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CHANGE. It’s that constant buzzword we hear all too often in different areas – especially when we talk about personal change, mindset change, climate change, social change and organisational change. If we have entered into our comfort zone for a long time, then change can be a rather unsettling experience for most of us.

In today’s VUCA (vulnerable, uncertain, changing, ambiguous) business environment, it is imperative to embrace change and stay competitive and relevant. Kodak, for example, failed to see the future of digital camera revolution transforming the photography market, leading to its decline and eventual death. So what can we do to prepare ourselves for such change? Perhaps we can learn a thing or two from chameleons, which are one of the coolest and cutest (at least for me) creatures in the animal kingdom.

Adaptability

Chameleons are well known for their ability to change colour. It is their natural response to changing conditions. They are unique because they can change their body temperature, their metabolic rate, their heart rate, their blood pressure, their blood chemistry and even their brain chemistry. This enables them to see two different things simultaneously.

Chameleons’ eyes are on the front, back and sides of their head. The outer parts of the eye allow the chameleon to see two different things at once. They are always watching and listening, matching their surroundings, seeking food or potential threats.

This is the same for organisations. Chameleons are excellent at changing direction while on the move. They can change direction at a speed of 10° per second. This is similar to the speed at which a human can move their head and eyes.

The process of going through changes in and around the organisation, who knows we might actually find our true calling in life after all?

COOL CHAMELEON

By LIM LAY HSUAN
layhsuan.lim@leaderonomics.com

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

1. “The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” – Socrates
2. “True life is lived when tiny changes occur.” – Leo Tolstoy
3. “To improve is to change, to be perfect is to change often.” – Winston Churchill
4. “It’s not that some people have willpower and some don’t... It’s that some people are ready to change and others are not.” – James Gordon
5. “Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change.” – Wayne W. Dyer

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The Science of Building Leaders
**ARE YOU A CONDUCTOR?**

CHANGING GAME PLAN WHEN NEEDED

By ROSHAN THIRAN
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I n 2004, I watched the first season of The Apprentice where Donald Trump fired a person each episode. It came to a climactic ending where only two people remained – Kwame Jackson and Bill Rancic. Trump eventually fired Jackson and Rancic became the first winner of the reality show. Born and raised in Chicago, Rancic was always an entrepreneur at heart. His first ever business venture was selling pancakes with his grandmother. He explains, “I learned how to make pancakes with my grandmother, who..., pancakes with his grandmother.

In a TEDTalk, Talgam walks through the story of different conductors and their different styles. There is the commanding conductor (Riccardo Muti), who led his orchestra through authority but it resulted in unhappy people. In fact, he received a letter signed by all 700 musicians of La Scala asking him to resign. Why? Because he didn’t let his musicians develop. They felt treated as instruments, not as partners. The same can be said of some authoritarian bosses, who are commanding but have extremely unhappy employees. Talgam goes on to describe a few more types of conductors until he showcases the “perfect” conductor – someone who allows each musician to express themselves freely, yet takes full control to ensure nothing goes wrong.

Talgam even shows a clip when things go wrong for this “perfect” conductor – his trombonist goes off. He doesn’t panic but gently re-directs him back to the right path, ensuring harmony prevails in his orchestra.

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**FINAL THOUGHTS**

Back to Rancic and his story. In an interview for The Leaderonomics Show, I asked him how he won The Apprentice. In his own words he said, “By thinking through each task and changing my game plan when I had to.”

He went on to talk about how he displayed leadership which resulted in his victory. At the end of the day, Rancic won because he managed to produce the best “music” for Trump. Just as a good orchestra conductor would. How about you? Are you conducting your team to success? Are you a good orchestra conductor?

**UNDERSTANDING YOUR TEAM**

Like an orchestra conductor, being a leader within an organisation bears the same challenges – trying to create perfect harmony amongst the different variables in your business to ensure your organisation creates “beautiful” products and profits.

According to Talgam, the best orchestra conductors understand their people, allow them to develop, treat them with respect, and yet gently nudge them towards the goal of making beautiful music. As a leader you might have a strategy as well written as a symphony by Mozart, but if your orchestra is not well conducted, then noise will prevail over music.

**CHANGING GAME PLAN WHEN NEEDED**

An orchestra conductor faces the ultimate leadership challenge: to create pure harmony without uttering a word. Talgam adds, “A conductor out of the chaos, can create order. Noise becomes music.”

A business leader is similar as they need to create perfect “harmony” in their business.

