organisational purposes may, for a time, appear to be heading in the same direction, but it is an act of utter folly to surrender one’s purpose to the organisation, believing it wants exactly the same thing. Leaders who are sustainable, who are it in for the long haul, keep their purposes separate from their employers.”

The thought caught me off guard. But the more I chewed on it, the more I appreciated it. Our lives encompass far more elements than our careers involve.

If we want to run this marathon successfully, we have to honestly and carefully identify our priorities as individuals, and ensure that while we give 100% to work, we do not ignore elements like God, family, friends and the community, which are often the fuel that keep us going.

Individual purpose serves as a guide to our daily decisions, and articulation of this purpose will help us recognise when a line has been crossed.

The way I see it, if we take Casserlie and Megginson’s advice, we come to work as holistic individuals who offer our experience to the companies we are a part of. The Centre of Employee Value, a division of the Ryder Self Group, defines employee sustainability this way: “Employee sustainability measures the ability for individuals to perform effectively at work, day after day, while also enjoying a quality of life.”

Let’s live as individuals who understand our purpose so we can refreshed in the morning can help you wake up slightly earlier just to relax. Before you go to work, spend 10 to 15 minutes in quiet relaxation. Make the effort to do something fun that has nothing to do with your work. Some Serenity

Author Christine Hohlbaum writes “if you no longer wake up with fire in your belly – but rather with your stomach on fire – you are burnt out.” Recognise that you have lost momentum. Look up signs of burnout, and if they all sound familiar, accept the fact that you are burnt out and that you need to do something about it.

START YOUR DAY WITH SOME SERENITY

Before you go to work, spend 10 to 15 minutes in quiet relaxation. Make the effort to do something fun that has nothing to do with your work.

LEARN TO SAY “NO”

We tend to be overachievers at times. We want to take up everything though we know we can’t handle it all. Learn how to say “no” to tasks because we are all still human. We all need rest. Our body needs time to rejuvenate if it’s tired. Think about the quality instead of the quantity. Put your best effort into the tasks you already have instead of piling up your workload and as a result, you produce poor quality work.

LILY CHEAH

Editor, myStarjob.com

A V O I D B U R N I N G O U T

If you are constantly dragging your feet to work and forcing a smile though you look like you have not slept in days, chances are, you are experiencing burnout.

Burnout is a psychological disorder that sets in when you have been experiencing prolonged stress. So how do we deal with burnout?

1. ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU ARE BURNT OUT

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4. LET YOUR CREATIVITY FLOW

Don’t be afraid to explore your creative side. This will ensure a balanced lifestyle when you start using more of your brain.

Dr Shelley Carson writes, “The latest neuroscience research suggests that developing our creative potential will lead to greater success and fulfillment in our personal and professional lives.” Do something new like starting a project or going for an art class. Try something fun that has nothing to do with your work.

5. SEEK HELP

Find someone you can trust and just let it out. Don’t be afraid when you come to a breaking point and need help.

Discuss your work situation and how you can address the burnout you are experiencing. It is absolutely alright to share your struggles with someone else.

The opinions expressed in this career guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.

1. “Leadership is an active role, ‘lead’ is a verb. But the leader who tries to do it all is headed for burnout, and in a powerful hurry” – Bill Owens

2. “Adopting the right attitude can convert a negative stress into a positive one.” - Hans Selye

3. “In dealing with those who are undergoing great suffering, if you feel ‘burnout’ setting in, if you feel demoralised and exhausted, it is best, for the sake of everyone, to withdraw and restore yourself. The point is to have a long-term perspective.” – Dalai Lama

4. Science writer Ulrich Kraft says it’s the best employees that tend to burn out. These are the individuals who are enthusiastic and responsible, whose job is a crucial part of their identity.

5. According to Child Development Resource Connection feel, “Burnout arises in response to expectations placed upon us, either by ourselves or others. It is common in home or work situations where there are highly stressful demands on our time and energy, or when we feel others are dependent upon us.”
By BOB AND GREGG VANOUREK
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

O, you want to build a sustainable organisation. Great.

What do you mean by “sustainable”?

An organisation that has built environmental protection into its operations, or an organisation that is enduring?

If your focus is on being “green,” you might think that since the world is becoming more environmentally conscious, you can “do well by doing good,” as the saying goes, and customers will beat a path to your door because you are “green.”

Good luck with that. Too often, that is just not the case. There is no automatic win. Many companies shine on corporate social responsibility (CSR) metrics but struggle with performance.

So, how can you do both? We have a framework of advanced leadership practices, based on decades of our own experience and our research, including interviews with leaders from 65 organisations in 13 countries for Triple Crown Leadership: Building Excellent, Ethical, and Enduring Organisations.

THE THREE Es:

First, you must set as your overarching goal to build an Excellent, Ethical, and Enduring Organisation.

We call it the “Three Es.” Building an excellent, ethical, and enduring organisation means embracing a new model of leadership, what we call “triple crown leadership.” It is a model very different from most leadership models used today.

Here is how we define the Three Es:

Excellent: Excellent means achieving outstanding results. Regardless of your intentions, if you don’t achieve strong results, your tenure as a leader will be short. In business, you must generate attractive financial results.

In non-profits, you must generate impact with your programmes to attract participants and donors or grants.

Ethical: Ethical means operating in accordance with universal principles of right and wrong. It means achieving your results the right way: without cutting corners.

Triple crown leaders make decisions after analysis, reflection, and consultation with trusted colleagues.

They apply simple standards such as: “Would this violate any of my core beliefs?” “How would I feel if this were on the front page of the newspaper?” and “What would my family say about this decision?”

Yancey Hai, vice-chair and CEO of Delta Electronics (an award-winning global leader in clean energy solutions based in Taiwan), told us, “You must have a high degree of integrity; otherwise, you don’t belong here.”

Often, the ethical path is the harder one. It can be painful or costly for example, when others in your industry are bribing or cooking the books.

In the long run, ethical ventures build trust and reap dividends.

Committed: Commitment is essential, but only the first step. Leaders must also create systems and processes for instilling ethics into the enterprise.

Enduring: Some organisations accomplish impressive feats by sacrificing the long term for the short term. They cut corners, or abuse some stakeholder group (such as employees or vendors) in order to gain temporary advantage.

Eventually, they face a rude awakening, realising they cannot sustain such artificial gains because they borrowed from a future quarter, depleted replaceable assets, or lost the trust of important constituents.

