LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MODEL

ARE YOU DOING IT RIGHT?
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What you see may not be what you get

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IN RECENT YEARS, I HAVE TAKEN TIME OUT TO THINK ABOUT THE LEADERS who have inspired me, and also those who convinced me that their leadership style was not for me. Of the six leadership styles presented in the Harvard Business Review more than a decade ago: coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacing, and coaching—I believe I have encountered them all—and not always from senior leaders, but team members as well.

I have made my share of mistakes—all same, and yet motivating others to the extent we remain firm friends years later. I realize that I must continuously learn to be a better leader.

Today, more leadership styles have been identified, as well as how one might approach developing leaders of a certain DNA. Sharing a firmly held belief of many, Andrew Lau points out that the leadership model of an organization is critical for its success; he delves into important considerations, including the case of a predominantly Gen-Y workforce. Taking a step further, Evelyn Teh walks us through the five guiding principles of designing the R.I.G.H.T leadership development model.

In The Leadershiponomics Show, we sat down with David Frigidard, chairman of Sullivan & Frost who discussed leadership in times of change and urged CEOs to spend time creating visionary scenarios so that I could attend to an urgent family matter. Life prepared me whole, or the individuals we work with.

As your experiences differ and multiply, you become a different man, and soon they might be swimming like a fish.
WHAT YOU SEE IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT YOU GET
SOMETIMES LESS, SOMETIMES MORE

BY GLENN WILLIAMS
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Of the most powerful conveyors of messages today is the media – we use it to transmit what we want people to see and hear, even though what they actually see and hear might be quite different from what we intended.

In the book, New Media 1740–1915, Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey Pingree assembled 10 scholarly essays looking at the historical development of media – how we transitioned from one innovative medium to another, and how the availability and use of that media influenced the delivery, reception and meaning of the message.

Some media have been more affordable and easy to make, making it more available and accessible. At one time or another, however, all media was new to us – the zograscope, physiognotrace, optical telegraph, telescopes, typewriters, the telephone, vinyl record albums, eight-track magnetic tapes, CDs, the Internet, the iPhone and the Android – although their place in our world was often ill-defined at the time they were introduced.

Who could possibly have anticipated how the Internet would transform the way we communicate and do business? No one fully comprehended its impact on our culture, its potential and limitations, nor the new challenges that have emerged in relation to both the privacy and the complexity of communications.

THE EIGHTH CONTINENT
The Internet has literally changed our world. Global web-marketing expert Donald DePalma describes the Internet as similar to “discovering the Eighth Continent”, that “confounds legislators and cultural purists worldwide who do not know what to make of the web-based globalisation phenomenon that threatens to make their geographic, political, economic, and cultural boundaries almost meaningless.”

In the essay, there are many benefits of an interconnected world through the Internet.

Rob Salkowitz, author of Young World Rising, points out that there is a new breed of entrepreneurs where the growth and spread of their “social networks is helping to catalyse the potential seeded by capacity-building investments, bringing people into contact with ideas, opportunities, and markets.”

And while there are still many organisations that are trying to come to terms with how their businesses should interact with the Internet, what Gitelman and Pingree present is how the emergence of new media has redefined our culture in relation to how we related to one another throughout history.

This is why James Carey, a communications theorist and author of Communications as Culture, says, “Communication is culture”, and why the essays collected by Gitelman and Pingree provide a healthy discussion around the place of media: how it is introduced and managed, and how their meaning and function is shaped over time.

A SUMMARY
On a practical level, let me summarise the importance of what Gitelman and Pingree are presenting, as they have sought to provide insight into today’s new media by examining media in their historical context.

1. Media per se is a powerful tool of communication, and awareness (rather than ignorance or resistance) of its benefits and limitations will enhance its effectiveness while reducing risk for an organisation.

2. Don’t assume that the message being conveyed through the medium is the message being received by all of its recipients. The context of the content (including how other media can alter the meaning) can easily be distorted or missed by the degree to which recipients are familiar with the medium being used and the biases and perceptions they bring.

3. Establish:
   (a) clear communication protocols for yourself and the organisation you lead and;
   (b) create an intentional strategy to explore the breadth of new emerging media.

The absence of (a) and (b) conveys a lack of understanding and discipline, exposing your leadership and the organisation’s reputation to unnecessary risks, and ignorance of opportunities.

While media has been used by “the hierarchy” or those in privileged and powerful positions to control, influence and shape what they want people to know, it is wise to reflect on the power of the Internet and its potential to be a great leveller.” People, communicate mind to mind. There is no race. There are no genders. There is no age. There are no intimacies. There are only minds. Utopia? No, the internet. Where minds, doors, and bodies open up.” (New Media 1740–1915, eds. Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey B. Pingree, page 91. Cambridge: MIT Press.)