In a TEDTalk, Talgam walks through the story of different conductors and their different styles. There is the commanding conductor (Riccardo Muti), who led his orchestra through authority but it resulted in unhappy people. In fact, he received a letter signed by all 700 musicians of La Scala asking him to resign. Why? Because he didn’t let his musicians develop. They felt treated as instruments, not as partners. The same can be said of some authoritarian bosses, who are commanding but have extremely unhappy employees. Talgam goes on to describe a few more types of conductors until he showcases the “perfect” conductor – someone who allows each musician to express themselves freely, yet takes full control to ensure nothing goes wrong. Talgam even shows a clip when things go wrong for this “perfect” conductor – his trombonist goes off. He doesn’t panic but gently re-directs him back to the right path, ensuring harmony prevails in his orchestra.

Great leaders get the best out of their people at the right time. They ensure their musicians feel significant, accepted and secure. A conductor needs his/her musicians. Likewise, a leader needs his/her followers and needs to take time to develop his/her followership.

Great conductors lead with their hearts and are passionate about their work. Are you passionate about the vision and mission of your organisation? Do you lead with passion and conviction? A leader’s passion is infectious and generally seeps through the organisation.

Great conductors are aware of their gestures and impact. They have to be precise or their musicians will not be able to follow. Everything done is intentional. Are you an intentional leader?

Great conductors share the spotlight. When the concert is over, and the audience is clapping, the conductor turns to the audience and takes a bow. Great conductors immediately turn to their orchestra, inviting them to take the limelight. Without the orchestra, the conductor is nothing.

Do you share your leadership glory with your team? Are you a leader that gives credit back to the team?

Great conductors are not super-humans. They don’t do everything. In fact, they delegate everything to others who are better and more skilled. The conductor only appears on stage when it is time for him to lead. Great leaders know when to lead and when to let other leaders do the job.

Do you know when to take the lead?

The conductor focuses on his/her task and keeps his/her back to the audience. Great leaders similarly keep their mind’s eye on things they are facing rather than worry about what is being said or done behind them.

The conductor usually stands on a platform and is visible to every member of his/her orchestra. This is to ensure the orchestra stays in alignment. Are you a visible leader who is visible to your employees and your teams? Or are you not spending time with your team and causing misalignment across the business?

Great conductors lead. Most musicians in the orchestra are much more talented than the conductor. They are experts in their musical instruments. They look to their conductor not for technical advice but for leadership. The same happens in organisations. Most leaders are not functional or technical experts. Employees look up to them for leadership. Leaders need to inspire, create excitement, have a clear vision and lead. Are you a leader?
4 CORNERSTONES OF SOLID WORK RELATIONSHIPS

Making personal adjustments for everyone’s good

By JEREMY GOLDMAN
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You know what? I love my colleagues. There. I said it. It has always been how I operate; I just enjoy trying to make friendships at every company I go to.

While you can’t spend all day talking by the water cooler, I feel that it’s easier to be passionate about your company's success when you care about the team who will be affected by it.

It should go without saying that building and maintaining strong relationships, whether in our personal or professional lives, is vital to our overall happiness and success.

Therefore, it’s no surprise that co-worker camaraderie appears to be the key ingredient to job satisfaction.

LinkedIn's recent Relationships @Work study revealed that 46% of professionals worldwide believe that work friends influence how happy they are at work.

When you’re in an environment where you feel safe and supported, you’ll view your job and the people you work with in a more positive light.

Moreover, you might even be happier when you leave the office, as studies suggest that being happy at the office can lead to higher marital satisfaction. And, if you’ve ever had a colleague with problems at home, you know that it can easily spill over to affect work productivity.

When you have friends at the office, you can be more confident knowing that people have your back – this makes it much easier to share your thoughts and opinions if you’re already established open and honest communication.

Unfortunately, many businesses suffer due to a lack of rapport among employees, which (in my experience) translates to lower long-term market success for the company and stunted career advancement for the employees.

So, if you’re looking to change the office environment to make it more ‘connected’, here are four helpful tips:

1. SHOW AN INTEREST IN THEIR PERSONAL LIVES

A 2012 study by Gallup uncovered that one in two workers who had a best friend at work indicated they also felt a strong connection to the company they worked for.

Compare that to one-in-30 without a best friend at work. Pretty stark difference, no? Showing genuine interest in a colleague's personal life is a great way to create a stronger bond between the both of you.

Everyone has (or at least should have) hobbies outside of work, so if you take the time to connect with your colleague on a personal level, you will not only build their trust, but will also experience less job stress and burnout because you have someone to confide in.

If you’re unsure how to connect with someone, the Wall Street Journal reveals the key to effortless conversation: “People love to talk about themselves and often will think you are a great conversationalist if you talk about them and not yourself.”

2. BE THEIR SCHEDULE'S BEST FRIEND

This one in particular is something I’ve been guilty of and am working to get better at. It’s probably one of the easiest to pay heed to, yet the most difficult to master.

While some people are more observant about their schedules than others, I’ve noticed that even the most relaxed co-workers will get bent out of shape if another colleague keeps disrupting their schedule.

After all, disruptions lead to lower productivity, which leads to lower job satisfaction. In short, it’s a downward spiral.