Enduring organisations operate sustainably, which, as we see it, has two dimensions:

Internal: sustaining people (not burning them out or otherwise abusing them) and maintaining the financial health of the organisation.

External: ensuring appropriate and sustainable levels of resource consumption.

Thankfully, many organisations today reject the siren call of short-termism and instead play the “long game.”

Paul Polman, CEO of Unilever, said, “If you buy into (Unilever’s) long-term value creation model, which is equitable, which is shared, which is sustainable, then come and invest with us. If you don’t buy into this, I respect you as a human being, but don’t put your money in our company.”

The views of business leaders around the world are changing. In a 2011 survey of 2,874 executives and managers from 113 countries, two-thirds indicated that sustainability is critically important to being competitive in today’s marketplace, up from 55% the year before.

Thirty-one percent said their companies are currently projecting from sustainable business practices.

An overwhelming majority of hundreds of finance executives and investment professionals surveyed by McKinsey and Company believe CSR creates shareholder value.

The business case for sustainable practices includes the potential for increased sales, customer loyalty, revenue diversification, pricing premia, cost reduction, risk mitigation, reputation enhancement, operational efficiency, innovation benefits, competitive advantage, and talent attraction, motivation, and retention.

Each of the three Es is difficult on its own. Triple crown leaders commit to all three.

The question then becomes: what are the leadership practices that help you achieve them? A summary appears below:

THE FIVE PRACTICES OF TRIPLE CROWN LEADERSHIP

1 Head and Heart: Triple crown leaders start with new approaches to choosing, developing, and rewarding people. Most organisations focus on knowledge, skills, and experience — “head” issues. Triple crown leaders, by contrast, recruit for all that plus “heart”: character, emotional intelligence, and “fit” with the organisational culture.

2 The Colours: Triple crown leaders employ their organisation’s shared purpose, values, and vision as sacrosanct “colours” to represent their quest to become excellent, ethical, and enduring.

The colours are standards by which people can judge their options and make decisions. The purpose grounds, the values guide, and the vision inspires.

3 Steel and Velvet: Triple crown leaders know when to invoke the hard edge of leadership — the steel bit — that demands excellent results, insists upon ethical practices, and resists the allure of short-term thinking.

They also know when to invoke the soft edge of leadership — the velvet stroke — that patiently builds a high-performance culture of character.

The key is that they must learn to do both: getting beyond their natural style and flexing between the hard and soft edges of leadership, depending on the people and situation.

4 Stewards: Triple crown leadership is a group performance, not a solo act.

People are empowered by the purpose, values, and vision, not by the authorities, and they have an automatic licence to lead as long as they develop and protect the organisation’s high-performance culture of character. In doing so, they become stewards.

They work on the enterprise, not just in it. This act of stewardship entails radically new responsibilities for the board, CEO, officers, and even people without formal authority.

5 Alignment: Triple crown leaders align organisations to achieve extraordinary results. Aligned organisations operate at or near peak performance.

They execute remarkably, yet retain the flexibility to make rapid midcourse corrections. Alignment involves a 10-step, collaborative, leadership process that anyone can learn and implement.

THE BENEFITS OF TRIPLE CROWN LEADERSHIP

Leaders who capture their ventures on a quest to become excellent, ethical, and enduring, and who employ the five advanced leadership practices summarised above, will see a host of benefits:

• Infligting due to lack of trust, disrespectful behaviour, and cutthroat competition decreases.

• People commit to the organisation, fueling innovation and unashamed breakthrough ideas.

• The organisation avoids the devastating costs of ethical implosions.

• Employees experience greater satisfaction and fulfillment at work, increasing productivity and decreasing staff attrition.

• Stakeholders reward the enterprise with increased business, loyalty, and support.

This triple crown leadership quest is demanding and not for the faint-hearted. No organisation is perfect. People make mistakes. Values collide. But employing a new brand of leadership can raise your performance levels, employee engagement, and stakeholder satisfaction to new levels.

It is time to put building an excellent, ethical, and enduring organisation at the top of your priority list — and to raise your leadership game.

By so doing, you will build a sustainable organisation.

Bob and Gregg Vansuerek, father and son, are co-authors of Triple Crown Leadership: Building Excellent, Ethical, and Enduring Organisations, winner of the 2013 International Book Awards. Gregg is an adjunct professor at the Royal Institute in Sweden. Bob is the former CEO of five corporations. They will be in Malaysia on June 16. If you are keen to sign up for the Triple Crown Leadership seminar or to invite them to speak to your organisation, email people@leaderonomics.com
A NYONE who has ever held a job knows the power of one’s immediate manager to influence employee engagement. While this seems true regardless of how you might define engagement, it is especially so when you consider Towers Watson’s concept of sustainable engagement. The manager’s role moves beyond an employee’s mere willingness to exert extra effort and incorporates how enabled an employee is to get the work done and how energized he or she is to do it.

Indeed, it seems nearly impossible to imagine a scenario in which the manager does not play a key role in driving these critical factors. This view is supported by the results of Towers Watson’s Global Workforce Study, which found that an employee’s attitude toward the immediate manager is among the top five drivers of sustainable engagement globally (other top drivers include senior leadership, work/life balance, goals and objectives, and company image).

But managers who excel at the activities associated with this first attribute go beyond these basics to help employees craft jobs that have ample energizing elements (such as interesting work and fulfilling team relationships) combined with the right energising elements (such as satisfying tasks, opportunities to master skills, recognition for success). Exceptional managers don’t just connect people with training, coaching them or giving frequent feedback, however.

Rather, they seek to personalise each employee’s development experience by working with him or her to craft an individual long-term plan for growth and development. They could include, for example, the creation of a network of internal and external learning contacts uniquely relevant to that employee. Delivering the Deal, the third component of the model, focuses on ensuring employees are rewarded for their efforts.

Solidly performing managers apply the organisation’s reward systems equitably. They adhere to the company’s stated (though rarely well-executed) pay-for-performance philosophy and do their best to administer reward systems effectively.

But managers who strive for excellent performance go well beyond these basics. They understand that pay frequently fails to reinforce performance and that ownership behaviour doesn’t result from holding a miniscule portion of a company’s equity. Rather, they use the entire portfolio of intrinsic rewards at their disposal (satisfying tasks, opportunities to master skills, recognition for success) to make employees feel individually appreciated.

The fourth component of the model is Energising Change. This involves helping employees respond to change that is both imposed and unavoidable (e.g. reorganisation, strategic redirection, downsizing) as well as leveraging and creating change sparked by innovation and creativity, such as when people develop new offerings or find better ways to work.

