KEY DRIVERS OF ENGAGEMENT

WHAT • WHY • HOW • NOW

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PEOPLE POWER

To young veterinarians, it was an excellent teaching hospital equipped even with linear accelerators to treat cancer in cats, and a wide array of specialties to care for all manner of pets. I was just a kid from Malaysia – I hadn’t known that people kept giant rats, 12kg pythons or six-foot guanais (in hindsight, I see why strict separation of the first two was essential!).

To me, it was a place where people, young and old, rich or poor, friendly or crabby (with their own species) came together unified in their passion to care for the sick.

We didn’t have a formal engagement assessment, but anyone could see that when a hit-by-car dog or badly abused rabbit came in, everyone rallied together and got the job done. I believe a clear vision and consistent execution by our leadership was key.

Since then, I have worked in different settings and been astounded, perhaps naively so, that organisations with abundant resources are equipped even with linear accelerators to treat cancer in cats, and a vast workforce. The economist in me cries out “oh the inefficiencies!” and the softy in me, unable to come even close when engaging their vast workforces. The sighs “so much more could be done”.

However, each member rises to the challenge each day.

BREAKING STEREOTYPES

By SARAH TAN

Pigeonholes everywhere

We encounter pigeonholes in everyday lives. However, in relation to our jobs, what does it really mean to pigeonhole? An example would be something that is becoming very popular lately – the generalisation of generations. To a certain extent, labeling is needed when there is a lack of a better word to name a group of people.

However, along with the term “Gen-Y”, there tends to be a meaning behind it. The group belonging to Gen-Y is thought of as Internet savvy, because they have grown up with technology all around them.

Apart from that, this group of people is said to have ambitious, confident, and demanding characteristics in the workplace.

Whilst these are not necessarily bad characteristics to have, I believe that not every person who fits the Gen-Y age group have the same set of characteristics, nor do people who fall under the Gen-X or Gen-Z categories.

INCLUSIVE AGENDA

For this week’s Try This, let’s endeavour to put on a different perspective when we look at others. Breaking this bad habit of making assumptions can help us learn how to properly converse and understand the “new” and “old” people in our workplaces.

Apart from pigeonholing people according to their age groups, we may also be guilty of categorising others based on their appearance and the way they speak. On one hand, these can be good indicators of their personality. However, we should also be wary of jumping to conclusions and assumptions.

Pigeonholing people may sometimes force others to subconsciously act according to the kind of person they see and treat them as. This may also result in people not being able to advance in their careers as they are stuck in the small area of space that we might have accidentally categorised them to.

There are many articles on different ways to avoid being pigeonholed in your company, just as there are many unadressed aspects in pigeonholing in this article.

Instead of providing the usual practical tips today, I’m appealing to those who are guilty of pigeonholing – something which all of us are probably guilty of – even those who are trying to avoid being pigeonholed.

1. “When people are financially invested, they want a return. When people are emotionally invested, they want to contribute.” – Simon Sinek

2. “To win in the marketplace you must first win in the workplace.” – Doug Conant

3. “A group of people get together and exist as an institution we call a company so they are able to accomplish something collectively that they could not accomplish separately – they make a contribution to society, a phrase which sounds trite but is fundamental.” – David Packard

4. “On what high-performing companies should be striving to create: A great place for great people to do great work.” – Marilyn Carlson

5. “Always treat your employees exactly as you want them to treat your best customers.” – Stephen R. Covey
THE 4 STAGES OF ENGAGEMENT EXCELLENCE

LEADERSHIP without engagement is only an egotistical trip. As organisations strive towards the need for higher performance, there is no shortage of leadership development programmes being peddled as the next best thing that will bring about breakthrough performance. It is important that individuals are trained to lead, but do they have what it takes to engage their team?

The challenge of creating an engagement excellence is one of sequence rather than substance (most of us know what is the right thing to do but are we doing the right thing at the right time?).

IT’S ALL IN THE CULTURE

By JOSEPH TAN
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STAGE 1: CULTURE SETTING

“"There is a persistent disconnect between what we profess and what we practice.”

In my many conversations with CEOs and organisational leaders, there is hardly anyone who is unable to articulate his or her aspirations for the future. In fact, most of that “vision” would have been captured in a set of corporate communications programmes.

However, there are three practical considerations to set these “visionary aspirations” in the right perspective:

- Has the “vision” been translated into workable organisational development strategies?
- Has the “vision” been crystallised into specific key results where non-delivery is not an option?
- Has the “vision” been accurately linked to the type of change efforts required?

Hence, the first step towards creating a culture of engagement excellence requires a consultative process with senior leaders whereby their aspirations are reframed into practical, operational and measurable frameworks.

Without this first vital step, organisations inevitably end up putting the cart before the horse.

STAGE 2: CULTURE ALIGNMENT

“"When something goes wrong, we spend more time blaming than fixing the problem.”

Once the organisation’s vision is culturally set, the next step is to align daily policies and leadership practices into a set of consistent experiences.

