TO MICROMANAGE OR NOT? WHEN TO STEP IN AND WHEN TO PULL BACK

Ripe for change
Surprising lessons on transformation from biological evolution
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VANTAGE POINT
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The image you send when you go diagonal or circular
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CHECK AND BALANCE
Three practical steps to build a culture of accountability
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A few years ago, a petite young lady came over to the Leaderonomics office and was convincing me to hire her. After spending a few minutes with her, I knew we had to bring her into our team.

We had no role for her but I loved her passion, conviction and self-confidence. And I saw so much potential in her. If we developed her well, she could even replace me in the future. So, we created a role for her and brought her to team Leaderonomics.

This lady, Lily Cheah, immediately set about driving change and pushing herself. She understood that a key part of becoming a leader was to learn and grow. Even though it was painful, she persevered.

And we kept pushing her too. We accelerated her growth by “forcing” her to take on new roles faster. We also continually fed our expectations of her performance. Early last year, we made her one of the youngest print editors ever. She took up the challenge and took this career guide and our content team to the next level.

A number of years ago, I met up with Wayne Rooney’s first coach, Ray Hulme. He told me in the way Everton developed all its young players was to constantly push them outside their comfort zone.

So, Rooney was always pushed to play with older, bigger and more skillful boys. This forced Rooney to learn faster. But forcing someone does not guarantee success. Rooney had to WANT to learn. He had to WANT to grow faster. He had to have the desire to push himself.

Much the same with Lily. We kept pushing her and will continue to accelerate her development as she continues to push and commit herself to fulfill the amazing potential she has. And so, as part of her acceleration, we are moving Lily to yet another role in Leaderonomics.

Beginning June 1, Lily will be setting up a new team and we forced her to learn a whole new set of skills to continue her growth as a leader. It will be painful, but like Rooney, Lily is destined for greatness and she is ready for the challenge.

This week will be Lily’s last hurrah as the curator and editor of our weekly career guide. So, do enjoy what Lily has in store for us this week.

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HE ability to make the best decision has always been a strong measure for leadership potential. It is as if the burden of having answers almost always falls on the leader’s shoulders. The question is, in this era and time, should that be the case? ‘Margaret Thatcher, the first female prime minister of Britain is well known for the divisive opinions on her leadership style. While some adored her iron lady leadership, others blame her for the downfall of Britain’s economy in the 1980s.

Her leadership style could probably be best described by the modern term of ‘Authoritarian Leadership’ characterised by unilateral decision-making and top-down command. Historically, and not just limited to Britain, the concept of heroic leadership where leaders sit atop the hierarchy of information and possess full control is widespread. Leaders who do not exert such dominance are often thought to be weaker leaders. To be fair, control-and-command does have its place in an organisation.

Donald Clark, a leadership consultant, explains that for an organisation to function well, the four concepts of Command, Control, Leadership and Management need to be in synergy with the imperative that these concepts are carried out in its truest forms.

For example, he defines Command as the skill performed by a leader to use a well-thought vision and to guide an organisation to ensure efficiency. Control on the other hand is the skill related to providing structure in an organisation in order to enable effectiveness. Thus, it is understandable if leaders are seen as the people who make the best call for an organisation.

Nevertheless, somewhere in between satisfy people’s inclination to want to be in the know (we probably don’t enjoy being blindsided more than we realise). He emphasises that great leaders cannot afford to be caught in the minutiae of daily detail or they risk losing perspective of what really matters.

In a world where everything is moving at increasing speed, the noble intention of a leader being involved in everything becomes a double-edged sword whereby efficiency is compromized, ultimately reducing the credibility of the decision. In addition, leaving the leader to bear the sole burden of making decisions is not sustainable given the risks of burning out.

Moreover, the Ivy Business Journal suggests that the heroic leadership style widens the gap between an employee’s ability to be empowered and their tendency to be dependent – if they do not get a chance to step up to decision-making, why should they seek to?

There may be reasons to discourage leaders from being the know-all but what about reasons to encourage the “I don’t know” aspect of leadership?

1. Creates possibilities
   In line with the concept of lifelong learning, even leaders have their blind spots and since it is humanly impossible or beneficial to be a jack-of-all-trades, admitting you don’t know creates the awareness that there is exploration needed. The key is to be comfortable with the unknown and to embrace it as untapped possibilities.

2. Inspires engagement
   With the awareness of untapped possibilities, a leader then plays the role of a facilitator of questions to help his/her team dig deep as opposed to being a know-it-all. This creates space for new ideas to emerge and these ideas are owned not just by the leader or each member, but the team as a whole thereby leading them to synergise at a higher level of performance.

3. Defends against complacency
   In a fast-paced era, the biggest enemy of organisation is complacency especially when we are paradoxically living with increasing amounts of information but decreasing control over it.

Continuing the heroic leadership of knowing everything, or pretending to know everything, might curb organisational growth.

On the other hand, if the leader is comfortable with “I don’t know” and migrates to a culture of “Let’s find out”, we might just find ourselves in the interesting space of what Hanke calls constructive agitation spurring organisational growth.

4. Increase joy
   While this may not be the most serious advantage of the “I don’t know” culture: consider this: in a space where leaders readily admit they do not have all the answers, employees who are encouraged to look for these answers are likely to feel that they can make a difference and their opinions matter to the organisation.