A team member’s morale will go downhill if he or she feels like you’re making it harder for them to meet their outside-of-work personal obligations.

As a colleague – or manager – you never want your teammates feeling resentful because their schedules have been disrupted.

Is there a project that’s going to require late nights? If so, give as much advance notice as possible, and try to pitch in rather than leave early. Even on a day-to-day basis, try to schedule meetings when your colleagues prefer them rather than forcing them to adapt to when it will be convenient for you.

If you’re a manager and can give a little flexibility, try to allow responsible employees that latitude so that your direct report can take a longer lunch break for yoga twice a week.

If you can help teammates keep happy outside of the office, that will almost always lead to better workplace productivity.

3. GIVE CREDIT WHEN CREDIT IS DUE

Try to think when the last time you’ve said something along the lines of “good job” to someone you work with. Was it last week? Last month?

Now, try to think if that compliment would have been justified over that time period.

If you didn’t manage to compliment anyone yet you think it was warranted, why not try to work them into conversations more often?

A major part of career satisfaction is feeling appreciated and acknowledged for your hard work.

Moreover, acknowledging others is contagious. If you help create a culture in which compliments are given, then others will see it as a green light to give compliments as well.

It’s a virtuous cycle that will benefit everyone. Over time you’ll be part of the reason why you operate in a healthy, happy work environment.

Hence, a simple thank you or acknowledgement of a co-worker on a job well done will go a long way.

4. BOND OUTSIDE OF THE OFFICE

A study led by Christine M. Riordan, published in the Journal of Business Psychology, uncovered that even the opportunity for friendship boosts worker happiness and productivity.

The connection that we share with those around us – especially colleagues we see on a daily basis – not only impacts our health and well-being, but also makes us more productive in the workplace.

It can be something low key like grabbing coffee together in the morning or a drink at happy hour.

If you’re the boss and you’re considering doing this with a subordinate, just make sure that it’s a casual offer that your employee doesn’t feel commanded to oblige.

This is about connecting as peers, after all, and not as manager and direct report.

The important thing is to show your colleagues that you are investing in your personal relationship with them as well as your professional one.

EDITOR’S NOTE: The article first appeared on LinkedIn on Sep 3, 2014. It has been republished with the author’s permission.
I'D LIKE A PEGASUS--NOW PLEASE, AND HERE'S WHY

WHY—WHAT—WHEN TO CLEARLY COMMUNICATE EXPECTATIONS

BY LILY CHEAH
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I came across an internet meme recently that really made me laugh. It’s a photo of a man crouching forward as an artist works on a tattoo on his back.

In his hand, he holds a picture of what he wants his tattoo to look like: an intricate drawing of Pegasus, a powerful winged stallion with wings stretched out.

But we also see the work in progress. The artist, though looking like he is trying his best, has tattooed what appears to be an outline of an ill-shaped donkey with wings more befitting a ladybird.

While the photo is likely staged, I wonder if that is so far from the realities we observe in workplaces today.

Leaders expecting a Pegasus and getting a “My Little Unicorn” instead? That’s not so rare. And definitely not as funny.

We’re looking at a situation here involving unmet expectations. What was hoped to be an image of strength has turned out to be a child’s temporary tattoo lookout.

An instruction has been given, but the demonstrated result doesn’t live up to expectations.

But how does this happen? How does a powerful Pegasus become a weak four-legged creature with fairy wings? Instead of the demonstrated result doesn’t live up to expectations.

Especially in situations involving tight timelines, or crucial deals, can we really afford to hear “Well, I didn’t know that was what you wanted” or “It was just too hard”?

As we observe dynamics at work increasingly favouring collaborative atmosphere instead of a route of command-and-control, the What–When approach is predictably only going to continue to decline in effectiveness with newer generations.

DON’T FORGET THE “WHY”

What Connors and Smith propose is an insertion of the “why”, which must pave the way for “what” and “when” in order to engage and boost motivation to meet the expectation.

If we prefaced the instruction “Complete this report, and send it back to me by noon” with “The department head is heading out at 12.30pm to meet the expectation.

Don’t forget the ‘why’ approach for conveying expectations. We say “What” to clearly communicate when we need a task done. It’s the traditional “What–When” approach for conveying expectations. We say what we want to get done, and when it needs to be done: “Full stop.

While undoubtedly, the What–When approach still gets things done, there is a lot missing with this formula. It doesn’t provoke nor inspire any sense of owner-ship in the task.

It is purely instructional in nature and wouldn’t motivate someone to go the “second mile”. Authors Roger Connors and Tom Smith in the bestseller How Did That Happen explain it like this: The What–When approach “fails to engage the hearts and minds of people in a way that motivates them to follow through and do what it takes to deliver on key expectations”.

When we only communicate “what” needs to be done and “when”, we are purely instructing and not ensuring that recipients understand and take personal ownership of the task.