For example, if a company prides itself in saying “we are a listening organisation” but there is hardly any feedback time allotted during the weekly department meetings – what this does is to create more “blame-hotspots”.

This is the fundamental reason why most change initiatives fail. Too much effort is spent on crafting the belief statements and not enough focus is invested in the creation of consistent experiences.

Without this alignment between belief and experiences, employees tend to be sceptical towards the rollout of any engagement activities because they are convinced that the culture of the organisation must be felt at the grassroots level.

Here are two questions to assess the cultural alignment of your organisation:

- Are employees department-focused (“I take care only of my own backyard”) or organisation-at-driven (“I will do what is good for the reputation of the organisation as a whole”)?
- Are employees “feedback” taken seriously (especially feedback on managerial behaviour)?

STAGE 3: CULTURE COACHING

“Managers are not taking ownership for engaging with their employees.”

It is interesting that the state of managerial leadership today is reflective of the state of parenting. Consider this – parents today are generally too busy to personally engage with their children.

So, who ends up picking up the slack? Well, it is the babysitters, enrichment centres and other child minders.

The opposite of ownership is not abandonment (parents still want to care for their children), rather it is outsourcing (parents still want to maintain an air of respectability, i.e. “Since I am not personally involved, I will get someone else to do it”).

So it is with many managers today: if they have issues with their employees, then it is the role of the human resources (HR) or training department to take over and “fix the problem”.

While it is true that HR and trainers play a role in employee development, it is the regular interaction with the direct supervisor who captures the heart and mind.

Here are three self-reflective coaching-based questions for the manager:

- In the past seven days, have I recognised any of my employee’s contributions?
- Am I creating opportunities whereby my employee is able to do what he or she does best every day?
- Do I know the unique talents of my employees so that I am able to make right job placement decisions?

STAGE 4: CULTURE MOTIVATION

“"It is so hard to please employees nowadays. How does one create both satisfaction and productivity?”

A few generations ago, employees were largely concerned with “bread and butter” issues – coming to work represented a simple motivation – make enough to make ends meet.

However, in today’s context where employees do not have to worry very much about their three square meals, the challenge for engagement takes on an added perspective whereby organisation leaders are now looking to feed not just the physical needs of the employees but also their “soulful” aspirations.

Here are a few examples of how motivation of today’s employees is contrasted with the motivation of employees of the past:

- The need for communication rather than just information.
- The need for inspiration rather than just instructions.
- The need for purpose rather than just profits.

As productivity pressure increases, organisational leaders would be wise to also increase the pace of engagement excellence. An increase in productivity with a corresponding increase in engagement excellence leads to a performing organisation without a soul, i.e. without that sense of energy that creates sustainability and significance.

When it comes to matters of loyalty, retention and commitment, it takes more than just a barrage of competency programmes to get the message across. What is required is a cultural priority to capture the hearts and minds of every employee.

This is excellence that truly matters.

Joseph Tan is the CEO of Leaderonomics Centre of Engagement Excellence and is passionate about ensuring all Malaysian employees are fully engaged in their work and with their organisation. If you would like to enhance the engagement levels at your organisation, email people@leaderonomics.com for more details. For more articles by Joseph Tan, visit www.leaderonomics.com
If you’ve done as many personality tests as I have, you would have an indication of your strengths and weaknesses. The only thing I have done so many is, firstly, to know my strengths, and secondly, to minimise my weaknesses. Also, it’s quite fun!

Know Thyself

I have been described as a choleric-sanguine (Personality Plus), dominance-influence (DISC), shaper and minimiser (Belbin®), and the list goes on pretty much in the same vein.

In other words, I’m generally a task master! (Can you hear the wind howling? And lightning clapping in the background for sound effects?)

There is a “people” side to me but it doesn’t mean a gentle giant. That was and is a conscious effort to master.

Having been led and lead, there were many points in which I had to engage team members and colleagues to work alongside me.

I am generally a collaborative person but I realise that sometimes there is a time to be tough and a time to be gentle. Knowing when that time should be is really a difference.

Bringing Out the Best

My work on air in radio is to bring out the best in people in the short period of time I have with them.

My interviewing style is different from my colleagues. In my show Enterprise, a lot of it is information-gathering and completing a difference.

Listening

When it comes to interviews, I always make time to know about the interviewees and their business in a non-confrontational manner, before they go on air, so by the time we go on air, I am not intimidating anymore.

A large part of this skill or training comes from my days in public relations consulting, having to take briefs from clients, understanding their needs and translating that into something that people will want.

Listening is another skill that has not been taught. Think about it. We learn to speak and write in school but we are not taught to listen. It’s also not mindless listening but empathetic listening. This is the case of “presentation”, which is probably worse than absenteeism, where the individual is physically but not mentally present.

I use my voice in an organisation which is fairly fluid and the members in the team are mostly Gen-H. Managing morale and performance have been the toughest roles in my life. I have to know everyone individually, professionally, and the person’s needs. In some cases, I hear about personal lives and why they are working there.