That means, in addition to employees enjoying their work, they are also likely to be more productive resulting in better performance outcomes.

ANSWERABLE LEADERSHIP

Franz Kafka once said that in a battle between you and the world, back the world. What the world requires now is the answerable leader; a leader who is aware and accountable of how decisions are made for the organisation.

For that to happen, a leader needs to be agile enough to lead authoritatively on the spectrum of knowing to not knowing rather than just relying on their own judgment based on limited information.

Fortunately, there are numerous resources to aid leaders in embracing uncertainty such as Daniel Goleman’s ‘Lifelong Learning’ and ‘Emotional Intelligence’ framework (refer to table). This framework suggests five styles of leadership that leaders can adopt in responding to a spectrum of certainty to uncertainty. At the end of the day, where doubt can be avoided and where leaders know the answers – state it with confidence and conviction.

But where leadership requires embracing “I don’t know”, perhaps it is wiser to admit it and use it to build trust rather than allow it to derail one’s credibility.

By EVELYN TEH
evelyn.teh@leaderonomics.com

LEADING WITH ANSWERS

What place does Margaret Thatcher’s style of “authoritarian leadership” have in today’s organisation?

Adopted from Daniel Goleman’s “Leadership That Gets Results”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pacesetting Leader</td>
<td>Do as I do, now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leader experts and models excellence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Best for teams which are already skilled and when quick results are needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Overuse may lead to hindrance of innovation and overwhelming the team.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative Leader</td>
<td>“Come with me”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leader mobilises team towards common vision with focus on end goals and giving autonomy to team to decide.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Works best in circumstances where situational factors had made an impact. (i.e. new vision needed). Best in inspiring entrepreneurial spirit and vibrant enthusiasm.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- May not be best when team is made of experts who knows more than the leader.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliative Leader</td>
<td>“People come first”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leader creates emotional bond and feeling of belonging to organisation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Works best in times of stress or bouncing back from trauma or rebuilding trust.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sole reliance on this style (i.e. praise and nurturing) can foster mediocre performance and lack of direction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Leader</td>
<td>“by this”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leader develops people for the future.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Works best when leader intends to assist teammates in building individual strengths for overall success.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Least effective when teammates are defiant/unwilling to change or when leader lacks proficiency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coercive Leader</td>
<td>“Do what I tell you”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leader demands immediate compliance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Most effective in crisis (e.g. company in peril) or when actual danger is present. Can also be useful in controlling problematic teammates should all other means fail.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Should be avoided where not necessary as it alienates people, stifles flexibility and inventiveness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Leader</td>
<td>“What do you think”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leader builds consensus through participation.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Most effective when buy-in, engagement is needed or when fresh ideas are needed from qualified teammates.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not the best choice when pressed for time or if teammates are not well versed enough to provide guidance or perspectives.</td>
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Evelyn Teh is part of Leaderonomics’ Talent Acceleration team. For more information, email people@leaderonomics.com
By RAJ KUMAR
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

INNOVATORS are often perceived as individuals who work alone and have created breakthrough products or services out of a spark of genius. While the latter is true, the former is not. They do have mentors who have pushed them to greatness in one way or another. What if I told you that the great innovators Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and Jack Dorsey all have had mentors behind them? This is an actual fact but while we look at the mentors behind these great innovators, there are some key learning principles which innovators today can learn from.

1. Find a mentor who will push you out of your comfort zone.
   Jobs met Robert Friedland when he wanted to sell Friedland a type-writer and they became friends long enough to effect a serious change in Jobs’ attitude and working methods. According to Jobs, “he turned me on to a different level of consciousness.” Jobs was an introvert and Friedland was a charismatic and forceful person who could bend people and situations to his will. Friedland pulled Jobs out of his shell and turned him into a more open and extroverted personality.

2. Find a mentor who can help you realise your dreams.
   According to Stanford history, Frederick Terman, a Stanford professor, encouraged Bill Hewlett and David Packard to establish a little electronics company in Palo Alto Garage in 1939, which was later dubbed “the birthplace of Silicon Valley.” Terman brought a lot of potential customers for Hewlett and Packard’s first creation, an audio oscillator. The fact that Hewlett and Packard were able to channel the brilliance of Terman to create one of the largest consumer PC makers in the world shows the importance of mentorship in realising dreams.

3. Find a mentor who will challenge you to be greater!
   Dorsey is known for creating Twitter and Square (a mobile payment system). However Dorsey had a mentor who challenged him constantly to think big. For six months, Ray Chambers had consistently met with and mentored Dorsey. From Chambers, Dorsey learned to think bigger and better.
   “At the core of his being, he really wants to make the world a better place,” Chambers had said about Dorsey.
   Chambers made his fortune via a private equity firm that he co-founded and currently serves as United Nations secretary-general’s special envoy for financing the Health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and for Malaria, but he comments that his greatest success is Dorsey.
   In conclusion, if you are an aspiring innovator, take heart and know that you don’t have to be alone; you can and must have a mentor, because even the “greats” had one.

In the face of these pressures, many leaders unfortunately make unethical and unsustainable decisions. We see the results of these failings all around us. The world needs a better brand of leadership to rise to these great challenges.