This requires managers to help employees through change that is both affirmative and forward-looking (although not necessarily easy) as well as the kind that is less favourably perceived, such as when economic conditions or market trends make adapting merely a requirement for survival. The final component of the model is Foundational and underlies the preceding four: Authenticity and Trust.

Every manager, of course, must act with integrity. But the best managers also display the humility, intellectual honesty, interpersonal sensitivity and behavioural consistency required to perform effectively across all core elements of the manager model. These elements form a basis for establishing a trusting relationship between manager and employee.

Looking across the model’s components, we can clearly see a common theme: Effective managers understand what each individual requires and leverage the organisational systems to deliver it. This means paying attention to each person’s talents and interests, and customising their work, their development opportunities and their rewards accordingly. Our model predicts these actions will improve sustainable engagement and, therefore, business performance. Of course, it is always desirable to test these assertions and examine their unique aspects inside each company by incorporating the right questions.

This article has been contributed by Towers Watson Malaysia.

**THE POWER OF GREAT MANAGERS**

**HOW THEY INFLUENCE SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

By ADAM ZUCKERMAN
mystartjob.com, Saturday 15 March 2014

**SWEET TASTE OF SUCCESS**

By PREMA JAYABALAN
prema.jayabalani@leaderonomics.com

SAHAR Hashemi was a lawyer at the initial stages of her career journey before deciding to start her own business. Today, she is a successful entrepreneur, a sought-after speaker on innovation and entrepreneurship as well as a bestselling author. “I believe that you are all entrepreneurs,” she says. “My transition from a lawyer to a businesswoman took place when I tried to turn my idea into a reality.”

“The process of taking our ideas and working towards making it happen is what turns us into entrepreneurs,” shares Hashemi, best known as the co-founder of Coffee Republic, UK’s first coffee bar chain which she started with her brother.

Hashemi is also the founder of Skinny Candy, a confectionery that produces low-fat sweets and chocolates. In 2011, Director magazine nominated her dynamic as one of the Top 10 original thinkers in 2013.

Her book, Anyone Can Do It – Building Coffee Republic from our Kitchen Table, is the second-highest selling book on entrepreneurship in the UK that has been translated into six languages. Hashemi is part of the secretary of state’s entrepreneurs’ forum, where she advises the government on policies involving enterprises.

She is also on the business support consumer panel where her expertise is extended to advising the department of business, innovation, and skills on business support.

**By ADAM ZUCKERMAN**
mystartjob.com

SAHAR Hashemi co-founded Coffee Republic, UK’s first coffee bar chain.

“Starting a business is not easy, you will face many challenges along the way. It is not easy forming that one small idea of yours into a revenue churning reality.”

“You basically have to start from scratch when it comes to looking for money, getting suppliers and putting your business together.

“You have to be innovative and you face resistance from many people who are not aware or sure of what you are attempting to do. But the aim is to keep moving without letting all these elements influence your ambition.”

Hashemi still remembers when her brother and she opened their first coffee bar. No one came in for the first few days. It was a new coffee place amidst many famous ones, and no one wanted to give it a shot.

“It took perseverance, hard work and a never give-up attitude to flourish the business. We came up with innovative methods to sell our products and eventually it picked up. It did very, very well till the day we sold the business off,” she reminisces.

According to Hashemi, there is no such thing as overnight success. It all boils down to hard work, persistence and a hunger to succeed. “To all the young, aspiring entrepreneurs out there, if you have an idea, the first thing you do is your homework. Do your research and get to know your business well. Once you have all the information that you need, put your head up and just go ahead and do it.”

People may try to intervene and influence you, but you have to believe in yourself in order to make it real, she explains.

“Remember, you are the master of your own destiny and nobody can say otherwise,” Hashemi advises.

Sahar Hashemi will be in Kuala Lumpur on April 3. She will be speaking at The Business of Innovation forum organised by The London Speaker Bureau. For more information, visit www.bizinnovation.com.my or call 03-23038988.
Evolving to break new grounds

The first pillar of AmBank Group’s EVP promises continuous growth for both the organisation and employees. As the Group recognises that the dynamic growth of the organisation will mean the ability to provide employees with a wide range of opportunities, it constantly seeks to break new grounds and encourages innovation across the Group. It harnesses best practices from its acquisitions, and leverages international partnerships to ensure employees are sharpening their skills. Expatriate employees from the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ) and Insurance Australia Group (IAG) provide support to build technical knowledge and up-skill local expertise.

AmBank Group expects high performance and wants to ensure its employees have the tools they need to achieve this. Clear KPIs and targets are set, and line managers are being developed to manage high levels of performance outcomes.

To equip employees with information on how to set objectives and realign KPIs and targets, the Group offers e-learning facilities on its “MyLMS” platform. The Group also seeks to reward those who outperform. Mindful that rewards must come in forms that relate best to its employees, it is tailoring its rewards philosophy based on feedback from employee surveys. On top of that, it is increasing the transparency on how pay is linked to performance and wants to ensure its employees are being recognised for their contribution.

Growing across AmBank Group

Growing in AmBank Group is taken very seriously. Leaders are given KPIs that encompass people development, and a formalised talent management process is in place to facilitate learning and development. Competencies are defined and mapped to positions, and career paths are drawn up to provide career options within the Group. Furthermore, customised programmes are offered to fast track careers of employees, and recognises high performers. Resourcing is primarily done internal- ly where possible, and cross-divisional career mobility is offered in order to allow employees to further grow within the Group.

The Group’s Leadership Development Programme is currently being enhanced to grow emerging leaders in a competitive environment that continues to be fast on talent. In this new environment of corporate governance, I have been able to broaden my horizon and gain wide exposure. AmBank Group has allowed me to progress within the Group. Furthermore, cross-divisional career mobility is offered in order to allow employees to further grow within the Group.

The Group’s Talent Council identifies high performers. Mindful that these same competencies are a key part of leadership selection, development and promotion, which are managed by a Group Talent Council. Employees are drawn out to provide career options mapped to positions, and career paths are drawn up to allow employees to further grow within the Group.

Vibrancy and a sense of connection are key elements of the AmBank Group brand, and the Group promotes these to its employees as much as it does to its customers. It promotes a vibrant working culture and expects values of the Group to be displayed by all employees, including leaders. To maintain such a culture and clearly communicate behavioural expectations, the Group incorporates leadership and behavioural competencies into job descriptions, and designs its development programmes based on these expectations. These same competencies are a key part of leadership selection, development and promotion, which are managed by a Group Talent Council.