They come in different packages with different expectations. An attempt to make them all fit into a mould is not going to help anyone.

Drawing from my past experience, I do quarterly reviews so that there are no surprises on non-performance at the end of the year.

Yes, I have been on the receiving end of that stick too, hence I do not want history to repeat itself.

Our company values are of utmost importance. Along the way, if you find that what you do is not aligned with the company values anymore, it probably makes sense to part ways.

There have been cases where individuals either leave or join another team because their beliefs and company values are misaligned.

What’s in it for me? (WiFM)

This has to be everyone’s favourite “radio station”. I remember working on a global project in my previous job where we had different stakeholders, from employees, human resources to country managers around the world.

Each had different agendas and needs. I had to listen to what each individual wanted, and craft the message in a way that is most palatable for that person.

Yes, it can be tiring and trying. Age (job, sob) and experience have shown me that this is a task everyone needs to do.

I also believe that if you come with good intentions to meet other people’s needs, it will be appreciated. They may not hear your lyrics, but they hear your music.

Freda Liu is a producer and presenter with an independent business radio station in Malaysia. She is also a certified trainer and coach.

For more inspiring articles, visit www.leaderonomics.com

By FREDA LIU
editor@leaderonomics.com

SAFETY FIRST

Everyone should have the safety talk. Whether you are in a high-risk industry, working a desk job, or are a frequent business traveler, danger can (and usually does) talk. Whether you are in a high-risk industry, working a desk job, or are a frequent business traveler, danger can (and usually does) talk. Whether you are in a high-risk industry, working a desk job, or are a frequent business traveler, danger can (and usually does) talk.

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By FREDA LIU
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SAFETY FIRST

Everyone should have the safety talk. Whether you are in a high-risk industry, working a desk job, or are a frequent business traveler, danger can (and usually does) strike when you least expect it.

Chico Force Sdn Bhd makes danger and safety its business. As a security and protection service provider, it has extensive experience in providing the finest safety and defence training to its security and executive protection personnel, such as its executive aide de camps.

This kind of training should not be limited only to those interested to work in the safety and security field.

Its executive close protection operator course that was recently carried out in Kuantan, Pahang trained and groomed individuals to become sharp in detecting, avoiding, and dealing with danger and other unpredictable circumstances.

Tapping into the resources and network that the company has already forged, Chico Force has not only produced a similar safety and defence course which will be open to the public soon.

“The skills taught are applicable to a wide number of personnel. There is a whole group of people that could find themselves in potentially threatening situations, such as journalists, politicians, and businessmen,” says chief instructor Mike, a British military veteran from the United Kingdom to lead the two-week-long training.

Many of us are in denial that danger could not strike us at any point in time. Ask any victim of crime, and he or she would most likely say something along the lines of “I never thought it would happen to me”. It is crucial, therefore, that every person takes safety into his own hands, and learn how to deal with threats on a daily basis.

For those of you who do not fall in the category of high-risk careers, Mike suggests to observe these five basic safety tips at all times:

1. When walking around town, be aware of your surrounding people and the people around you. Avoid being too focused on your mobile phone.
2. Upon arriving home, take a moment to look out your window and soak up the environment before opening your gates.
3. When: you are in. Do not make yourself a striking target by wearing the latest designer wear and window and soak up the environment before opening your gates. Look for vehicles you don’t recognise, or if there are people in the area who shouldn’t be there. Most attacks happen when you least expect it, especially around the perceived safe zone near your home.
4. Dress for the environment you are in. Do not make yourself a striking target by wearing the latest designer wear and dressing flashy accessories if you are only going to the mamak stall.
5. Trust your gut. There are numerous occasions where we moved our clients just because something didn’t feel right. Remember, we have to be “lucky” every day. The threats, on the other hand, only have to be “lucky” once. Look after yourself and each other!

For more information on the executive aide de camp positions offered by Chico Force, or to apply, visit www.mystarjob.com/chico-force

By NISHA T Naidu
editor@leaderonomics.com

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ENGAGING EMPLOYEES
THE STRATEGY AND APPROACH

By JOHN WALTER BAYBAY
editor@leaderonomics.com

ONE of the most interesting events for a management consultant is having to do an employee appraisal, only to find that once you start implementing the qualitative portion of your analysis (usually involving some in-depth interviews), you have opened a can of worms!

Earlier this year, I was asked to do a gap analysis for a medium-sized company. I found that around 69% of its employees had intentions to leave the company within the following two years.

Of which, around 31% were looking to leave within the year. Twenty-five percent were just standing by to see if things were going to get better and most of them were not optimistic.

For the most part, employers are just vaguely aware of the actual climate at staff level. They cited four major reasons for leaving, among which stress is the No.1 reason.

Compensation only ranked second to the lowest, was a far distant third among other reasons — all of which were related to the work environment and its current structure. They all complained as to what this was doing to them.