By PREMA JAYABALAN
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LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE WITH TRIPLE CROWN

Q: How would you define a good leader?
A: We focus more on the act of “leadership” than on “the leader.” It’s because we believe leadership is a group performance, not a solo act. Good leadership blends leadership, management and followership. It serves others. It unleashes other leaders. It calls them to a quest to find or create a new and better place.

Q: What are the main characteristics needed to establish good leadership in an organisation?
A: Much is required, but it begins with a heartfelt and dogged commitment from leaders to build an excellent, ethical, and enduring organisation, one that achieves impactful results and impacts on all key stakeholders ethically and sustainably.

Q: What do you think are the biggest challenges faced by leaders today?
A: There are many. Many leaders get caught up in their own ego. For them, leadership somehow becomes an ego trip. Today, many leaders face intense short-term pressures to achieve results in a challenging economic and competitive environment, with fast-changing technology and disruptive business models.

17. For more information, visit www.imsasia.com.

Leadership experts Gregg (left) and Bob (right) will be running a workshop in Subang from June 16 to June 17.

For six months, Ray Chambers had consistently met with and mentored Dorsey. From Chambers, Dorsey learned to think bigger and better.

Jobs’attitude and working methods.

Famous father and son team Bob Vanourek and Gregg Vanourek are leadership experts and co-authors of Triple Crown Leadership: Building Excellent, Ethical, and Enduring Organizations, winner of the 2013 International Book Award (Business: General). They will be facilitating a leadership workshop in Kuala Lumpur in June.

Here is the father and son duo’s take on leaders and leadership:

Q: What do you think are the biggest challenges faced by leaders today?
A: There are many. Many leaders get caught up in their own ego. For them, leadership somehow becomes an ego trip. Today, many leaders face intense short-term pressures to achieve results in a challenging economic and competitive environment, with fast-changing technology and disruptive business models.

In conclusion, if you are an aspiring innovator, take heart and know that you don’t have to be alone; you can and must have a mentor, because even the “greats” had one.

So start looking for a mentor using the above principles and start innovating to make the world a better place because that is what any mentor would want in the first place!

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SO start looking for a mentor using the above principles and start innovating to make the world a better place because that is what any mentor would want in the first place!

Sraj Kumar is the vice-president of Global Consulting for UCSI Blue Ocean Strategy Regional Centre and is passionate about Strategy and Innovation. You can follow him on Twitter @rajkumar77.
**EVOLUTION**

**TRANSFORMATION**

LESSONS FROM BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTION ON ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

By JOHAN MERICAN

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**Transformation** has potentially become an overused buzzword. Leaders aspire for transformation, whether for country, economy or for their company and organisation.

Yet in reality, what typically transpires is incremental change, nothing dramatically different from before. The problem with achieving something truly transformational is that at the beginning of the journey, it appears beyond imagination, beyond belief.

In figuring out what it takes to be truly transformational, let us draw lessons from biological evolution. This is a phenomenon generally accepted in scientific circles, yet haphazardly by virtue of its truly transformational nature, it remains difficult for many of us to believe it to be true. Suspending judgment for a moment, evolutionary biologists have hypothesised, for example, that all vertebrate animals’ ear bones (yes, including yours and mine) evolved from being part of jaw bones. Sounds strange?

Even more surprising, evolutionary biologists like Stephen Jay Gould contend that to enable this evolutionary journey, the conditions required are:

- Inefficiency
- Redundancy
- Multifunctionality

In stark contrast to these conditions, today’s amoeba in biological terms are very efficient in its bodily functions, without redundancy in its spare form and very specialised in its function.

That level of perfection makes it very successful as a living organism, in being in existence everywhere in stupendous numbers on earth. But today’s amoeba will not change or transform anytime soon into a more complex entity. Why bother since it does its job so well.

**Biological Evolution**

Coming back to the origins of the ear bones, earlier vertebrates had additional jaw bones. These bones appeared to multitask, supporting the chewing function and, at the same time, were sensitive to vibrations—a useful function against predator or prey. However, it wasn’t performing both functions efficiently. This establishes the pre-condition for change—inefficiency as a basis and motivation for transformation, ironically.

However, to facilitate change, there needed to be redundancy if the bones that were eventually to emerge as ear bones were integral crucial parts for chewing, then it would never have been able to evolve its function out of chewing and into purely hearing.

Without surplus resources, there wouldn’t have been the opportunity to change functions.

Multifunctionality is also a critical element to facilitate the evolutionary journey. Biological evolution occurs over many cycles or generations of offspring. Each generation has to survive and function, to enable the next generation of incremental change and natural selection. Hence, each generation or intermediate state in the evolution journey needs to be functional (albeit not optimally), both as a jaw and detecting vibrations.

Hence, the bones that will eventually emerge as ear bones need to continue to multitask in the course of the transformation, though with each stage becoming less of a jaw and more of an ear.

**Organisational Transformation**

Taking note of evolution theory and, in particular, the evolution of ear bones, there is a case for organisational change to require similar conditions, namely:

- Inefficiency or a burning platform for change
- Redundancy or surplus resources
- Multifunctionality during the process of transformation

Hence, before we embark on organisational transformation, we should first ask, is there a need for change? Are we already efficient as an amoeba or are we more like some poorly fitted jawbone? We are naturally resistant to change and managing the process of change is painful.

Thus, to put an organisation through change, there must be clarity both in the problem (source of inefficiency) and the benefits to the organisation and people arising from the transformation.