There can be multiple reasons for unmet expectations, including lack of resources and lack of empowerment. But one big potential factor could also be a breakdown in the communication of those expectations.

MAKING EXPECTATIONS UNDERSTOOD— A MISSING ELEMENT

“The ‘why’ approach also silently communicates is that the person ‘is worth the time and effort it takes to enrol and engage them in the mission.’ [...] It tells people that you respect them, that you value them as key contributors to the process of getting things done,” write Connors and Smith.

The “why”-When approach works with the communication of different levels of expectations, from the completion of daily tasks, to expectations that may take years to fulfil, like the turnaround of a company.

When Howard Schultz returned as CEO of Starbucks in January 2008, the company was in bad shape. In 2007, the value of Starbucks shares had fallen 42%.

There was increased competition in the market, and in the words of his leaked 2007 memo to the then CEO, Jim Donald, Schultz thought that the Starbucks experience had been watered down and the brand “commoditised”, all for the sake of growth.

But when he returned, Schultz didn’t jump straight to pushing “what” he wanted employees to do and “when” they needed to do it by. Instead, he spent time and resources explaining “why”.

In his first week, he made a public apology to all employees for having let them down and promised that the glory days of Starbucks would return.

He reiterated the importance of “the pursuit of an unequivocal, absolute commitment to quality” and to back his words up, in February 2008, he closed all 7,500 stores for a few hours to retrain employees on how to make a good espresso.

He also took 10,000 store managers away to a conference in New Orleans. In a 2010 interview with Harvard Business Review, he explained that this was to rally the leadership of the company together and to be “vulnerable and transparent with our employees about how desperate the situation was”.

A number of hard decisions had to be made in the ensuing years, including closing down stores and cutting jobs, but throughout it all, Schultz spent time and resources drilling in the vision and values of Starbucks (the “why” that powered all expectations).

It ultimately paid off, and Schultz successfully steered the company out of stormy waters. In 2009, Starbucks’ share price more than doubled, and profits tripled from 2008 to 2010.

CONCLUSION

We may not be facing a situation of Schultz’s magnitude, but the “why” can apply to even the simplest of requests: “I need to take this call. Could you please meet the client on your own first? I’ll join you soon.”

Perhaps if the man getting the Pegasus tattoo had taken the time to explain to the artist why he was getting it (maybe it was to commemorate an anniversary or to function as a symbol of strength) and engaged the heart and mind of the artist, he would have been honestly told by the artist that he didn’t possess the skills necessary to draw a Pegasus.

Of course, getting people excited and ensuring that they understand what is expected of them does not guarantee success, but clearly communicating expectations would definitely provide a strong start.

Try applying the Why–What–When formula in your communications this coming week. You may be pleasantly surprised at the results.

Lily Cheah leads employee, customer and alumni engagement at Leaderonomics, and believes that small details play a big part in huge successes, including always explaining “why”. To read more articles by Lily, visit www.leaderonomics.com. To engage with her, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com
WINDS OF CHANGE
EMBRACING AND MANAGING UNCERTAINTY


"S

KDND straight, breath in

roll your shoulders back, and

breath out on the exhale. All

as much as you can. Breath in, hold it, then

breath out, continue holding.

This statement illustrates a typical yoga ses-

sion at a farewell party, albeit a simplified

one. Yoga comes to my mind whenever the concept of change is discussed – it is a way

of finding a balance between not resisting,

breathe in, hold it there,

resisting, but the impact of change. For the

A paradigm shift is only the beginning, as it

Shawn Achor's and Harvard Business Review's

another reminder that it will always happen,

The bonus: In building our own capacity to

the right choice in response to change.

of… change. Naturally, it can be uncomfortable

a few of your colleagues have been asked

vapour and pumkashower. This belief has

the concept that CO2 is a good thing and that

left to the scenario to an organisa-

famous Organizational change consultants.

in changecould already bring you to our next

change (Don't let up, make it stick)

while answering whether you really have the abil-

And if you're not ready, it

the automaticity of our behaviour across

make a shift to interrogative self-talk

with the right people and right envi-

the automaticity of our behaviour across

One thing that can happen right now, or nothing can hap-

Beyond the skill of decisional balance, devel-

The automaticity of our behaviour across

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we are aware of the pros and cons of changing.

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I made the decision to quit my full-time career back in 2004, around the time I got engaged to be married. The decision was surprisingly easy for me to make, despite a flourishing career in advertising.

I have always been an energetic person who loved the demands and daily challenges that came with my job. Whilst there has and will always be those who are genuinely smarter than me, I figured my work ethics would help me earn my spot at the table and get me the recognition I was aiming for. Hence, I would stay up late and work during weekends in order to organise, supervise, troubleshoot, and do the due diligence required.