A BALANCED CONTRACT

Somehow, many managers who have mindsets still stuck in the industrial revo-

lution believe that employees are bound by a simplistic “economic contract”: As I spoke about a “psychological contract” that exists between employees and employers in a previous article, the nature of that implied psychological contract could either be economic, social, or both.

There is a balance of expectations for delivery on both sides.

There is an economic premise to this contract, which is still valid, but the contract implies far more things to be deliv-
ered from both sides than just money. It is not as simple as “16 for 16”.

In recent bodies of research you would find that money, after all, is not the best motivator for using the old “carrot and stick” strategy.

The usual cycles of punishment or reward tend to have diminishing returns in the long run. A balancing of both eco-

nomic and social norms is necessary for employees to remain motivated, productive, and loyal.

PRIME MOTIVATORS

Dan Ariely in his book Predictably Irrational explains the power of social norms and its effect on motivation. I quote: “There are social rewards that strongly motivate behaviour — and one of the least used in corporate life is the encouragement of social rewards.”

Ariely says: “Money, as it turns out, is very often the most expensive way to motivate people. Social norms are not only cheaper, but most often more effective as well.”

While reading the book and remembering talks with my cousin in the US military, I found that levels of dedication and self-

lessness do not equate to their levels of monetary compensation.

Officers in service of their country are often prepared to go beyond the call of duty in heroic acts of selflessness, in difficult environments under unimaginable physical risks.

Soldiers, fire fighters, and police officers would literally risk life and limb for the fulfillment of their duties, not because of money, but because it is expected of their roles. In these examples, social norms outweigh the monetary equivalent.

The congressional medal of honour is worth more than its weight in gold. While monetary rewards usually accompany social recognition such as prizes and awards, the latter often outweighs the former and has a much longer term impact for the public and the person who is being awarded.

The recognition for fulfilling a “social contract” is often very difficult to evaluate in monetary terms as it is usually “price-

less”?

MONEY CHANGES ‘EVERYTHING’

On the other hand, we could also con-

trast the practice of many companies who give exorbitant cash bonuses to their officers.

Knowing many of them, I could not help but also observe that the larger sums of money every year do not equally equate to greater levels of satisfaction.

Greater sums usually fail to satiate their employees. Worse, employees tend to believe that these monetary rewards are transactional and impersonal in nature.

It has less to do with their personal contribution but rather what they produce for the company. In the end, it does not equate to satisfaction or loyalty.

In reality, levels of happiness are usually tied to the amount of social recognition derived. Unfortunately, the costs to motivate them seem to go skywards in a vicious cycle only for outsiders to see that the core need is, after all, pride and social recognition.

People genuinely want to be proud of what they do. Surely a company could be more creative.

This is not to say that money is not at all important, but employers must realise that people’s needs go much further than that.

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

In a very well researched book by Gallup called The Human Sigma, there are several steps to employee engagement and ques-

ions must be answered in steps leading to the top of a pyramid.

At the base of the pyramid you have level one, and it goes on by asking ques-

tions from the employee’s perspective, such as:

1. What do I do?
   - Materials, compensation, equipment?
   - Do I know what is expected of me?

2. What do I give?
   - Company encourages development.
   - Recognition from superiors.
   - Do what I do best every day (mastery).

3. Do I belong?
   - Do I have a best friend at work?
   - Do I have common vision and values with this company?
   - Do my opinions matter here?

4. How can we grow?
   - Learning opportunities.
   - Growth and personal progress within the last six months.
   - Am I getting the most out of my stay?

Having mostly negatives to these questions usually serve as a predictor to whether or not an employee would be motivated and stay.

In the case of the medium-sized com-

pany I spoke about, the principals and partners simply started engaging their employees by talking about their careers. Some were rewarded and recognised pub-

licly in an event with an all-expense paid vacation abroad.

Needless to say, the gesture of giving someone a gift and recognition could be worth more to the recipient than its actual cash value.

After all, the managers did go through the trouble. Maybe they do care? Perhaps they would stay?

John Walter Baybay is a regional management consultant who has worked more than 17 years in the areas of corporate strategic planning and economic planning. He is a competitive athlete who balances his time between business coaching, family and working with communities. For more articles by Baybay, visit www.leaderonomics.com
We had the opportunity to connect with Azn Hartin on the topics of employee engagement with a particular focus on trends in Malaysia.

In this interview, we spoke to Jeremy Andrulis, CED, South East Asia, Prashant Chaddha, senior consultant and Ji-Hao Lee, senior consultant. Andrulis, Prashant and Ji-Hao are Brevard, talent practice leader, and a senior practice consultant, respectively.

What are the top four drivers of engagement in Malaysia?


The key improvement factors for engagement remain stable across time.

What are your observations for Malaysia for certain demographic groups in Malaysia? Why are these factors important to you?

For female employees, pay and benefits rank third and fourth, with work tasks also included among their top six. In planning strategies to increase female engagement, organisations in Malaysia take note of different factors.