To enhance connection between employees, the Group has also introduced a 360 degree assessment exercise, which allows every employee to review their colleagues across levels.

I have been with AmBank Group for more than 10 years and it has been an exhilarating journey. I started as Head of Retail Collections, managing large and complex operations, and my career has been progressing well within the organisation. My current job scope involves facilitating AmBank Group Operations’ transformation plan and overseeing its execution. The role has been challenging, yet professionally rewarding.

In my current capacity, I successfully transformed the Group’s product-based operations into a lean and effective process-driven platform. Amongst other process engineering feats the Group has achieved, is moving from manual outgoing phone calls to a fully automated world-class call centre. I have been provided with unlimited opportunities to develop myself as an employee, but the most critical factor has been the relentless support I have received from senior management.

AmBank is a dynamic organisation that provides opportunities to those who have a positive outlook, are willing to go the extra mile, and are on the lookout for challenges.
**PACING YOURSELF**

**A CAREER IS A MARATHON NOT A SPRINT**

When you think of a marathon, what do you envision? A race with a clear start line and finish line? A grueling test of endurance and determination? For many, the image of a marathon is one of physical exertion and effort to complete a specific distance. However, the principles of pacing yourself in a marathon can be applied to your career, which is often seen as a marathon rather than a sprint.

**WORK LIFE BALANCE**

In sports psychology, being in the zone—what athletes call the “flow” state—implies adjustment to different conditions, with enthusiasm for the challenge and appreciation of the journey. Going back to the lessons of the tortoise, there is still value in how far you run. Even if you’re progressing slowly in your career, keep going, just like the tortoise. As you continue running, you create your own opportunities, and sometimes opportunities present themselves when you least expect them. Just stick, be patient and keep going.

**CORPORATE CULTURE**

The tortoise and the hare

Shahran Masood is part of Leaderonomics’ talent acceleration team. In sports psychology, being in the zone—what athletes call the “flow” state—is sometimes referred to as “the zone.” In the book titled “Flow,” the psychology of optimal experience, Csikszentmihalyi proposes that humans and animals feel happy and fulfilled when they are in this state.

He says, “The best moments usually occur when a person’s body and mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.” This concept can be applied to all areas of your life, including your career and your marathon.

**THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE**

In this classic tale of speed versus a consistent, slower pace, we all learnt that consistency is key. The tortoise’s perseverance paid off and he crossed the finish line first, whereas the hare fell asleep and lost. This metaphor can be applied to your career. In sports psychology, being in the zone—what athletes call the “flow” state—is sometimes referred to as “the zone.” In the book titled “Flow,” the psychology of optimal experience, Csikszentmihalyi proposes that humans and animals feel happy and fulfilled when they are in this state.

He says, “The best moments usually occur when a person’s body and mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.” This concept can be applied to all areas of your life, including your career and your marathon.

**THE FINISH LINE**

It’s time to think about the big picture. What do you want to achieve in your career? What are your goals? What are your aspirations? It’s time to reflect on your journey so far and set new goals for the future. Remember, you’re not alone in this. There are plenty of people out there who are facing similar challenges, and they can provide support and guidance as you navigate your career journey. So, keep going, stay motivated, and never give up. The finish line is within reach.”
HELPING YOUR TEAM MEMBERS BUILD THEIR CAREERS

By ANDREW LAU

CREER progression is often understood as an employee taking charge and action to plot his or her own path. However, there is no denying that managers play an important part in helping team members grow sustainable careers. Like most managers, we can get so caught up in output, that we sometimes fail to see that behind the team, are team members.

Every person has their own challenges, issues, hopes and dreams, especially in the area of careers. A great manager realises this and acts on it. In this article we will explore how caring for your team members can bring greater success to the team and organisation.

There are essentially five roles a manager plays in helping his/her team members grow in their careers:
1. A guide
2. A coach
3. A publicist
4. A connector
5. A friend

GUIDING

An individual worker and an organisation are both living organisms. Both bring their own unique DNA in terms of culture, habits, and characteristics. When we bring these two things together, a problem of “fitting in” occurs.

As such, managers need to act as a guide to the newer team members. Things like social norms, practices and what is acceptable are good starting points of conversations. However, culture cannot be taught – it is usually caught. Periodic casual and informal catch-up sessions are one of the best ways to do it. We can privately chat, write emails and even WhatsApp them when we observe learning opportunities that can help them grow.

We should also ask for their opinions on how things are done internally. Basically, we want our team members to move from a passive recipient to an active participant of the organisation’s culture.

There are a few advantages of doing this. Firstly they will take ownership and understand the need to take up more responsibility in areas of the company culture. Secondly, they will be more focused and be able to pick things up which they might not have seen.

Thirdly, they will adapt at a faster pace and spend less time trying to fit in. Ultimately this works in the favour of the organisation, manager and also team member.

COACHING

It has been said time and again that managers are coaches. This is true at both professional and at a certain extent personal levels. A coach has something which team members usually don’t have, which is hindsight. This hind sight is gained from experience throughout our working years and this makes us a perfect career coach within the organisation.

Like us in our early years, many of our team members struggle with understanding their own strengths and weaknesses. Others struggle with developing the right skill sets. They may be developing, but the question is are they developing the right skill sets.

Where should we as coaches start? In any industry, there are often core skill sets that a high performing employee must develop. Skills such as process improvement, operational excellence, project management, analysis, internal and external communications are critical. Behaviours such as being detailed, proactiveness, excellence and pushing the comfort zone are highly valued.

When giving out tasks, we should align our team members’ job scope to enable them to learn these core skills and behaviours. If it can’t be covered in their job scope, get the team members to be involved in short-term projects according to the area of development.

We can sit down with our team members to discuss their areas of development to get better insight before adjusting the job scope or getting them involved in projects.

Once they move into a job scope that helps them to grow, we will find that team members become more productive as they don’t feel like they are doing jobs that are repetitive or redundant to their skill sets.

PUBLICISING

As our team members start to develop and grow in their careers, another role of a manager emerges. This is the role of a publicist. Everyone knows that visibility with senior leaders is needed if we want to fast track our careers. When our team member does a job exceptionally well or demonstrates great behaviour, let the management know.

Write an email to the management or publicly praise them in management meetings. Make sure the team member also knows that he/she is being acknowledged. This does not only boost their morale but gets them to be motivated to achieve greater heights.