I wore my workaholism like a badge of honour. But, it became obvious this lifestyle wasn’t sustainable. I was getting burnt out, which led to feelings of disillusionment, despite the fact that I had “an awesome job”!

I wanted time out with my new status as a wife, to start a family and plan my next career move. I didn’t want feelings of guilt and stress to compound me because of divided attention between the demands of work and family.

**A PRIORITY SHIFT**

Today, I am a freelance brand and advertising consultant, and I have found my personal equilibrium between profession and parenthood. Admittedly, freelance work has no guarantees, but by networking my abilities, I found my niche.

Whilst being a mum with three children, I freelance at my old job as an advertising consultant, and I have found my areas of brand strategy and consumer research. I even do translations!

Some jobs are flexible enough to allow me to work almost entirely from home, so long as the expectations are being met. In my nine years of self-employment and being a stay-at-home mum, I can honestly say that it has been rewarding and wonderful.

I can add value to what the children learn at school by brushing up their lessons with them, or provide fun assignments that build their creativity and competency. I can take them for movies and play dates on less crowded weekday afternoons. I have the time to experiment with recipes. I can dedicate myself to marathon training in the early mornings. My commute to my “office” on some days is merely walking one floor down from my bedroom.

“I’M ONLY HUMAN”

But for those planning to tread this path, be wary. Do not dive into it with rose-tinted glasses. Freelancing while you have children has its fair share of problems! For instance, try receiving a call from your client only to have your children start singing Frozen’s “Let It Go” at the top of their lungs on a permanent repeat button!

I have also learnt, to my utter mortification, that young kids do not recognise the idea of not interrupting any calls or Skype videos. They even think it’s a good idea to join in!

Over the years, I’ve had my share of call “bombings”. My daughter previously interrupted a call to a senior client with, “Dada, is that you?” and then giggling away chattering, oblivious to my flapping hands and look of despair.

Not only is it embarrassing having work calls interrupted with toilet requests or demands for their favourite TV show, it utterly kills your professional veneer and utter kills your professional veneer and you are revealed as human – or worse, a mum.

As soon as they hear your two-year-old’s voice they no longer have that perception of you as an expert in a power suit. If you think being a freelance mum means delicious hours of uninterrupted sleep, think again.

Whilst trying to meet your work deadlines for the week, there are also the additional factors of your kids’ extracurricular activities, hours spent food-shopping, cooking, cleaning (even with a maid’s help), trying to slot in a morning run and even perhaps a social outing or two.

You basically end up feeling fairly exhausted at the end of the day!

**CHOICE AND EMPOWERMENT**

Daily organising and logistics have become a mandatory skill to be learnt and adopted in order to manage freelance work, keep the house running smoothly and keep the children entertained, learned and well-fed.

When they are sick, the days get even more complicated and stressful. In fact for me, the days whizz by all too quickly now, even more so than when I had a full-time job as a single woman.

Despite all the above, I cherish the ability to do what I am doing now. But in all honesty, the phrase “work-life balance” doesn’t hold water for me any longer. There is never on any day a 50/50 balance of anything!

What I am truly thankful for, is the empowerment I get in making my own work-life choices as far as my career, my family and also myself are concerned.

I think at the end of the day, life is all about knowing where you want to go, what you want out of it, and heading there sooner rather than later.
YOUR BRAIN ON KALE

KALE is a superstar. But when was the last time you ate it?

Kale is good medicine for your brain. It is nutrient-dense and can help keep your brain (and body) running well. A cup of raw kale has only 33 calories and zero fat. Moreover, consider these facts about the humble vegetable:

- It has a lot of iron, calcium, vitamins A and C.
- It is low in carbs, so there is no spike in blood sugar.
- It reduces inflammation (inflammation is a brain killer).
- It is packed with Vitamins A, C and K.
- It has a fair bit of protein.
- It is a good source of minerals such as copper, potassium, iron, manganese and phosphorus.
- It lowers bad cholesterol.

So, try to eat more kale. A cup of “brain summer smoothie” might be a good place to start (see recipe).

THE EVOLVING ROLE OF HR

By TISMAL RAJ
editor@leaderonomics.com

HUMAN resources (HR) practitioners from top organisations in Malaysia recently had the opportunity to attend an event focused on new learning and ideas that ranged from “Developing leaders for a globally competitive Malaysia” to “Big data: Data analytics in HR”.

One of the most crucial processes of HR is analysing performance data. While there are different theories, he said that “ability tests are a reliable value measure and a significant predictor of academic and work performance.”

A lot of research and case studies prove that psychometric tools, when utilised in an efficient and constructive manner, help companies to identify people with the accurate capabilities and cultural fit to deliver optimal and measurable business results.

In May 2011, the current CEO (then, the general manager of Japan) was asked to create an airline in 12 months and everything that goes along with it! With their most crucial and difficult task being to source a wide variety of people quickly, McLaughlin stated that utilising the right mix of tools ensured that Scoot hired the strongest performers who are most likely to stay, whilst minimising weak performers who are most likely to leave. This also leaves room for an organisation to increase its focus on development.