Especially in terms of benefits, engagement of this gender group may be stronger related to the reality faced by female workers in Malaysia (work tasks, salary, social rewards). Male workers, on the other hand, rate similar factors lower.

Junior management displays the same six drivers to improve engagement. However, recognition is ranked first, instead of career opportunities, as in the other demographic groups. To improve engagement levels among junior managers, programmes that focus on recognising their workplace should be considered.

Why do you think these engagement behaviours are successful, these being the drivers to engage employees, in a diverse global workforce?

This is because each group has unique expectations. For example, say, one的性格 can be very different between individuals and demographic group.

Therefore the first step is to recognise the unique expectations and then design strategies to meet them. Focus on engagement must be a cross-functional activity; it is important to involve the HR and business leaders to address diversity in engagement.

Dr. Ji-Hao Lee, senior consultant - As the “Say, Stay and Strive”-engagement model was developed, in which workers are identified through the key dimensions of work for the Force.

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Managing Diverse Personalities

What’s Age Got to Do with It?

By Cindy Yap
editor@leaderonomics.com

EALING with different personalities on a day-to-day basis can be challenging, be it with family members, friends, teammates or business acquaintances. Personality consists of qualities, traits, thoughts and behavioural response patterns of an individual, which are unique to a specific person.

For effective assimilation, these diverse personalities ought to be understood by a leader in order to deal with personality conflicts, as well as identify the right person for specific tasks. This may involve more than profiling the personalities according to the age bracket, as personalities evolve as we experience different life events, parenting styles, personal successes and failures.

In the profiling process, it is inevitable to find a correlation between the personality and the era to which an employee belongs. As shown in a survey by EY in the United States in September 2013, more than 1,200 professionals across generations and industries finds that Baby Boomers are hard workers and ranked the highest in productivity, but they do not adapt well. Gen-Xs are perceived to be entrepreneurial-thinking, the most effective managers and scored the highest when it came to adaptability, the ability to collaborate, and being a revenue generator and problem-solver, but they scored low on being cost-effective. Gen-Ys, or the Millennials, are the most tech-savvy, the most enthusiastic and know how to use social media to leverage opportunities, but they aren’t great team players.

Importance of Personality Diversity

While leaders may grapple with the handling of differing personalities, mindsets and communication styles, the diversity is essential and even encouraged to maximise the level of performance if correctly identified and properly managed.

Harnessing Strengths to Build Teams

Most of the time, we view issues from our own paradigm, but being part of a team would require individual perspectives to be brought forward to a team environment in order to harness each other’s strengths, leverage on personality differences and manage weaknesses towards a common goal.

The positive and negative traits in personalities would offset one another, complement each other, and lead to synergy.

2. Deep-Level Diversity vs Surface-Level Diversity

Dr David A. Harrison, winner of many research accolades and the brain behind numerous articles, books, reviews and papers on diversity in organisations, studied the contrast between “deep-level diversity” and “surface-level diversity.”

“Deep-level diversity” consists of the attitudes, beliefs, values and commitment to the organisation, as opposed to “surface-level diversity” which includes traditional categories such as race, gender or age.

According to Harrison, the more team members work together and engage in high-quality informational interactions among themselves, the more they would learn about each other’s deep-level characteristics and subsequently develop more meaningful, richly-functional relationships.

The study found that “increasing levels of collaboration can reduce the impact demographic differences, including age, on team performance” and that “deep-level diversity surface more clearly.”

The Malaysia’s 100 Careers Fair

By Hyma Pillay
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The Malaysia’s 100 Careers Fair 2014, an umbrella event under Mega Careers and Study Fair was held from Sept 6 to Sept 7. It was estimated that more than 12,000 people attended the two-day event at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC).

All booths at the fair were taken up by exhibitors, including Malaysia’s 100 Leading Graduate Employers.

Among the highlights of the career fair was the Malaysia 100 Survey, which is the largest career survey done in Malaysia. It collected the views and opinions of students and fresh graduates about their employers of choice.

The results of the Graduate Barometer will be analysed and made public during the Malaysia 100 Leading Graduate Awards which will be held next month.

The Leaderonomics Youth team also participated in this event and Youth Leader Majura Perashot said, “The organisations did a splendid job by providing a very comfortable and helpful atmosphere for the students, such as networking sessions between potential employers and graduates, and interactive smartphone games for visitors. The crowd was also entertained with a culinary presentation by celebrity chef Malcolm Goh.”

The event received positive feedback from participants and exhibitors. Participants said that they would definitely come back and would love the organisers to host the event more often.

They also expressed satisfaction with information provided before the event. Overall, the fair ran smoothly, with exhibitors and visitors alike being satisfied with the outcome.

The next Mega Careers and Study Fair will be held from Feb 7 to Feb 8, 2015 at KLCC.

Handling different personalities requires a leader’s attentiveness to what each member tick, the ability to be adaptable to the diverse personalities to bring out the best of each member, and the instilling of a spirit of collaboration and sense of commonality in order to record greater achievement collectively.