Establishing the business case or burning platform for change to all involved will prove important as a guiding light for the organisation, especially during the challenging periods of the transformation.

It is natural in organisations today to drive for lean management, ensuring optimality particularly in resourcing.

While laudable in driving efficiency for stable operational processes, having just the right number of people leaves little room for creativity.

Thus, for the organisation or department to undergo transformation, there must be spare capacity (akin to redundancy in jaw bones) to drive the transformation over and above continuing the execution of existing day-to-day functions.

While the use of external consultants is a common means of providing the redundancy or extra resources, nothing beats having sufficient resources for internally driven transformation to ensure relevance and organisational buy-in.

The need for multifunctionality comes together with the conditions of inefficiency and redundancy. It is having the organisation being able to both drive the transformation and continue supporting operations over the course of the transformation journey.

Having multitasking down to the individual level is also potentially powerful. Consider having operational people who fully understand the nature of inefficiencies, being the ones living and breathing it, to determine the changes needed.

In TalentCorp’s own experience, during a period of transformation, it is best having the same people work on both policy change and implementation. It ensures those implementing change fully understand the intent of the planned changes and also allows for a feedback loop to the extent that implementation challenges require tweaking the policy changes.

Again, this is contrary to specialising by function for maximum efficiency. Like the jawbone evolution, multifunctionality may translate to a period of serving both functions less than optimally.

However, we may just need to accept this as a necessary intermediate phase along the journey of ultimately major change.

Biological evolution follows hysteresis or is path dependent. What this means is that it is more like incremental renovations to a house, rather than being able to tear down a house and build a new perfect one from ground zero.

The same applies for an organisation which cannot completely stop and then restart with a completely new design or process.

The final outcome therefore is influenced by the starting point and workable intermediate states along the way, much like each stage of a renovation.

Hence, as a final reflection on lessons from evolution, it teaches us that we mustn’t allow the perfect to be enemy of good.

Where we are now influences where we can go from here. We should learn to accept the potential imperfections of each stage of change, in journeying to a final destination of transformation.

After all, if the human body is the result of such imperfect steps, it ain’t half bad. Daunting and unimaginable as transforming our organisations can be.

We should draw inspiration from where inefficiency, redundancy and sub-optimal multifunctionality can take us—whether in our own evolution or more pertinently towards transforming ourselves, our organisation and our country.

Johan MERICAN is CEO of TalentCorp.

To send feedback to Johan on this article, email mystarjob@leaderonomics.com
**MICROMANAGEMENT VS EMPOWERMENT**

**A LEADER’S ROLE IN PEOPLE MANAGEMENT**

By VINESH NAIDU

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**“THE PERSON WHO KNOWS HOW WILL ALWAYS HAVE A JOB. THE PERSON WHO KNOWS WHY WILL ALWAYS BE HIS BOSS.”**

**ACTUALLY,** a better way of viewing a spectrum, not an “either-or” problem. You don’t either micromanage or empower. You have to do both. Everyone tends to have some tendencies in both camps—some people have actually identified stages for those sort of things. To say I can’t quite make up my mind though I find it to be in total awe of their clairvoyance on the matter. As long as I remain and work within the scope of my responsibilities, clairvoyance is great, but only if the link remains clear. But the key is you also articu-

**EMPOWERING**

An employer’s role is to make a person feel seen, heard and valued. They are empowered, they are more engaged, performing and more productive. Engaged employees are empowered employees. Engaged employees are more likely to stay for longer than their less-effective peers. This means that giving work to people who deliver, not people who don’t, is a key driver of engagement.

Several of the “12 elements of great management” as determined by the Gallup Organization are directly related to employee empowerment. Empowered employees share decisions with their managers, as determined by the Gallup research.

If you have the materials and equipment you need in order to do your job, don’t feel like you are working differently from your competition? Simple as it may sound, empowerment was the key by ensuring the workforce did the right thing and not simply doing things right.

**Airlines**

There is someone at work who encourages you to take steps to improve your work, rather than vice versa.

**Facebook**

There is someone at work who encourages you to take steps to improve your work, rather than vice versa. Engaged employees also result in a higher revenue growth rate. In fact, this gives an organisational head start as an even better and more effective strategy for succession planning and understanding the profile of the visionary work required for both personal and organisational development. But it goes without saying that step by step, any employee who is more empowered, the workforce is more likely to operate in a slow, think and act can actually lead to big breakthroughs. To ensure your work is not only more productive but is now considered a necessity, let me regale you with more research insights.

**Facebook**

There is someone at work who encourages you to take steps to improve your work, rather than vice versa.

**EMPOWERING**

Engaged employees are empowered employees.

Empowered employees are engaged employees. They have a focus on learning and growth, connect with colleagues and others throughout the organisation. To say that I am someone who has a clear understanding of their ideal role of the leader.
I have been working in the area of strategy and planning for the past 37 years and I would have thought I had seen everything at this point. I have worked with many companies which at some point have been considered to be the most innovative companies that the world has ever known.

I had a client whose company was once known as the leader for lighting after World War II and was one of the pioneers of the compact disc in the 80s and 90s only to suffer in more recent days to commoditisation as cheaper products, most of which are copies of their own designs, are flooding the markets from China.