Attendees of this event found it to be very beneficial as they were able to take home a variety of solutions and recommendations for their organisations.

A CASE STUDY

John McLaughlin, commercial director of cut-e Singapore, presented a case study on Scoot Airlines and its selection criteria for every role.

Dr Goh Chee Leong, dean of the School of Psychology Malaysia and vice-president of HELP University, gave his keynote on the evolving role of HR, analysing performance data. While running through a comparison of different theories, he said that “ability tests are a reliable value measure and a significant predictor of academic and work performance.”

By TERRY SMALL
editor@leaderonomics.com

“A PERSON TOO BUSY TO TAKE CARE OF HIS HEALTH IS LIKE A MECHANIC TOO BUSY TO TAKE CARE OF HIS TOOLS.”

— SPANISH PROVERB

Remember this:

- You can also use kale to:
  - act as a ‘bed’ for chicken or fish
  - add to your pasta
  - add to your salad
  - make kale chips

All this adds up to kale being a superstar food for your brain.

Brain Summer Smoothie Recipe

1. Get a good blender and put in a little water.
2. Add organic apple or pear (or a bit of both) – leave skin on but remove seeds.
3. Half a banana and add one pitted date.
4. Add a handful of kale (other leafy greens work too) – 2 good ratios are 40% greens and 60% fruit
5. Add more water, if necessary.
6. To up it even more, add a bit of avocado and kelp powder.
7. Blend until smooth.

Expect a surge of energy and brain focus. These foods contain the amino acids tyrosine and tryptophane. The combination of leafy greens and fruits boost dopamine and serotonin. Dopamine boosts your attention and memory whilst serotonin improves your mood and learning, and curbs appetite.

For more brain bulletins, visit www.leaderonomics.com

All this adds up to kale being a superstar food for your brain.
CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND THE IRON LID

By JOHN WALTER BAYBAY
editor@leaderonomics.com

THE GREATEST BARRIER TO CHANGE IS OFTEN THE LEADERS THEMSELVES, BUT THEY CAN ALSO BE THE BEST PIVOTAL ELEMENTS IN A SUCCESSFUL CHANGE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Change management is often exemplified by the idea of the iron lid, a metaphor symbolising the resistance and inertia that can block change. This article explores the factors that can hinder change and the pivotal role of leadership in facilitating it.

1 Focusing too much on the results rather than the process
There is very little argument as to why change is needed in response to the changing environment. The top brass tend to look more at the ideal outcomes resulting from change, but have very little appreciation as to how it affects individuals working in the organisation.

The path to change is riddled with human landmines. The human experience in implementing change is often wrought in emotional investment. Effective change management needs to focus on how it is implemented, with sensitivity to the human experience as it is being effected.

The focus should be shifted to processes rather than pressuring others for immediate results. Managers need to realise that they are managing the human experience within the organisation.

2 Motivational misalignment
Change management usually entails some changes in expectations from both sides: employers and employees. People in organisations tend to fall under the concept of a psychological contract. The psychological contract concept was popularised by behavioural theorists Chris Argyris and Edgar Schein back in the 1960s. In their studies it was observed that employees and employers have an implied notion of what was expected of them as makers of the psychological contract.

At the time of employment, both employers and employees have a good idea of what to expect from each other. This expectation tends to be reinforced over time and becomes the basis of their relationship. When change is being implemented, these mutual expectations tend to get misaligned. The objectives of employees and the new expectations of employers get disconnected. It is like renegotiating the psychological contract.

The old motivations for career advancement sometimes change along with some of the investments made in the old path. This causes a great deal of insecurity and distrust towards management. It is very important for managers and leaders to get down to the level of their employees to reinforce trust with the assurance that they care about the future and careers of their employees, and the commitment remains for the mutual benefit of the employee and the employer.

If personal motivations and corporate intentions remain misaligned, there is no way for the employee but to see himself or her way out, or just wait for a golden parachute.

3 Underestimating the personal impact of change
A focus on ideal results also over-shadows the impact that is brought about by change. Leaders must realise that embracing change also entails being open to changing “the way we do things.”

An employee spends years, or even decades, to be proficient in what he or she does, and is usually appraised and remunerated in similar ways. When change is evident, this investment to mastery is sometimes cast aside for new and improved processes. Also, rapid changes in the industry sometimes force companies to restructure their value chains to the point that some of their key activities could be outsourced, automated, or junked.

The same goes for the people who use to own these processes; they could either be repurposed or scrapped. That is the prevailing fear among employees in a company that is going through major structural changes.

LEADERS AS SOLUTIONS
Fear often tends to point towards the worst scenarios. It is the role of leaders to accurately communicate the extent of change management initiatives as well as explain exactly what the process entails.