On the reverse, if our team member is getting negative things thrown at them and if it was an honest mistake and not repetitive in nature, defend them.

Sometimes a bad impression with management can hamper the growth of a person’s career by up to a few years. As a manager, we have more of what I call “impression quota”. This means we can afford to take more hits than our team members and not damage our careers.

The worst thing that a manager can do when their team members are being unfairly targeted is to side with management and leave them to fend for themselves.

To many team members, this can be a tipping point and we should not be surprised to see some resignation letters coming our way.

Praising and defending your team members should be done on a limited basis in situations that really warrant it.

CONNECTING

It’s a common sight in company functions to see big bosses gather among themselves and the younger ones huddle in their own groups. Though it is a social function, the gathering is reflective of how interaction is in organisations.

A common sight in company functions to see big bosses gather among themselves and the younger ones huddle in their own groups. Though it is a social function, the gathering is reflective of how interaction is in organisations.

Younger team members either don’t dare or care enough to understand that having visibility with seniors has a big impact on their careers. This is where our role as a connector comes in.

We need to act as a bridge to help them widen their network and in doing so enlarge their circle of influence. To make this work, we need to understand layers. In organisations, networks are formed in layers.

LAYER 0 – A person’s peers
LAYER 1 – 1 seniority level above a person (direct manager)
LAYER 2 – 2 seniority levels above a person (direct manager’s boss)
LAYER 3 – 3 seniority levels above a person (direct manager’s boss)

Most people will be found mixing with others within Layer 0 and Layer 1. Once it hits Layer 2, it’s common for the conversation to be limited with very little day-to-day interaction. For Layer 3, people have little to no direct interaction—perhaps a few times in a year.

As connectors we can help to introduce people that see two or even three layers above our team members. This can be done in meetings, over lunch and also office functions.

One of the best ways is to give our team members small sections of time to talk when there is a meeting with high level management. Ask for their opinions but make sure you let them know before hand. They may be jittery as it is putting them on a spot with a question.

BEING A FRIEND

Last but not least, we can be a friend to our team members. While some people say that we are a manager and not friends, I disagree. Working with the new generation is different. We need to see them as a person and not a functional office tool.

Don’t just talk to our team members when we need something from them, but engage them as a person. Get to know their likes, dislikes and converse with them on a non-formal setting. They will also be more willing to share with us their ideas, perspectives, hopes and fears.

This in turn will foster a culture of open communication, which promotes trust. Not only will the team be more cohesive as a unit, they will start performing and showing results.

So the encouragement is for managers to take a proactive step in helping their team members grow their careers. Don’t do it because it is in your Key Performance Indicator, but do it because you genuinely care for your team members. That is one of the marks of a great manager.

Andrew Lau heads the campus division at Leaderonomics. To engage with him email andrew.lau@leaderonomics.com
I suspect you’ve sat in a bar at one point or another and been approached by a stranger who tried to start a conversation. My guess is you felt awkward or possibly even uncomfortable. This is because you didn’t know when or if the conversation would end. The key step in the process of developing great rapport and having great conversations is letting the other person know that there is an end in sight, and it is really close. When you approach someone to start a conversation most people assess the situation as a threat before anything else.

Humans have genetically survived because of this. This is a strong reason why these techniques work, they are specifically designed to lower the perceived risk to a stranger.

This is a pretty simple one. You want to make them feel threatened. The No.1 non-verbal technique to use to look more accommodating is to smile. This isn’t new. It’s the second of six principles in Dale Carnegie’s book, How to Win Friends and Influence People.

You can, however, accentuate your smile in a subtle way. Adding a slight head tilt tells the other person that you have comfort with them and trust them.

Another non-verbal to try and maintain is a slightly lower chin angle. High chin angles make someone feel like you’re looking down at them. I purposely slow down the delivery and take pauses for people to absorb the content of what I have just said. Whenever I have a conversation that I believe is important for me to be credible in my content, I try to get confirmation from the other person after I have told them.

As human beings, we are biologically conditioned to accommodate requests for assistance. The compulsion is based upon the fact that our ancestors knew that if they did not provide assistance when asked, the assistance would not be granted if they requested it at a later date.

This may be the most rewarding and most difficult of all of Dreeke’s techniques. Suspending your ego is nothing more complex than putting other individuals’ needs, wants, and perceptions of reality ahead of your own. Most times, when two individuals engage in a conversation, each patiently waits for the other person to be done with whatever story he or she is telling. Then, the other person tells his or her own story usually on a random topic and often times in an attempt to have a better and more interesting story. Individuals practising good ego suspension would continue to encourage the other individual to talk about his or her story, neglecting their own need to share what they think is a great story.

VALIDATE OTHERS

There are many types of validation. Dreeke identifies three of them.

Telling: This is the simplest and one of the most effective. Just listen to someone can produce amazing results. Where we run into problems is keeping our own thoughts, ideas, and stories out of the conversation. True validation coupled with ego suspension means that you have no story to offer, that you are there simply to hear theirs. And there is another benefit. When the focus is on the other person and we’re not anxious to tell our own story, we also tend to remember the details. We’re mindful. Few people naturally use this to its fullest potential, and, most of the time, we don’t realise when it is being used; all we know is we really like the person who gives it. Demonstrating thoughtfulness in words and actions with everyone in our lives is a simple and effective way to improve our relationships. Validate thoughts and opinions: This technique is quite difficult because of “our innate need to correct others and the difficulty we have suspending our own ego.”

But if you remember that we like people who are like us, you’ll immediately grasp the power of validation. You will begin to see how useful it is and you will not only do it to have them come up with the idea. The best way to have them come up with your idea is to ask questions, and to honestly understand the other person’s point of view and then build upon that base value. Once the individual being targeted in the conversation supplies more words and thoughts, a great conversationalist will utilise the content given and continue to ask open ended questions about the same content. The entire time, the individual being targeted is the one supplying the content of the conversation. This means suppressing your ego and listening to what people are saying. You’re not thinking about what you’re going to say next. You’re not thinking about how the person is wrong. If you’re really listening then ask open ended questions based on the content they are saying should be pretty easy.

CONNECT WITH QUID PRO PRO QUO

In the context of a conversation this means giving up a little information about yourself in order to further the conversation and get a little from others. In my experiences, there are really only two types of situations where I have utilised quid pro quo. The first and more common of the instances is when you attempt to converse with someone who is either introverted, private, or both. The second instance is when the person you are conversing with suddenly becomes very aware about how much they are speaking, and they suddenly feel awkward. In both instances, giving a little information will help alleviate some of the issues.