One thing is inevitable and that is “change”. There are no hard feelings about it, when we realise that we simply have to innovate. Industry structures shift and those who fail to see these changes early when they start to happen usually are the ones who are hurt the most.

This failure to see the shifting environment has resulted in some of the most harrowing examples of restructuring and lay-offs in corporate history. Leaders need a better vantage point to see what is going on. Change management gurus have headed up the boardrooms to develop breakthrough strategies and introduce game-changing strategies to steer the company in new directions.

Some have been more successful than others. Many, however, always attribute successful changes to leaders who had the ability to see the bigger picture and determine industry shifts that were going to change the rules of the game.

The likes of Bill Gates and Steve Jobs were able to usher in the era of personal computing in the 80s through their forward thinking perspectives. The airline industry is close to 100 years old and the industry still continues to shift on both extremes from the highly differentiated Virgin Atlantic to the reconstruction caused by the budget airline segment led by the likes of Southwest Airlines and AirAsia.

The ability to see the big picture and go beyond what everyone else is thinking has been the determining talent that has led to the prosperity of innovative companies, many of which were able to thrive in periods of volatility and challenges.

The role of leaders in having to identify changes that will affect their organisation and industry for better or for worse cannot be underestimated. While it is very unlikely that we can have a reincarnation of Steve Jobs or have the divergent creativity of Sir Richard Branson on demand, the ability to see the big picture is a key talent of any strategic leader.

The question that remains however is whether or not having the ability to see the big picture is enough? It is obviously a “yes” in a situation where the organisation has a crisis of innovation and needs to get unstuck from its status quo. A fresh perspective is always needed.

The importance of having a good vantage point is that it allows the leader to take a step back and look at the bigger picture. It allows him to see what is happening in the world outside the organisation and its impending effects to the current strategy.

At this point a leader needs to have a lens similar to a microscope to get to root causes of problems and deploy measures for corrective action.

4 Instrument flying: Have a dashboard for navigating the strategy. Build a system for measuring progress and milestones. Have the necessary indicators for strategic traction that measure finances, learning and growth, customer perspectives and internal processes. Use a balanced scorecard perspective.

The good news for the leader is that he does not have to be omnipotent to see the forest and the trees. He needs only to have the right perspective at the right given time and if he chooses to specialise in certain aspects, then a true leader recognises the need for the other perspectives and gives way to empower others to formulate and execute strategy.

Gone are the days that one leader does all. Leadership in the Age of Execution as I wrote about earlier demands more collaboration and a broader cross-sectional perspective to make things work.

This demands a certain level of leadership from all of us and we can’t have a zero-sum perspective of power and influence.

Having a leadership vantage makes it useful that strategy goes beyond the self or the leader. And while it may take a visionary to cast a broader perspective, it takes a visionary to cast a broader perspective.

By JOHN WALTER BAYBAY
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THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A GOOD VANTAGE POINT IS THAT IT ALLOWS THE LEADER TO TAKE A STEP BACK AND LOOK AT THE BIGGER PICTURE. IT ALLOWS HIM TO SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE ORGANISATION AND ITS IMPENDING EFFECTS TO THE CURRENT STRATEGY.

Seeing the forest and the trees is having the ability to view things from different lenses at different points in time when they are needed:

1. Situational appraisal and scenario analysis: Use a big picture perspective and engage your team in looking at the facts together and have a shared appreciation to determine a broad strategy. Develop a broad sense of vision and direction amidst the sea of competition. See the future through a telescope and build a navigational roadmap.

2. Use other people’s perspectives in visualising different scenarios that could affect the execution of your strategy: In this case you are not using your own lens but that of your Cross Functional Team (CFT). This gives a leader a holistic perspective across the organisation. This helps the leaders anticipate barriers to execution.

3. Have a diagnostic mindset: Sometimes a leader needs to take a “deep dive” into their own organisation to identify constraints to execution. These constraints could be motivational or systemic. They could also be resource based.

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THE LEADERSHIP VANTAGE
**MULTIPLERS**

Multiplicants extract full capability, their own as well as others, and demonstrate the disciplines of a Multiplier, i.e. Talent Magnet, Liberator, Challenger, Debate Maker, and Invester.

Diminishers underutilise talent and resources, their own as well as others, and also demonstrate five very different disciplines: Empire Builder, Tyrant, Know-It-All, Decision Maker, and Micro Manager.

As Wiseman clearly realises, people combine some of the best and worst traits of both the Multiplier and Diminisher. Strengths can become weaknesses or vice versa if carried to an extreme. A Talent Magnet, for example, could be especially effective in recognising and attracting high-potentials and then hoard their talents, exploiting them to his or her advantage. A Micro Manager could be especially alert for significant details that others ignore, but deny other people’s professional development by refusing to delegate tasks to them.

In the healthiest organisations, there are constant efforts to increase (multiply) positive and productive engagement while reducing (diminish) waste. We have all had experience with the two dramatically different types of leaders. The first type trains intelligence, energy and capability from the people around them and always needs to be the smartest person in the room. These are the idea killers, the energy sappers, the Diminishers of talent and commitment.

On the other side of the spectrum are leaders who use their intelligence to amplify the smart capabilities of the people around them.

When these leaders walk into a room, light builds turn on over people’s heads; ideas flow and problems get solved. These are the leaders who inspire employees to stretch themselves to deliver results that surpass expectations. These are the Multiplicants. And the world needs more of them, especially now when leaders are expected to do more with less.