WHAT’S THE BOTTOM LINE?
There are some excellent leadership models that contain specific characteristics. Helpful to leaders suited to a range of different contexts, including across cultures.

However, some leaders are running so fast in responding to short-term demands that they rarely have time to think about the type of leader they want to be.

Here are important questions:
- What characteristics of leadership are critical to my current organisational context, and which ones do I need to focus on developing?
- What changes do I need to make to transition from a Level three or Level four leader to what Jim Collins describes as a “Level five leader”?
- As a leader, do I know who I am serving?
- Dr Glenn Williams is the CEO and principal owner of Outward Looking International, an organisation that empowers leaders and organisations to grow their leadership capacity. To engage Glenn for special leadership workshops for your organisation, email glwilliams@leaderonomics.com.
DOES IT REALLY AFFECT ONE’S THINKING?

**LEFT-BRAINED OR RIGHT-BRAINED?**

By ADELINE TAY

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H ave you ever heard or used the term “left-brained” or “right-brained” people? It is widely believed that humans are either dominated by their right or left brain hemispheres, resulting in two types of thinking respectively.

According to this idea, people who are “right-brained” tend to be more creative and intuitive, while those who are “left-brained” tend to be more analytical and logical.

Even before reading this article, you probably have an idea of whether you are a left-brained (i.e. analytical and logical) or right-brained thinker (i.e. creative and intuitive).

The concept of a left-brain or right-brain is not new. It is most certain that you have come across videos, programs, articles, and books about it.

You have probably even taken a test or two to find out whether you are dominantly a left or right-brained thinker! Regardless of which side (left or right) you belong to, there is something important you should know:

This is a myth.

You are probably thinking, “Liar! No way would any creature of any cranial origin have come across videos, programs, articles, and books about it. But, the truth is that this is another assumption (Kalat, 2009):

1. Different hemispheres are specialized for different functions.
2. We rely on our dominant hemisphere to process information.
3. The dominant hemisphere engaged will manifest in our thinking style (e.g. analytical or creative).

While the first assumption is scientifically supported, the other two are not. It is a fact that the two hemispheres are not mirror images of each other, and it is also true that each hemisphere has its area of “expertise” (e.g. the left hemisphere is specialized in language).

However, although experts do recognize that certain types of tasks and thinking tend to be more associated with particular regions of the brain (also known as lateralization), no one is fully right-brained or left-brained… and this is the reason why: the corpus callosum.

**CORPUS CALLOSUM (SOUNDS LIKE A SPELL THEY TEACH AT HOGWARTS)**

The reason why it is so easy to jump into the dichotomous classification of things is that we tend to forget that there is an existing structure in our brain that enables the two hemispheres to constantly exchange information with each other.

Thankfully, the amount of research studies conducted in the area of neurosciences have shown that the two halves of the brain are much more intricately linked than was previosuly thought, and the corpus callosum is the key to debunking this myth.

We should break away from the misconception that everything to do with being analytical is confined to one side of the brain, and everything to do with being creative is confined to the opposite side.

This is because, it is the connections among all brain regions that enable humans to engage in both creativity and analytical thinking.

Consider the following quote by Carl Zimmer, a science writer:

“No matter how lateraised the brain can get, though, the two sides still work together. The pop psychology notion of a left brain and a right brain doesn’t capture their intimate working relationship. The left hemisphere specializes in picking out the sounds that form words and working out the syntax of the words, for example, but it does not have a monopoly on language processing. The right hemisphere is actually more sensitive to the emotional features of language, tuning in to the slow rhythms of speech that carry intonation and stress.” – Carl Zimmer, Discover

As you can see, the premise that any individual habitually relies on one hemisphere more than the other is not true simply because the two hemispheres work hand-in-hand.

Although certain functions, such as speech production and facial recognition, tend to be dominated by one side of the brain among the majority, most tasks require parallel input from both hemispheres (Kalat, 2009).

Unless an entire hemisphere is completely removed or damaged, no one is considered to be fully “right” or “left”-brained.

**CONCLUSION: GIVE CREDIT WHERE IT’S DUE**

Until today, the popularity of the “right brain-left brain myth” still persists strongly among the public, if not more so. In summary, our brain is much more complicated and fascinating than what some of us make it out to be. It would certainly be a shame if we continue to water down the complexity of our brain into something which can be simply deduced through a simplistic random test on Facebook.
THE RIGHT LEADERSHIP MODEL

CRITICAL FACTORS FOR COMPANY SUCCESS

By ANDREW LAU
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A PART from the business model, the leadership model of an organisation is the most critical factor in deciding the success of a company. This is because leaders make decisions about the people, culture, infrastructure, expenditure, strategy and many others. More importantly, it will affect how decisions are made – especially when dealing with people and culture. So, how does one choose the right leadership model for his or her organisation?