Leaders must have a concrete knowledge and be able to explain the scope or extent of their change initiatives.

The greatest barrier to change is often the leaders themselves, but they can also be the best pivotal elements in a successful change management initiative. The ability to change operates under the principle of an iron lid.

Leaders can act as a lid or limit to change potential but conversely, they can also be the agents. When looking at implementing a change management programme, the board also needs to identify localised leaders who form the vortices of influence within the organisation. These kingpins also serve as thermostat or regulators for organisational behaviour.

Organisations need to identify, develop, and invest in the leaders within to effectively implement change.

Leaders must also need to have a human approach towards their team in building confidence, integrity, and trust for a smoother transition.

Focus on “how” you do it rather than blindly trying to achieve the “what”.

Don’t forget the human element.
LEADERSHIP INTERVENTION

DO TOP PERFORMING UNDERGRADUATES NEED IT?

By ANDREW LAU
andrew.lau@leaderonomics.com

I just came back from multiple camps organised by top companies, in which I worked, mentored and learnt together with hundreds of scholars and top performing undergraduates. In the academic world, their pedigree is second to none—coming from Ivy League universities such as Harvard, Oxford, the London School of Economics and Political Science and Warwick, as well as other very respectable universities.

They are intelligent, willing to work hard, have the right attitude, and are eager to learn. With this list of criteria seemingly checked off, is there a need for host organisations to intervene? Based on my observations—it’s a YES, and here are five reasons why:

1. THEY LIVE WITHIN THEIR COMFORT ZONES

While most top performing graduates or scholars hold leadership positions in clubs and societies, many of them might not have the right depth of experience that will align with the needs of organisations. The reason is most of the activities organised are events such as BBQs, prom nights, small conferences and competitions, social gatherings, etc. While there’s nothing wrong with organising such events, they develop skill sets that bring little to no value to organisations.

2. THEY ARE NOT EXPOSED TO THE BUSINESS WORLD

Universities are first and foremost academic institutions. While universities try their best to bring in career fairs and try their best to bring in career fairs and try their best to bring in career fairs and try their best to bring in career fairs and try their best to bring in career fairs and try their best to bring in career fairs and try their best to bring in career fairs and try their best to bring in career fairs and try their best to bring in career fairs and try their best to bring in career fairs. However, in the business world, things are different. There is neither grading of assignments nor taking of exams. Wrong decisions can lead to a loss of resources, reputation and life. As such, their delivery of expectations are pegged at the level of their peers.

3. THEY ARE UNAWARE OF PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Undergraduates form their social circles and network among their peers. The only adults that they usually interact with are their parents and lecturers. As such, their delivery of expectations are pegged at the level of their peers. Top undergraduates struggle with matching up with expectations of professional working adults because it’s much higher than what they are accustomed to. There are demanding stakeholders to manage, often with very tight deadlines and resource constraints.

4. THEY COMMUNICATE IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

Even with top performing undergraduates, one of the biggest gaps is communication. Organisations that hire these newbies are unable to communicate with the type of lingo and tact required. The problem is not grammar but rather the cultural context of the conversations that have been taking place in their daily lives. More often than not, students talk rather than communicate. Usually in my speaking sessions with undergraduates, I ask this simple question: “When was the last time you had to motivate, convince, negotiate or coach someone?”

When I ask for a show of hands, I only get 1–2% of the crowd that had done in it in the past week. 98% had not even done it in the past year.

5. THEY ARE GREAT WITH BLACK AND WHITE BUT NOT WITH GREY AREAS

In the area of cognitive thinking and decision-making, many students do well—though unfortunately only when the answer is black or white, or when there is a clear answer. However, the hardest decisions are found in the grey areas. Perhaps this is because the system that they live in as a student values a single correct answer, but this does not apply in the working world. Students struggle with breaking down complex issues into manageable chunks, analysing similar options, thinking out of the box and defending their decisions when questioned about it.

If we all agree that these are indeed urgent and alarming gaps, then the next question would be—how then do we intervene? In my opinion, scholars and top performing undergraduates need to undergo leadership development and not soft skills training.

Unfortunately, soft skills training in its present form is largely made up of theory and a bit of application through short games or activities. While short games or activities might help to bring the concepts across, it does not give the participants the business world experience that is required for their development.

The focus areas above summarise how leadership development needs to happen if we want to create world-class young leaders. As part of a company whose mission is to develop capable leaders, we have a passion to build up the younger generation through such a method. Here at leaderonomics campus, we have developed our interventions to ensure the five focus areas are at the core of how we develop young leaders.

The answer lies within these five key focus areas. Any leadership development for scholars or top performing undergraduates must have these to ensure holistic development.

1. They need to deep dive into business world situations and not case studies. They need to manage stakeholder expectations in a live setting within a business world context.