In this engaging and highly practical book, leadership expert Liz Wiseman and management consultant Greg Mckeown explore these two leader styles, persuasively showing how Multiplicants can have a resoundingly positive and profitable effect on organisations — getting more done with fewer resources, developing and attracting talent, and cultivating new ideas and energy to drive organisational change and innovation.

Thus, it is an examination of why some leaders (Diminishers) drain others and why other leaders (Multipliers) are the opposite from that of a Diminisher. Multipliers are out there. Narayana Murthy, founder and chairman of India-based Infosys Technologies is a great example.

Multipliers get twice the capability from people compared to Diminishers.

**BECOMING AN INVESTOR**

Investors empower by providing others the ownership and the resources to achieve goals independent of the leader. More of the Multipliers and the world needs more of them, especially now when leaders are expected to do more with less.

How do they do that? Let us take a look.

1. **Define ownership**
   - Multipliers believe in the intelligence and abilities of the people around. They ascertain ownership by putting them in charge.

2. **Name the lead.**
   - For example, John Chambers, CEO of Cisco gives every member of his team 51% of the vote in the decision-making but they are 100% responsible for the result. Clarifying the role that you will play as a leader actually gives people more ownership, not less.

3. **Give ownership for the end goal.**
   - For example, a management team was assembled for an offsite meeting to plan an important acquisition for their business. They kicked off their work with a simple but powerful management exercise called “The Big Picture”. They were all given a one-inch square of a famous painting. They were told to enlarge the square.

4. **In other words, each team is given a little piece of a bigger picture. The goal is to bring all the enhancements together to form a unified replica of the original painting.**
   - Initially, everyone was focused on the piece given to them. And when the time came for them to put together the whole picture, the painting did not come together so well.

The leader reminded the team that the goal is to optimise whole and not their individual piece. Only then did they start to give heed to the bigger picture. Though it was too late, they learned an important lesson.

When people are given ownership of only a small piece, they tend to focus on that piece. When they are given ownership for the whole, they will optimise and stretch their thinking for the bigger picture.

5. **Stretch the role.**
   - Multipliers get more than 100% of people’s capability and responsibility for them, but they are not in charge to stretch and get them to do things they have never done before.

When investors stretch the role, the person gets stretched too because the stretched role creates a vacuum that needs to be filled.

6. **Invest resources**
   - Investors guard their investment by imparting knowledge and by providing resources the person needs to succeed.

7. **Teaching and coaching**
   - Investors empower by providing resources the person needs to succeed.

8. **Investors see and believe in the natural consequences of their actions**
   - They build the ownership and the responsibility for success.

TIPS

**Let them know who is boss**

Let people know that they are responsible and accountable and tell them how you will stay engaged and support them, but they remain in charge.

**Let nature take its course**

Nature is the best and most powerful teacher. People learn well, quickly and deeply when we allow nature to take its course and let people experience the natural consequences of their actions, especially through their mistakes.

Ask for the F-I-X

When people come to you with a problem and a challenge, it is a problem not important but to assume responsibility for the problem. Give the problem back to them.

Prompt them to stretch further, ask questions such as: How would you like to fix this? What are the possible solutions for this situation? Get them to complete the thought process and come up with the solution.

Hand back the pen

Once you see that your team members are stuck, be ready to assist, but have an exit plan. Tell them that you are here to back them up. Ask how you can help as they lead, that you are glad to think through this with them but you are still looking to them to lead.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

Once people are given ownership, and when Multiplicants show confidence and invest resources in them, vast amount of latent intelligence and capability are unearthed.

Multiplicants do participate in operations, but they ensure that ownership remains with other people. Multiplicants are able to achieve world-class results; 42% better than Diminishers.

**Koh Earn Soo and his team have made the best books and summarise them into shorter, inspiring content in the hope of inspiring people to read more and learn more. To read the rest of this summary and many other bestsellers, subscribe to www.thebestbooksummary.com**
Diagonal lines have almost the same effect as verticals but they give a softer appearance, thus accentuating the curves of the body. A wrap dress is a good example of a diagonal line that flows from the top to the bottom. A bias skirt is another.

Diagonal design influence is any design line or feature that causes the eye to move from side to side on an angle — for example, Grecian necklines, V-necklines and ragged hemlines.

The physical effect of it is that diagonal lines shorten and widen or lengthen and narrow depending on degree of angle.

Psychologically, the imbalanced features of diagonal lines give a dramatic, energetic, restless and active feeling.

Here are some principles for you to ponder upon when using diagonals:

1. The longer and more vertical the diagonal line, the taller and slimmer the wearer will appear to be; the shorter and more horizontal the line, the shorter and wider the area will appear.

A good example is using a V-neckline to elongate our necks. The longer and the sharper the neckline, the longer your neck will appear to be. Plus, it will help you look taller as well.

A wrap dress is another example. The longer the line of the wrap is, the slimmer the person will look. Picture a head-scarf with a diagonal front? It will make the wearer look taller.

2. Triangles fall within diagonal influence and are one of the most common design elements seen in fashion — for example, V-necklines, V-lapel, V-shaped necklaces with pendants.

Compare the difference between peak and notched lapels. With peak lapels, one will always look taller as your eyes follow the sharpness of the triangles on top; whereas with notched lapels, your eyes will look down at where the cut-out of the lapels are located.