ORGANISATIONAL NEEDS

Just like how a business model fulfills a market need, a leadership model fulfills an organisational need. In other words, what does the organisation need to move it forward? This is dependent on three things:

1. TYPE OF INDUSTRY
   Certain industries which are fast-paced require a leadership model that enables key leaders to make quick decisions. In such cases, autocratic models would be better suited as opposed to a consensus-driven model. Sitting down and having multiple meetings to discuss would effectively give the competitive advantage to competitors.

2. HIERARCHY OF THE ORGANISATION
   If an organisation has been around for a long time, the chances are that there are layers of red tape and bureaucracy. The best way to keep employees engaged is through a democratic model where they are involved in decision-making, but the leader still has a final say.

3. GEOGRAPHY OF THE ORGANISATION
   If an organisation is spread across a number of locations around the world, then a laissez-faire model would be a better fit. This means that leaders provide little input and then delegate the power to managers and employees.

The highly successful Apple Retail stores follow this model where sales specialists and geniuses (yes that’s their job titles) are given the freedom to make the right decision to make the customer feel special. As such, there is no limit as to how long a sales specialist can talk to a customer, even when the customer decides not to buy anything.

TARGET MARKET

Secondly, we need to know our target market. Our target market is the people who make up the organisation. Are they young or old, open-minded or legalistic, new in the company or experienced with the way it functions? If you are to influence the people in the organisation, the leadership model and the engagement approach must be chosen carefully.

We need to understand the way different generations work, such as Baby Boomers, Gen-X, and Gen-Y. For older generations, the leadership model needs to be more structured with an emphasis on seniority, experience and seriousness. For the younger generation, it’s all about approachability and openness of a leader. A leader must also be seen as being fun and energetic.

This has nothing to do with the age of a leader. As you can see, leaders such as Sir Richard Branson can easily trump many young leaders with his energy and leadership style.

Finally, the most important thing is to understand ourselves as a leader. We need to be aware of behavioural traits, strengths, weaknesses and competencies. As much as we might want to follow the latest leadership model or the one that our business mentors use, this can lead to detrimental effects. Among other things:

1. PEOPLE IN THE ORGANISATION WILL SEE US AS BEING FAKE AND UNTRUSTWORTHY
   This is because the way we portray ourselves in private does not match with the way we portray ourselves in public. People will make the assumption that we are putting on a show.

2. WE WILL FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE AND THIS WILL AFFECT DECISION-MAKING
   An example is if we are non-confrontational. Using an autocratic model would only force us to make difficult decisions. More often than not, there is also a higher level of conflict which we would rather avoid based on our character.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

At the end of the day, the three most important things in deciding on the leadership model are the organisation’s need, the target market and how self-aware we are as leaders.

While there are lots of models out there, keeping the model aligned to the above would more likely see the leadership model succeed in its objectives. More often than not, we will arrive at a hybrid model and it may change as we grow as leaders.

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LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR GEN-Y

WHAT’S the best model of leadership to influence and engage the Gen-Y employees in our organisation?

To answer that, let’s start by looking at what they value. While there has been no conclusive research done, these are some of the important things that have been widely observed (in no particular order):

- Work-life balance.
- Good boss.
- Fun and open culture.
- Cool office.
- Good compensation package.
- Quick career progression.
- Opportunity to travel for work.
- Proper tools and training for the job.
- Bigger responsibilities.
- Freedom to make decisions.

Essentially, if we categorise it, there are two things that they are looking for:

1. People who will believe in them and empower them.
2. Being able to work in an environment that is engaging.

The first leadership model or style that addresses the empowerment issue is by being democratic.

Gen-Y employees believe they have something valuable to contribute. They do not necessarily expect that all their suggestions would be accepted, but they want to be heard.

The second model is pace setting. Here, a leader needs to create exciting goals and encourage the employees to challenge themselves. It creates a sense of adventure and also a bigger purpose that Gen-Y employees will find attractive.

The third model is coaching. While Gen-Y employees are quite capable, they also acknowledge that there are things that they don’t know.

They respond well to coaching rather than being lectured or scolded. They prefer if someone comes alongside to guide them on how to improve as opposed to being left alone to figure things out.