GIVING

This is conversational reciprocation in action. Great rapport builders and conversationalists understand the desire to reciprocate during every conversation. This technique, coupled with ego suspension, are techniques great for building great relationships. This is also the easiest technique to utilise, because gifts come in many forms, from non-material compliments, to tangible material gifts. Gift giving, or reciprocal altruism, is hardwired in our genetics. The key is to do this without an agenda. If you have an agenda you’ll come across as insincere.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

Regardless of the situation, whether it is an altruistic intention or not, there is an agenda. The individuals in life that are able to either create or utilise a strategy to shift the agenda to something altruistic will have great success at building rapport. The other way is the lowest of all low disappointments. The net is to do it without an agenda.

Shane Parrish is the editor of for-namestreetblog.com. He helps companies make better decisions and foster innovation. For inquiries, including speaking engagements please write to mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

By SHANE PARRISH

mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

I’m not sure if I could have crossed Robin Dreeke’s It’s Not All About Me but I’m glad I did.

Dreeke is the lead instructor for FBI’s Counterintelligence Training Centre in all behavioural and interpersonal skills training. He wrote an amazing book on how to master the skills of communication. Honestly, this book is not only for those interested in sales and marketing, but can be used by anyone who wants to improve their skills in interpersonal communication. There are many places that teach these techniques and I would not hesitate to send you to a better guide than Dreeke.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL, SAYS MERCEDES-BENZ MALAYSIA

By LILY CHEAN

lily.chean@leaderonomics.com

MERCEDES-BENZ Malaysia has launched a five-month Leadership Development Programme (LDP) for its management staff.

Like many organisations today, the company is recognising the need to find and groom individuals who are able to lead in today’s disruptive marketplace.

Roland Folger, president and CEO of Mercedes-Benz Malaysia, says he believes not only in hiring the right people but also in developing existing high-performing employees. According to Matthias Adis, senior manager and head of human resources, the company’s aim is to develop leadership skills and behaviours across the organisation.

“It was from the results of our employee survey in 2013, that we realised there was a need to improve the development of our people, with a special focus on leadership. This is how the development of this programme came about,” says Adis.

“We want to ensure all our leaders can cast and communicate vision, are passionate about our products and services, and able to motivate and develop others,” he says. “We promote situation-based leadership rather than a directive approach.”

Aside from talent development, two other areas that stood out in their employee survey results were a greater need for collaboration within the company, and the company’s brand and culture.

The company responded to these suggestions by creating the Employer of Choice 2014 “initiative to address these three core areas. The LDP is one of its fruits.”

The committee is made up of senior leaders from various functions, including Veerappan Annamala, general manager of procurement; Mohd Tahir Kader Mohd Sie, general manager of finance and controlling; Veerappan, who is spearheading greater collaboration within the company says this cross-function collaboration reveals Mercedes-Benz Malaysia’s commitment to addressing the needs of employees.

This is not just a human resources initiative, everyone they oversee the overall implementation. This is a company initiative. The CEO believes the progress they have been empowered to make decisions, he says.

The organisation sees their employees as the ultimate measure of the success of their initiatives. “Being an employee who is valued is about not collecting external awards, but about how employees of Mercedes-Benz Malaysia perceive and judge the company,” says Tahir. Mercedes-Benz Malaysia is part of the Daimler group, which employs more than 275,000 employees in more than 120 countries. The Malaysian subsidiary is 10 years old, and has many long-serving staff. In January 2014, the Employee Service awards were given to 50 employees, amounting to 56% of the total workforce in Malaysia. Attrition rate sits at 7%, compared to the national average of 15%. “We have been with Mercedes-Benz Malaysia for 10 years,” says Adis. “And I’m very proud to see how the company is evolving. The current way to avoid keeping the people and the basis to take this company forward.”

CEO Folger is confident that Mercedes-Benz Malaysia is moving in the right direction in keeping the company a great place to work.

1 ESTABLISHING ARTIFICIAL TIME CONSTRAINTS

This isn’t new. It’s the second of six principles in Dale Carnegie’s book, How to Win Friends and Influence People.

You can, however, accentuate your smile in a subtle way. Adding a slight head tilt tells the other person that you have comfort with them and trust them.

Another non-verbal to try and maintain is a slightly lower chin angle. High chin angles make someone feel like you’re looking down at them. Another key non-verbal is body angle. Standing toe-to-toe with someone else can be intimidating.

A slight body angle or blade away from the individual you are engaging

2 ACCOMMODATING NON-VERBALS

This is a pretty simple one. You want to make them feel threatened. The No.1 non-verbal technique to use to look more accommodating is to smile.

3 SLOWER RATE OF SPEECH

Speaking fast may mean you’re excited. It may even mean you know what you’re talking about. However, speaking slowly gives you more credibility.

4 SYMPATHY OR ASSISTANCE THEM

If you’re like most people, you’ve felt a bit of regret for turning down someone seeking help. Think for a moment about the times in your life when you have either sought assistance or been asked to provide it. When the request is simple, of limited duration, and non-threatening, we are more inclined to accommodate the request.

As human beings, we are biologically conditioned to accommodate requests for assistance. The compulsion is based upon the fact that our ancestors knew that if they did not provide assistance when asked, the assistance would not be granted if they requested it at a later date.

5 EGO SUSPENSION

This may be the most rewarding and most difficult of all of Dreeke’s techniques.

SUSPENDING your ego is nothing more complex than putting other individuals’ wants, needs, and perceptions of reality ahead of your own. Most times, when two individuals engage in a conversation, each patiently waits for the other person to be done with whatever story he or she is telling. Then, the other person tells his or her own story usually on a random topic and often times in an attempt to have a better and more interesting story.

Individuals practising good ego suspension would continue to encourage the other individual to talk about his or her story, neglecting their own need to share what they think is a great story.

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BUSINESS CASUAL
OR CASUALTY?

By WENDY LEE
mlstarjob.com

I was reading an article onboard a plane when a little paragraph caught my attention – A survey done with human resources (HR) professionals in Malaysia found that more than 60% of potential candidates would be well groomed during interviews, but would slack off after that.

It’s similar to going for a cake with beautiful icing, only to find after a few bites that it tastes bland.

A female employee would be in her court shoes on her first day, but ballet flats a year later.