3. Our eyes are led to the widest side of a triangle. Thus, with a shi jacket that opens at the base, your hips will appear wider as the angle increases. Similarly, wearing a wide V-neckline will definitely make your shoulders appear broader.

Circular design influence is useful when you want to appear fuller and more rounded.

A jacket with a rounded hemline will add weight and width to the hips. This would be good for ladies with a boyish frame, but would not be recommended for those with a triangular, round or oval body shape.

Circular design lines are much gentler and softer.

If your intention is to appear warm, friendly and welcoming, then lace, ruffles, ribbons and bows should be your pick. But too much of it will decrease your level of professionalism. So do reserve your floral shirt or dress for parties and not for business presentations.

Circular designs can be employed to balance the upper and lower body when one area is larger than the other.

For someone with a full hipline, having a wide oval scoop neckline or a puff sleeve will balance up the bottom.

Curved lines can be used to re-emphasise or define your figure because the female body is naturally curved.

A slim woman with small waist who wishes to appear more womanly can seek out garments that have curved or round-ed internal design lines or patterns.

Now you know a little more about verticals, horizontals, diagonals and circulars, the next time you look in your wardrobe, think about the message you are sending. Remember to read between the lines!
MPOWERMENT: the new YOLO

Not afraid of being rejected and doing what you’re good at.

The irony of empowerment is it implies that our parents or employers – the “apparent” power-wielding, decision-makers in our lives – need to give us the power to do the things that we want and make decisions for ourselves. Being allowed freedom is a juxtaposition that I can’t even begin to comprehend.

Instead, empowerment should start from within. You should be able to feel empowered without waiting for the power to do so.

I know this – I own five cats, and if anyone can teach you about being your own person and doing your own thing, it’s our furry felines. Below are five lessons on self-empowerment that I learned from my cats.

1. Don’t be afraid to ask for what you want

Some cats have a knack for asking by coming to humans only when they want something – be it food, water or a belly rub – and they usually do it till they get what they want.

It’s not easy to ask. There’s the obvious prospect of rejection, and the discomfort of knowing that you’re causing discomfort.

Letting yourself get what you need is perhaps the most important part of empowering yourself. Far too often, we feel reluctant to wrestle with what we want or, more importantly, what we deserve.

What happens then is that we don’t get the responsibility that we want – or worse, be given the part of the chicken we like least.

Empowerment has a lot to do with harnessing control over your life and being the one who makes decisions.

Independent individuals know not only that you must be able to ask, but also when and from whom to ask.

Get comfortable asking for specific responsibilities at work or during group assignments in university. Besides putting yourself in the position of control, it is also crucial in making sure you have the advantage of doing what you’re good at.

It also shows a lot of initiative, and that you know how to get what you want.

On top of that, asking gives people confidence that you will get the job done because you have already shown the interest to do it.

2. Be able to be alone

Cats are often solitary animals. They are fully capable of seeking affection and company among humans and also other cats, but what truly defines their strength is their ability to hunt and scavenge alone, and spend hours trawling the neighbourhood on their own.

Being able to deal with being alone empowers people in ways that they often underestimate.

Many people, especially extroverts, dread situations where they find themselves alone, and are therefore forced to depend on the presence and acceptance of others.

Feeling comfortable being solitary is a form of independence that allows you to have full control and ownership of your actions and feelings despite the resistance and criticism of others.

Great leaders often find themselves having to stand their ground despite the resistance from everyone around them. Self-empowerment means that you are not afraid of being rejected and being left alone when you make certain necessary and unpolar decisions.

You should also know when to turn around and walk away in situations that are bad for you. Far too many young people, especially women, in physically and emotionally abusive relationships are afraid to leave their partners out of fear of being alone.

Learn to spend some time alone by doing things that you usually must do with someone else: watch a movie, have a nice fancy dinner, or go on a holiday, alone.

You may not always enjoy the experience, but try to look for some points of comfort which you could go back to when forced into a solitary situation the next time.

On top of that, you will feel reinvigorated by your ability to overcome your fear of being alone.

3. Decide for yourself – don’t be a people pleaser

Cat haters love to call our furry friends arrogant and unfriendly. Cat lovers, on the other hand, understand that cats are merely able to put their paw down and do only the things that they deem reasonable.

People who feel empowered can make decisions for themselves. Liberating as that sounds to some, there are many more people out there who are not comfortable with the pressure of making the call.

Asians are especially afraid to come off as too assertive, but there is a difference between always wanting to have control and having the confidence to be the one to make decisions.

An example that we are all far too familiar with:

“When to eat?” Or, “Anywhere will do.”

“I don’t know.” Or, “Anywhere will do.”

Make it a habit to be a decision-maker even in relatively insignificant situations, even on small things like deciding on a restaurant or which cereal to buy at the supermarket.

Going back and forth when making small decisions like these shows a clear indecisiveness and lack of confidence, and will spill over in your work life later on.

Of course you will occasionally get rejected or make mistakes and unpopular decisions. Perhaps the restaurant that you chose served bad food, and all your friends were unhappy with it, or the cereal you picked was too expensive and tasted unhappy with it, or the cereal you picked was too expensive and tasted unhappy with it, or the cereal you picked was too expensive and tasted bad.