2. They need an environment which forces them to make decisions that don’t have “right” or “wrong” answers, and they need to be able to defend those decisions.

3. They must be in the zone and dream, eat, think, act, behave and live out the life of a business leader, not a graduate.

4. They are intelligent, willing to work hard, have the right attitude, and are eager to learn. With this list of criteria seemingly checked off, is there a need for host organisations to intervene? Based on my observations—it’s a YES, and here are five reasons why:

5. They live within their comfort zones. While most top performing graduates or scholars hold leadership positions in clubs and societies, many of them might not have the right depth of experience that will align with the needs of organisations. The reason is most of the activities organised are events such as BBQs, prom nights, small conferences and competitions, social gatherings, etc. While there’s nothing wrong with organising such events, they develop skill sets that bring little to no value to organisations.

The 5 key focus areas

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EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
RIDING THROUGH TIMES OF CHANGE

By LEE JI-HAO
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I

Today's fast-paced and ever-changing economy, organisations have to take significant steps to remain competitive and deliver results. Although successful organisations often apply a modest, continuous level of change, in the past few years, organisations have had to employ significant business and talent survival tactics in response to challenging economic conditions.

Times of change can cause employees to feel confused or unsure about how they will fit in after the change. During these uncertain times, it can be difficult for employees to remain focused and stay productive. Therefore, maintaining employee engagement in the midst of organisational change is a key element in the success of a change initiative.

Employee engagement measurements (Aon Hewitt) demonstrate that engaged employees say good things about working at an organisation, have a desire to stay and be part of the organisation and they strive to give extra discretionary effort at work.

Employee engagement becomes particularly important during times of change because a highly engaged workforce is more likely to embrace and drive change and transformation. Engaged through observing their colleagues and leaders, employees want to see and hear from management on the issues they care about.

Employee engagement measures often apply a modest, continuous level of change, in the past few years, organisations (Aon Hewitt) demonstrate that successful business and talent survival tactics in enable organisations to continuously improve employee engagement.

In times of change, employees who believe in his cause. Today, he leads a team of approximately 100 people.

Restructuring
Restructuring efforts usually result in elimination of jobs; these events affect employees in a very personal and tangible way.

Remaining employees may also fear for their jobs, while at the same time they may be required to take on the work of eliminated positions. Employees in these situations can be engaged through observing their co-workers make personal sacrifices for the sake of the organisation and ensuring that employees can depend on others within a work group.

TRANSFORMATION
These situations usually mean letting go of old behaviours and adopting new ones to compete in new markets and drive business value in a different way.

Organisational leaders can drive engagement during this type of transformation by keeping an open, two-way dialogue.

Employees want to feel as if they work in an environment that, despite the organisation's modification of its core strategy, still values their input and enables good decision-making.

Driving Employee Engagement Through Change
In order to keep employees engaged during times of change, it is important for organisations to assess, understand and take action as it underpins transformational change and transformation.

Driving Employee Engagement Through Change
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2

Senior leadership is visible
Co-workers make personal sacrifices to help the organisation
Company provides a two-way dialogue

3

4

5

Understand career path
People in work group are reliable
Have the resources necessary to do job

Leading in times of crisis
Engaging the storms
When life takes a tragic turn

Also next week

Order
1
2
3
4
5

Drivers of Engagement for Different Types of Organisational Change

Top 5 Drivers of Engagement for Different Types of Organisational Change

Mergers/ acquisitions
Restructuring
Strategy Transformation

Involved in decision-making
Involved in decision-making
Involved in decision-making
Understand career path
Understand career path

Employee in the midst of organisational change is a key element in the success of a change initiative. Employee engagement measures (Aon Hewitt) demonstrate that engaged employees say good things about working at an organisation, have a desire to stay and be part of the organisation and they strive to give extra discretionary effort at work. Employee engagement becomes particularly important during times of change because a highly engaged workforce is more likely to embrace and drive change and transformation. Engaged through observing their colleagues and leaders, employees want to see and hear from management on the issues they care about.

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DRIVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CHANGE
In order to keep employees engaged during times of change, it is important for organisations to assess, understand and take action as it underpins transformational change and transformation. To measure and improve employee engagement, the Aon Hewitt Best Employers in Malaysia 2015 programme, in partnership with TalentCorp Malaysia and myStarjob.com provides a platform to identify engagement levels, leadership effectiveness, employer brand and culture to drive high performance.

Best practices in talent management are shared with participating organisations and results are benchmarked against other aspiring or recognised Best Employers in Malaysia and Asia.

For more information about this programme, email editor@leaderonomics.com

Eyes on Young Inventors
By Azza Abdel Hamid Faiad
2014-09-20

The updated Young Inventors list for 2014 has received reader requests for more! Here’s a quick update on these inventors (aged between 16–19 years) who believe in his cause. Today, he leads a team of approximately 100 people.

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