A male employee would pick his best shirt on the day of the interview, but six months later, he would turn up in his just-woke-up-from-bed-T-shirt, should no one say anything about it.

Sounds familiar? This is common at work-places here in Malaysia, except perhaps for the hospitality industry, where good grooming is part and parcel of the job description.

In general, we see people slack due to several reasons:

1. Complacency – I’ve secured my position. No one is going to fire me if I decide to wear my worn-out 20-year-old shirt today.
2. Office culture – No one else dresses up. Why should I?
3. Attitude – You want me to wake up at 5am to mix and match my attire?
4. No specific guidelines – Who says my skirt is too short?
5. No proper training – I didn’t know my blouse is considered too trendy for work wear.

What you should leave at home:

- Tired, worn-out clothes that are faded should be used when you are doing gardening.
- Flip-flops, no matter how comfortable they are, are a definite no-no in the office.
- Clothes that no longer fit you – either too tight or too loose.
- “Tired, worn-out” clothes that are faded should be used when you are doing gardening.
- Even if it’s a tiny hole, the thread will eventually give way.
- No matter how much you want to flaunt your assets, the office is not the place for you to show off your ultra-short hemlines and plunging necklines.
- No proper training – I didn’t know my blouse is considered too trendy for work wear.
- With the term casual, there are a few pointers.

More Formal

Many layers
Collars
Dark colours
Smooth fabrics
Solid colours
Tailored
Structured
Heels (W)
Leg hose
Classic pants
Quality fabrics
Make-up (W)
Refined, conservative styles

More Casual

Few layers
Collarless
Light/Bright pastel
Textured fabrics
Unstructured
Unstructured
Flat shoes
Bare legs
Jeans
Inexpensive
Relaxed grooming
High fashion or unusual styles

More ForMal

Solid colours
Structured
Shine/Sheen
Heels
Leg hose
Classic pants
Quality fabrics
Make-up (W)
Refined, conservative styles

More Casual

Many layers
Collars
Dark colours
Smooth fabrics
Solid colours
Tailored
Structured
Heels (W)
Leg hose
Classic pants
Quality fabrics
Make-up (W)
Refined, conservative styles

First and foremost, the term “casual” doesn’t give you the freedom to wear whatever you have in your closet.

Different companies will adopt different ideas on the term casual Fridays. There are companies that will only allow corporate T-shirts and there are those that will not have more than a short-sleeved shirt.

So, for the benefit of those that are trying to decipher the boundaries of business casual, here are a few pointers:

- Collared T-shirts are still preferred. But do make sure your collars are not wrinkled.
- Your T-shirt must be relatively new, not stretched out of shape, or have bits of fibre coming out everywhere.
- Choose well-pressed khakis over jeans. But if you do pick jeans, pick darker, dressier fabrics.
- Forget safety boots and anything that looks old and scruffy. Dirty shoes don’t speak well of you no matter what the brand or the rest of your outfit is.
- Keep on shaving.

When it comes to business casual, the general idea is that you are able to conduct impor-
tant meetings or be presentable enough to meet clients. You never know who you may bump into.

Would you feel comfortable sitting with a VIP client wearing whatever outfit you have on that day? If a vendor or a supplier were to wear what you are wearing today, would you be impressed by him or her?

Would you trust and buy whatever product or service he has? If you are not 100% sure, don’t wear it. Your image is your brand.

How you look says something about you, the work you do, and the company you repre-
sent. If any of the five reasons above resulted in you slacking, do something about it. Don’t allow your business casuals to turn you into a business casualty.
PRACTISING LEADERSHIP FROM YOUNG

By ZARA JAYNE
zara.jayne@leaderonomics.com

We all have different definitions of what a leader is. Is it someone who has a title? Someone who influences a group of people? Someone who is domi-
ninating and takes charge of things? From scoring 10As in her SPM exami-
nation to being accepted into Harvard University in December last year, Eleasha Chew has definitely accomplished a lot.

The 20-year-old from Penang is currently finishing her International Baccalaureate (IB) course in Taylor’s College Sri Hartamas and will soon leave for Harvard to fulfil her dreams.

“Harvard has always been my childhood dream. My love for the institution only grew over the years, especially when I dis-
covered that ingrained in its mission statement, is the idea that education should be used as a platform to make a difference in our world. I could not agree more,” Chew says.

As everyone has varied perceptions on leadership, Chew shares her views and how she has put her leadership skills into action.

What is an ideal leader to you?

A leader is someone who appreciates and values his or her team members. In order to value team members, the leader must be willing to listen to them.

A leader must also have an attitude of humility. Being a leader does not neces-
sarily mean you know everything. A leader has to be able to learn from others as they could gain more insight from their team members.

Positively definitely has to be in a leader’s DNA. No one wants to work with someone who is constantly leading the team with pessimism.

When there is positivity, the team will have a clear direction. The team members are willing to work together as tensions don’t flare up as much and communication becomes clearer with an optimistic envi-
ronnement.

Are there any activities or projects you have been involved in? Have you applied any leadership skills while running these activities?

In form 4, I was involved in the South-
East Asia Youth Leadership Programme (SEAYLP). I was chosen along with four other stu-
dents to go to the United States and devel-
oping skills like leadership, civic responsibility, and civic engagement.

When the five of us came back to Malaysia, we were involved in a Mangrove Conservation Project at Kuala Gula Wetlands in collaboration with Malaysia’s Global Environmental Centre. It was part of our SEAYLP project in 2012.

In 2013, I was in the committee to organise a project called the US-Malaysia Young Leaders Summit Conference as it was another part of our programme. We collaborated with Genasari Gemilang, a

NGO.

Apart from that, I was also the project manager for a service trip to Camp Beng Mealea in Cambodia.

Other IB students were also involved in this camp as it was part of our course in college. We went to the camp along with four lecturers who supervised us.

In order to go for this service trip, we had to raise funds which I was mainly in charge of. We held a fundraiser in college where there were bake sales and a pie-a-teacher game.

After the fundraiser, we planted trees, did roof tiling and brick laying for the school and did roof tiling and brick laying for the school. We also taught English at the camp.

What so have you learnt from all these experiences?

When trying to make a difference in a community, I learnt the importance of first taking time to understand and appreciate the context of the community instead of ignorantly imposing on them what I think is best for them.

From the Summit conference, I learnt the importance of servant leadership. To be a good leader is to first learn how to serve others. It was truly a humbling experience.

Lastly, what is some advice you can give to our young readers to help them develop leadership qualities?