It’s most important to keep going and continue letting yourself be the one calling the shots once in a while.

4. Explore and experiment – the world is your playground

Curiosity killed the cat, but she would rather die trying.

Go out there and experience life. Take the time to travel to strange places. Laugh often and meet new people. Take an odd job, even if it means you feel uncomfortable doing it. Say “Yes” more often, and reign in your doubts and reluctance.

This is especially directed to you if you often find yourself defeated by others because they have lived a more exciting and fulfilling life than you. While you married the mundane, they explored the world and are always one step ahead.

If you allow yourself to live and experience with everyone that someone else seems to have a greater life than yours.

And the bad news is someone else will always seem to have a greater life than yours.

Give yourself a break from the pressures of other people – let social media and your social circles be a friendly space instead of a playing field where everyone seems to be out there to outlive you.

Empowerment, unlike its unpolished brother Power, is not relative. It does not deplete, and isn’t something you harvest by cutting down the empowered trees of others.

Comparing yourself to the standards and lives of others is not only potentially deadbeat, but it also hinders you from enriching your life with the happiness of others.

Having said this, continue to be on Facebook or Instagram if you’re comfortable with it. Real empowerment is not to let it dictate what you do or how you feel.

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S E L F - E M P O W E R M E N T  L E S S O N S I L E A R N E D FROM MY CATS

Self-empowerment means that you are not afraid of being rejected and being left alone when you make certain necessary and unpopular decisions.

What small and unique experiences can teach them about handling life and the work place. In fact, some employers will see it as an ability to face new challenges and a willingness to throw yourself in new and unfamiliar situations.

Give yourself legitimacy – be proud to be “seen here, done that.”

Don’t worry about the haters

Cats are unfazed by unpopularity. They are comfortable being themselves and don’t need to live up to the social expectations set by their canine counterparts. They are perfectly capable of living their own lives. Whether or not people love them too.

This lesson is especially powerful today in the world of social media. The next time you do something fun with your friends and you are about to post it on photo upload on Instagram, stop yourself.

If you find yourself having to publicise how great your life is, you will also find yourself being defeated when someone else seems to have a greater life than yours.

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MYSTARJOB.COM, SATURDAY 31 MAY 2014
ACCOUNTABILITY IN A CULTURE OF EMPOWERMENT

By CHONG SOOK LENG
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EMPLOYEES desire freedom to exercise their intellect, explore options and contribute ideas. They seek flexibility and space in the process of accomplishing their work. As we move towards an economy of managing a workforce of knowledge workers, employees want autonomy and control to carry out their job regardless of their age, rank or experience.

Typically, employees are asking for empowerment, which is about delegating power and authority to another person, usually someone whom you can trust.

THE NEED FOR TRUST?
Trust in a person is built over a period of time and through proven track record that demonstrates that an individual is someone you can count on to consistently achieve expected results.

This recurring trend proves a person’s credibility and accountability to deliver the required service quality and goals. Their reputation makes this person a candidate worthy of more power and authority to make bigger impact decisions. But is trust a sufficient yardstick to qualify a person as worthy of being empowered? Let us consider what empowerment is not. Empowerment is not about entrusting power to someone and adopting a hands-off approach from thereon.

Recently, during one of my regular coffee sessions with an old friend, who is a CEO of a public listed company, he shared with me that he trusts his senior directors because they have been with the company for more than 10 years, and he knows that they have the best interests of the company at heart. As a result, he gives them a free hand to manage their respective functions.

When I asked if he was pleased with the results they were achieving, he mentioned that there were mixed feelings involving both contentment and disappointment.

Although business remains profitable, it isn’t growing as fast as its peers and there were several missed opportunities which relegated the company from being a leader in the industry to lagging behind its newer competitors.

How many leaders have you known who started out with the best of intentions in delegation and empowerment, only to experience disappointment and disenchantment and to further deepen engagement between the employee and the manager.

Feedback is important to help further expand on strengths and close developmental gaps. At the same time, these sessions are opportunities for directors to report on progress and for mentoring and coaching. Adequate support and guidance are essential as the person learns to make judgment calls, select choices, evaluate risks, consider different perspectives and build stakeholder engagement.

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Set aside time for mentoring and coaching
During the check-in process, seek opportunities for mentoring and coaching. Adequate support and guidance are essential as the person learns to make judgment calls, select choices, evaluate risks, consider different perspectives and build stakeholder engagement.

Feedback is important to help further expand on strengths and close developmental gaps. At the same time, these sessions are opportunities for directors to report on progress and for mentoring and coaching. Adequate support and guidance are essential as the person learns to make judgment calls, select choices, evaluate risks, consider different perspectives and build stakeholder engagement.

The process is no different from any project management exercise of setting goals, tracking milestones and disciplined execution.

Here are some easy steps to build a structure of accountability:

1. Set clear goals
In most organisations, a formal or informal performance management system is already in place. Setting clear goals and desired results are excellent ways to manage expectations of the empowered and avoid micromanaging by the business leader. Goal setting also allows both parties to be aligned and on the same page.

2. Set up a monitoring system
Agree on milestones to be achieved, and identify critical paths and approval processes. Establish regular check-ins and both sides must be comfortable of the frequency. The giver needs to ensure sufficient oversight and guidance is provided. The taker has to be responsible to deliver the expected goals. Track progress and recalibrate when necessary.

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