Using these three models will ensure more influence and better engagement with Gen-Y employees.
**The Right Leadership Development Model**

5 Guiding Principles to Follow

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1. **Intention**
   - The term ‘leadership’ is not defined until the intention of the leadership development model is crystallised. Without an intention, we can define the development model as a list of activities that occur, but not necessarily in any meaningful order.

2. **Tailored**
   - The governance structure and the content must be proportionate to the specific context.

3. **Growth**
   - If we see leaders as star people, the leadership development (LD) programmes are likely to be大幅提升 (a lift-up) projects. This empowered both participants and the organisation.

4. **Holistic**
   - In conclusion, this model, or rather this LD framework, is not an add-on to our mechanism. If we are to change our employees, we must change the context.

5. **Right**
   - The intention of the right LD model is to achieve the right leadership model (a corporate culture).

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**The Right Leadership Development Model illustrated with key words of each guiding principle**

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**APPLICATION OF THE RIGHT MODEL**

From the beginning, the charm of the leadership development model can be essentially involved across all three stages of Design, Execution and Evaluation. This relationship enabled Leadership Development to design and assess the development model so that is tailored for the intentions of the organisation.

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**THE CHALLENGE**

A year-long project for four different leadership models: Self, People, Business and Change.

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**THE SOLUTION**

A year-long project for the creation of a leadership model consisting of quarterly workshops and a pilot project to assess pre- and post-assessment.

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**RESULTS**

A couple of potential leaders, some who have moved to take on bigger roles, others who are on top of recognitions (increased networks) among leaders within the organisation.

Key projects which were essential to build the organisation were also taken on board and pushed forward into execution.
Disruption, The Next Innovation

By CALEEN CHUA
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Disruption. A word that usually leaves a negative connotation in our minds. True enough, by definition it means “disturbance.” But... What if disruption can help you succeed?

This was my takeaway message from sitting in on a private interview, conducted by Leaderonomics, with David Frigstad, chairman of Sullivan & Frost.

Against The Grain

According to Frigstad, being disruptive is essentially doing something against the grain in the industry. It can be big or small, but it has to be something against the norm. Steve Jobs, in Frigstad’s opinion, was one of the biggest gurus in disruption.

When Jobs launched the first black computer instead of the industry’s norm of beige casing which IBM started (how many of us still remember those humongous beige computers from the old days?), it immediately put the Mac computer as a standout product. “A simple move like that,” he enthused. “Out of the 600 other companies in the industry then, why did no one do it?” Jobs followed on by single-handedly disrupting, then transforming, the entire smart phone industry. With utmost certainty, all of us would agree that the entire consumer market welcomed Jobs’ disruption with open arms.

Embracing Change

We are now experiencing megatrends on the Internet that has transformed the business world. There is just too much information on the Internet, leading to consumer collaboration that can really hurt a business.

So, how do businesses survive this? Frigstad believes that to survive disruption, we must put the entire team, in a top-down process, through the experience of change—not just learning through reading. Even today, most CEOs (chief executive officers) are resisting change instead of adapting. Many are still operating with two types of mentalities:

I. “I am the industry visionary.”
II. “Everything we are doing is based on best practices.”

Both mentalities are unwise, as disruption can turn an entire industry upside down without a moment to spare.

The Innovation Culture

How can we innovate? Frigstad believes that hiring a chief innovation officer, which many of the big boys are doing now, will fail in a big way because it is not integrating the megatrends of today.

Innovation is a culture that goes from the top to the bottom. Hence, CEOs need to spend time creating visionary scenarios—both in the best and worst case, so that they can be as well prepared as possible in the face of disruption.

Recently, Frigstad met one of the biggest hotel operators (who will remain anonymous), and found out that this US$5bil hotel mogul had no clue about the existence of Airbnb!

What was even more of a shocker to Frigstad was that this mogul’s main goal was to increase the size of his workforce to 9,000.

Even as industries are going towards the lean and mean route, there still exists the old school mentality in which bigger is better. Disruption also translates to innovation, and entrepreneurs need to innovate in order to succeed.

The Startup Culture

A serial entrepreneur—the novelty title given to many startup founders—according to Frigstad, is someone who has failed multiple business ideas but still keeps pushing forward and eventually succeeds.

Nowadays, there is much more tolerance for dysfunctional characters and flexibility to leaders who don’t fit the standard, as these people are more likely to be a game-changer and are very much sought after by venture capitalists in Silicon Valley.

Unlike the old days when Frigstad co-founded Market Intelligence Research Corp and had to go through hard times—including sleeping on his office couch and missing wages—just to get started, funding is much easier to come by simply because innovation is now open to the idea of innovation.

However, startups, be wary. According to The National Venture Capital Association, three out of four venture-backed startups fail. Only a minute percentage of these startups actually make it big and give the venture caps the returns they need. Still, with high risk come high returns.