1. STRETCH

You must be able to stretch yourself and step out of your comfort zone. You’ll never know what you can discover about yourself.

For example, you can stretch yourself in terms of communication. Try public speak-
ing more often.

It will boost your courage especially in front of people and thus enhance your leadership skills. You would never know how good you are until you try.

Barack Obama says, “It’s only when you hitch your wagon to something larger than yourself that you realise your true poten-
tial.”

2. KEEP LEARNING

Another point is to have intellectual curiosity. Push yourself to love learning. The

more you learn, the more you grow. As a leader, you should broaden your knowledge in order to lead your team members well.

Pick up new things like learning more about the arts or discovering new scientific findings that you have never known before. It is always exciting to learn something new each time.

3. LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

Listening to opinions also helps you to grow as a leader. When it comes to projects, train yourself to accept construc-
tive feedback. Listen effectively because it does groom you to be a better leader.

For instance, when working with difficult people, have the heart to love and under-
stand them. Don’t just ignore them or rub salt into their wounds.

Be willing to acknowledge their opinions and see how you can work around them. This will determine what kind of leader you are and how well you can handle such people.

4. ENCOURAGE

Encouragement can really lift some-
one’s spirit. Encouraging your team mem-
bers helps you manage the team better.

Your team members would be able to coop-
erate better and they would have a deeper respect for you.

Simple gestures like a compliment or a thank you note are great to keep your team going. Having a leader that would continuously cheer their team can really push the team to go further.

5. HAVE A JOURNAL

Journaling helps you to grow more as a leader because it makes you a thoughtful, reflective and mature person.

By consciously writing about your experi-
ences, you will learn from them - especially from your mistakes.

It does wonders to clear up your thought process and this is very vital for a leader considering that you are responsible for providing your team with direction.

By journaling, you would also be able to see your own personal progress; whether you have become a better person or not.

Zara Jayne is a passionate university stu-
dent who aspires to be a leader who inspires the young people of today.

Date: June 2 – June 7
In HR Talk, we pick one human resources (HR) related topic each week, and gather a few HR experts to share their opinions on it. If you have any questions about the HR industry, send them to us at mystarjob@leaderonomics.com and we will get our panel of experts to answer them.

**LEE SOO FERN**
Malaysia talent leader

I believe employee rewards are a powerful means by which employers can demonstrate their value and appreciation of their people’s talent, knowledge, skills and contribution to an organisation. They are highly effective and strategic tools in attracting and retaining the right and best people in an organisation.

Employee rewards help motivate people to stretch themselves and inspire them to do more. They also reinforce the values, behaviour and outcomes an organisation wants its people to achieve.

People have different needs, priorities and aspirations. Money is not the only factor that motivates people to work and remain in a particular organisation. In my experience, employees will be attracted to and will stay with an organisation that can help them achieve their professional and personal goals, that can provide them a host of “rewards” beyond a monthly salary. These include greater responsibilities and growth, exposure, recognition, empowerment, flexibility, work-life balance, learning and development opportunities.

In today’s “war” for the best and brightest talents, organisations are greatly challenged to tailor and innovate their reward strategy such that it balances the different personalities, interests and motivations of their talent pool with the business strategies and goals of the organisation.

Ultimately, employee rewards are only as effective as how they are conceived, designed and implemented. It is important that employee rewards are well-aligned to the needs of both the organisation and the people, and that they are communicated and practised in a transparent and effective manner.

**KENNETH HO**
Location HR leader – Malaysia & Brunei
IBM

It is very important to reward and recognise employees. It helps employees become more engaged, which then results to a more dedicated and productive workforce, which in turn translates to more satisfied clients and significantly better business results.

There are a lot of ways to reward and recognise employees and it is clearly not just by means of giving them money.

It could be as simple as sincerely saying “Thank you” to team members who have done well and recognise them using your company’s intranet or via email distribution. At IBM, we have a suite of rewards and recognition programmes that_enable every IBMer to express daily recognition and thanks to their peers and bosses, managers to provide monthly/quarterly recognition for high performers, and an annual corporate award programme to recognise the best of the best IBMers.

The rewards are not always monetary – it could be in the form of additional time off, luncheon/dinner with bosses and teams, earning points in our online recognition center where they can redeem items that are meaningful to them including travel packages, etc.

**NIKKI GRANT-COOK**
Country human resources director
Citibank Malaysia

At Citi Malaysia, employee rewards extend beyond the monthly salary to an overall employee value proposition that attracts and retains talent through People Development, our support of Dynamic Careers, and the facilitation of Work-life Integration and an Optimal Working Environment.

Citi is the only bank ranked in the Top 20 by Hay Group’s Annual Exclusive List of Best Companies for Leadership. Our $1,000 sq ft Citi Learning and Development Centre signifies our significant investment on development. Additional investment has been placed in our top performers via the LEAD (Leadership Enhancement & Accelerated Development) talent programme, which provides customised training; cross-business team projects; networking opportunities with seniors; mentoring relationships and HR-monitored Individual Development Planning (IDP) sessions.

Our Management Associate (MA) programmes mould top graduates into leadership pipeline for the company through structured rotational assignments designed to build business knowledge and leadership skills.

Citi pioneered 90 days maternity leave in the banking landscape back when 60 days was the industry norm. Citi was also the first bank to launch a dedicated, subsidised childcare facility for children of our employees - the 5200 sq ft Citikids Care Centre located adjacent to Menara Citibank in Kuala Lumpur, set up in collaboration with a leading pre-school group, Peter and Jane Childcare.

Our employees continue to be eligible for birthday leave so they can enjoy the day with family and friends. Our flexi-work arrangements allow employees to integrate personal and business objectives while continuing to have meaningful career opportunities.

We prioritise employee well-being through Citi Live Well initiatives focusing on both mental and physical well-being. We have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that provides free professional counseling on issues including but not limited to: stress (both work/personal), interpersonal relationships, family issues, grief and loss, overcoming addictions and work-life balance. Citi also funds fun activities e.g. movie days and team-building trips, specifically to enhance rapport and camaraderie among our Citi employees.

**Also next week**

- A candidate’s guide to assessment centres
- What are the top hiring mistakes recruiters make?
- Gamification as the future of talent profiling
- HR leaders give their take on psychometric testing

If you have any suggestions or feedback on our content, get in touch with the Leaderonomics team at mystarjob@leaderonomics.com. For advertising and advertorials, contact ian.kee@leaderonomics.com - 016 974 7087