To read more interesting articles by Cindy Yap, visit www.leaderonomics.com. You can also get in touch with her at editor@leaderonomics.com

DOS and Don’ts on Managing Personality Differences

How To?

Do:
Create a mentoring system
Promote cross-generational interaction by encouraging juniors to make a conscious effort in seeking the experience and wisdom of seniors who are usually more meticulous, dependable and emotionally stable.
Seniors can also look at issues in fresher perspectives through their juniors.

Allow flexibility
Different generations in different life stages may require a certain flexibility to manage their personal time and matters.
For instance, those near retirement may prefer fewer working hours in exchange for a lower salary.

Team members can decide on what is important to them based on their personality and circumstances, while being placed on the same scale to measure success.

Accommodate different learning and working styles
Static training methods like presentation slides and handbooks may appeal to the Boomers, but the later generations may gravitate towards more interactive, technology-based forms of learning.
While Boomers may prefer being physically present in the office, Millennials may prefer a more balanced life and opt for unstructured work settings such as cafes.

Encourage open communication
Regardless of age and tenure of service, everyone should have a voice to engage in forums to present ideas, concerns and complaints.

Tailor recognition programmes
While a simple pat on the back may prefer fewer working hours in exchange for a lower salary.

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**MESSAGE FROM A MILLENNIAL**

4 Things Young People Should Stop Doing at Work

By JONATHAN ALLEN YABUT
editor@leaderonomics.com

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Here are four traits I’ve been guilty of, and most likely you are too:

1. **Announcing that you slept at 3am to finish work**
   - Ever heard of work-life balance? That’s probably the one thing your boss has been trying to achieve too.
   - It’s true that your boss appreciates that you’ve chugged bottles of Red Bull to get that presentation submitted on time, but he/she will be more impressed if you can achieve the elusive work-life balance.

2. **Resisting to ask questions during meetings to avoid looking like a fool**
   - My marketing career started as a trainee in a telecommunications company. In this job, I had to understand technical jargon: VAS, churn, USSD, codecs, and what not.
   - I was the adored management trainee who was hired among thousands of applicants because they all thought I was a smart know-it-all, right? So I pretended to be one.
   - An engineer would ask me, “Maybe we should switch the network from PSTN to VoIP so we can increase the ARPU,” and I casually answered with no idea, “Yeah, maybe we should try that.”
   - I am thankful I’ve grown wiser. I always ask questions the moment I get confused.

3. **Taking sole credit for an achievement**
   - I live by the philosophy that there is no “I” in “team”. For every milestone I achieved, my team was assigned to prepare a 50-slide presentation for the chief executive officer (CEO). My two managers diligently helped me finish the deck.
   - What is work? It means giving your best. It means you’re curious and attentive to details. It means you are listening. It means you are taking the task seriously and you don’t want to leave any stone unturned.

4. **Keeping critical information to yourself**
   - While our generation seems to be unstoppable as we get inspired by success stories of Mark Zuckerberg or Dong Nguyen, we definitely can improve on many unflavourable traits and habits.

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LEADING THE YOUNG
THE 21ST CENTURY AND BEYOND

By SARAH TAN
sarah.tan@leaderonomics.com

With the objective to challenge young minds, stretch their thinking, and invoke deeper thoughts, The Jeffrey Cheah Foundation and the Sunway Education Group, along with the Center for Asia Leadership Initiatives and the Asia Leadership Trek, hosted the Asia Leadership Conference and Camp from Aug 17 to Aug 22.

The whole conference and camp was also co-hosted by the Harvard Club of Malaysia.

Tan Sri Dr Lin See Yan gave a speech at the closing ceremony and presented certificates to the camp delegates.

Participants and guests were not only given delicious refreshment throughout the gala night, but also good food by Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah during his keynote address.

Sharing his background and philanthropic activities, Cheah’s speech can be summarised with an amusing yet meaningful quote by him, “I aspire to inspire before I expire.”

Bringing in Harvard-trained facilitators for various workshops, lectures, and talks, the Sunway Education Group aims to bring only the best to their employees and students.

WHAT SOME OF THE DELEGATES SAY

In a recent interview with delegate Rufus Ng, the 24-year-old management associate for a telecommunications company, said the workshop that impacted him the most was on “Overcoming immunities to change” by Shazia Khan.

“We are often taught to be empathetic to the plight of those who are in trouble. Shazia expanded the scope and shared how this is important even in a corporate environment.

“In one of her sessions, she provided us with a famous Harvard case study where we were asked to decide whether to allow for this race car team to race despite strong possibilities that the engine may fail,” shared Rufus.

“Being hungry for success and attracted by the potential of large profits, a clear majority of us chose to proceed with the race.

“The interesting twist to this study was that the information provided was identical to that provided to the management team tasked to decide whether to allow the Challenger rocket to launch despite there being a risk that the launch may fail due to cold temperatures.

“The management team allowed the launch, and it resulted unfortunately with the 25th Challenger exploding shortly after take-off, killing the entire space crew.

“This simple exercise made me think a little more about the way I make my decisions, especially about how I perceive risks and rewards,” he said.

Another delegate, David Ng, a 26-year-old reservation executive of g Hotel Penang, credited “The Art of Communication” workshop to be the one that impacted him the most, as it taught him skills that were applicable to his job.

“The story and examples provided in the workshop really inspired me. The workshop shaped me into a better speaker by building up my confidence.

“It also sharpened my public speaking skills. All the skills that I had learnt during the workshop will really benefit me in my workplace,” he said.

IMPACT ON SELF

Furthermore, David also gained a changed perception of leadership throughout the camp.

“I learnt that a leader is not always just leading people in a company or organisation. I learnt that leadership is all about a person’s initiative, ownership and passion in pursuing something. Everyone can be a leader by taking ownership and initiative to handle issues,” he said.

One of the few clear takeaways for Rufus was a new view on what strength in leadership was.

“Humility and honest introspection of one’s struggles is not necessarily a sign of a weak leader but can actually be a demonstration of strength.

“As Asians, we often try to hide our failures by sweeping them under the carpet. It takes courage to own up to these failures. This is especially true when we are leaders of our respective communities,” he said.

From a younger age group, Lydia Cheah, a 17-year-old student, felt that leadership “is not so much about waiting for someone to appoint you as a leader, it is about taking the initiative.”

Student Amanda Darshini, 18, says: “One of the most important aspects of being a leader is that you are confident in your own abilities. The best leaders are those who believe in themselves.”

NEW FORM OF LEADERSHIP

On the importance of becoming a 21st century leader and how we can go about assimilating to such a role, Rufus said new employees are those from Gen-Y and Gen-Z.
By KAREN NEOH
karen.neoh@leaderonomics.com

SAMUEL Kim is currently a Masters of Public Administration candidate at the Harvard University School of Government.

He heads an education, social impact and public leadership consulting firm, Centre for Asia Leadership Initiatives, which is a social profit firm he co-founded in 2012 that aims to serve governments, corporations, non-profit organisations and educational institutions in Asia.

Prior to attending Harvard, Kim worked as a strategy consultant. He is the founder and chief executive officer who has founded and managed three for-profit companies in the realm of investment consulting, distribution, and manufacturing.

“The first country I visited outside my home country South Korea was the Philippines where I had accompanied my parents who were humanitarians. I was very shocked – the neighbourhood we lived in had no running water, no electricity and the people were underprivileged,” he said.

“It was during this time that Kim learnt the importance of effect and from there to South Korea.

“What is leadership to me? What is governance? Effective leadership matters and sometimes even challenge decisions generally don’t take too kindly to change,” he said.

Kim exudes the passion to make a real difference and with his ability to mobilise like-minded individu- als, appears all set to build leaders throughout Asia.

Karen shares the following with Samuel Kim: same alma mater, major life transformation at Harvard and also wishes to share the amazing experience there with young leaders of Asia. She worked three jobs during graduate study, performed in community outreach, made best friends and loved every minute of it. She wishes Samuel and team every success for more articles by Karen, do go to www.leaderonomics.com

> FROM PAGE 10

He said, “Individuals from these genera- tions generally don’t take too kindly to following orders blindly. They will question and sometimes even challenge decisions which they do not agree with or do not understand. Individuals from these genera- tions also often want to be empowered. “If we were to really ‘know our audience’, we need leadership that will adapt and be pre- pared to empower these new employees as well as ensure that they understand why certain things are done.”

Darshini, concurred on the importance of adaptability, “It’s important to embrace change. When you become fixed on some- thing, you run the risk of having your ideas and products lose relevance.”

Similarly, Cheah says, “Being flexible and willing to learn along with your peers is one of the key factors in being a successful leader in the 21st century.”

IMPACT ON NATION

The impact of the conference and camp held, and what use would it be to us? Is it something that is able to impact our nation?

According to Kim, “We have a group of brilliant young aspirers, all eager to learn and also influential in their own spheres, being trained and taught concepts that were previ- ously within the exclusive domain of the American elite to lead better.

“It would not be surprising if they in turn shared these concepts and notions with their friends and families,” he said.

He also reflected, “While arguably this change would not necessarily occur over- night, I am confident that it would not take long for it to have a strong positive effect onto young Malaysian leadership.”

On a related note, David said, “We may change our nation by building up our own family members, our own community, our workplace, and even our schools.”

Gaurav Choudhary, a writer for Hindustan Times, once said, “A leader should lead by example.”

SUMMARY

Overall, it can be easily seen how impactful the Asia Leadership Conference and Camp was. Sunway’s ability and dedi- cation to bring in great leaders to impart their various thought processes, as well as inspire others, is impressive.

Hopefully, through such education, this will play a part in building up young great leaders in Malaysia who can in turn bring positive impact to our nation.

Cheah and Darshini summed up the whole event quite accurately, “Asia Leadership Conference and Camp forces you out of your comfort zone and to learn from individuals who inspire through their own experiences.”

Phoeon Kiang, 28

“My experience with the credentials of the Harvard instructors for the learning was thought-provoking and the whole experience exceeded my expectation. I would highly recommend the programme to young executives and professionals. I am now inspired to take on more challenging leadership roles.”

Focusing on Asian Leadership

Knowing, Doing, Being

The Leaderonomics Show

Kim, CEO and co-founder of Centre for Asia Leadership Initiatives

“In today’s world, you can’t be afraid of ‘failing’ as long as you learn from your mistakes. To adapt and be ready, you need to be brave.”

Kim

“When I returned to Malaysia, I was really addicted to the Asian culture and love to travel throughout Asia.

“Most importantly, though, is the aspect of ‘Being’. How can I become that type of person that this country, for example, Malaysia needs to help the community grow?”. “Just go back to the education system: 90% of energy is put in knowing, doing, being.”

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Exhilarating and packed with adrenaline-pounding workshops to increase your capacity for introspection and self-mastery, I wouldn’t miss it for the world.”

– Dr Jason Tee, 29

“My experience with the credentials of the Harvard instructors for the learning was thought-provoking and the whole experience exceeded my expectation. I would highly recommend the programme to young executives and professionals. I am now inspired to take on more challenging leadership roles.”

– Phoeon Kiang, 28

From Left: Rajan Patel, April Bang, Lance Li, Shaiba Khan and John Lee during a forum session at the Asia Leadership Conference 2014

Sarah hopes to become a successful young leader and one who can impact her nation as well. You can contact her at editor@leaderonomics.com, or read more of her articles at www.leaderonomics.com

Snap me for full interview with Samuel Kim

Get The Star Mobile App now!
WORKING as an intern at Leaderonomics has added a completely new dimension to my TV life. I have become more sensitive to the leadership lessons the movies or shows I watch. This of course includes ‘The Game of Thrones’, which is “infamously” known for the demise of pretty much almost every character you like.

From Daenerys’ matriarchal leading to Joffrey’s fear-based leading, what can we learn from this TV series? Spoiler alert if you haven’t caught the latest series.

1. DON’T FORGET WHERE YOU CAME FROM

Daenerys’ past has played a key role in shaping her into the person she is today, a powerful young woman with command over the Unsullied army of 8,000.

Much like the Unsullied, she was sold into slavery at a young age so she had a taste of the circumstances that surrounded their lives. Not only that, she had a taste of what it feels like to be suppressed, just as her brother Viserys has always tormented her. This led to a turning point in the series where she offered the Unsullied freedom after she bought them over. She won the loyalty of the top, do not forget your roots.

2. KEEP YOUR PROMISE; ALWAYS THINK OF THE CONSEQUENCES

We saw what happened to Rob Stark when he reneged on his promise to marry Walder Frey’s daughter. It ultimately led to one of the most gut-wrenching scenes in television history, i.e. the Red Wedding.

As a leader, you should always keep your promises to garner trust. If you often go back on your word, your employees may lose faith in you or your prospective clients may view you as untrustworthy and unreliable. Another lesson we can learn from Stark’s misdoing is to always think of the consequences before making a decision.

3. ALWAYS PAY YOUR DEBTS

A Lannister always pays his debts. After Jaime ‘Kingslayer’ Lannister’s hands were chopped off, Brienne of Tarth stood by him as a friend and form of comfort. Later, Jaime pays off his debts by rescuing Brienne when she fought with a bear.

In real life, a leader should always ‘repay debts’ no matter how high they rise in ranks. Help can come from the most unexpected places in difficult times and you never know when you will need it.

4. DON’T RULE BY FEAR

Joffrey’s demise was ultimately a product of his fear-based leadership style. He was ruthless, and insensitive to the needs of others, seeking only to secure his own gains. This made him extremely unpopular and his attitude can be attributed to another dimension in him, that is he ruled by fear because of his insecurity with his incompetence as a ruler.

Likewise, leaders should not rule by fear but rather, with love or moderation.

Being in authority does not mean that your employees or followers respect you and if you cannot gain their respect, it may lead to unproductivity or insubordination.

5. STAND BY YOUR VALUES

Hold your horses, I did not forget Tyrion Lannister! Tyrion is probably almost everyone’s favourite, so what can we learn from this awesome man?

For example, he is the only one who is not afraid to rebuke the ruthless King Joffrey even after he (Joffrey) ascended the Iron Throne. Like Tyrion, leaders should not lose sight of their conscience and should always speak up when they feel that certain actions will threaten the well-being of others.

They should adhere strictly to the status quo even if it makes them unpopular; for true leaders know the importance of sticking to their values.

Cassandra is a Gen Y-er who believes in youth empowerment, and that the youth hold many solutions to some of the nation’s biggest problems. For more lessons from reel life, visit www.leaderonomics.com