Fortunately, unfortunately, Europe and Asia are not quite there yet. The “fit in” culture still very much exists, where most are more concerned about maintaining a sense of belonging rather than pushing the boundaries.

However, slowly but surely, we will see a global shift in our investors’ appetite, thereby encouraging more of us to “disrupt” the rules of doing business as we know it.

Words of Advice

Frigstad’s advice? Don’t listen to everyone who says, “no, it won’t work.” Perseverance (and of course, a brilliant idea) is key.

For those who aspire to be like Frigstad, take heed that being an entrepreneur and CEO is much more than an honorary title. Sacrificing your time and working hard are the essential traits to becoming a success. In Frigstad’s opinion, what is missing in our current style of leadership is a mind, body and soul connection.

People need to lead from their hearts. The old leadership mentality was command and control, but this will not work well with Gen-Y and Gen-Z who prefer autonomy and inspiration.

Significance and value creation will be seen to play more important in future leadership. CEOs have to do well in order to make their company more significant and bring value to everyone—not only on next quarter’s margin.

A final golden nugget of advice that Frigstad would like to share with CEOs is to spend at least 2% of their time understanding their industry and what the future could look like in 10 to 20 years. Too few of us do it, he says, and that mentality could cause another “Kodak moment”. Kodak was in denial for more than a decade that digital could replace film, leading to its inevitable bankruptcy.

Having understood the new meaning of “disruption,” two key questions come to mind:

I. What could be the next disruption in your industry?
II. Will we be the disruptor or the disrupted?

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THE POWER OF WORDS IN LEADERSHIP

THEY CAN MAKE YOU OR BREAK YOU

By LINIA ANIRUDHAN
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I

A world that is constantly striv-
ing for convenience, words have become less relevant than it should be—not being chosen with the care they deserve as a key in developing great leadership.

Words breathe life into business ideas and motivate people to action. It has become a catalyst that opens doors to change our mindsets and move our hearts.

It all lies in the power of words.

A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

Words have power to uplift or to destroy, to build life or to “imprison” someone. Words have a lasting effect as they shape thought patterns, emo-
tions and experiences.

Their influence is enormous and limitless.

Ask yourself now: When was the last time you actually listened to your words? Especially to the words you say to yourself?

As it is, the words we speak tend to echo what’s on our minds, hearts and souls. Effective and trans-
formational lead-
ers recognise the impact of their words.

According to author Darlene Price, “With your words, you wield the power to plant seeds of either success or failure in the mind of another.”

Sadly, one of the biggest errors that leaders often make is to think that words are merely symbolic to explain things. We often forget that one of the dimensions of human language, which creates reality.

THE WAR OF WORDS

Some feel that the only way to influence people is through criticism, threats and negative words—thinking that pushing the extreme makes peo-
ple respond better. Whilst they some-
times do, it is often out of fear.

On the contrary, some leaders are able to influence harmoniously towards exceptional results through words of affirmation and positivity.

Whether it is to motivate, engage, or build high-performing teams or

...
By KOH EARN SOO & TEAM
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I

The book Little Bets: How breakthrough ideas emerge from small discoveries, Peter Sims did some extensive groundwork on innovative people to learn about their creative processes. He found similarities in the way Pixar creates films, Amazon develops new markets, stand-up comedians produce new jokes, architects design new infrastructure, generals construct counter-insurgency strategies, etc.

They are arduous, analytical, strategic and pragmatic. Yet, there is no set procedure.

Methodologies presented in Little Bets are not protocols that must be strictly adhered to, but rather they help to free the creative mind to discover.

COLOURFUL CHARACTERS OF DISCOVERY

Chris Rock, a comedian, knows that clever ideas never pop into someone’s mind by accident. Instead, they materialise through a rigorous experimental discovery process.

Thus, before he makes a big appearance, he would first test out the response generated from his materials in a small comedy club numerous times.

Besides, successful entrepreneurs don’t begin with brilliant ideas – they discover them.

Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin were looking for a way to prioritise online searches in the beginning – not to revolutionise online information search, which they ended up doing anyway.

Who would have guessed that Google’s breakthrough revenue engine could come from the banner ads that appear on top of search result pages?

Amazon’s CEO Jeff Bezos likened Amazon’s tactic of developing ideas into “planting seeds” or “going down blind alleys”. You never know what you’re going to get.

In one moment, they would release features that they think are really cool, and then come to realise they don’t get appreciated by customers. In the next, the demands for a new product would exceed their expectations.

They accept the uncertainty, the unreliability of predictions. They experiment.

Unlike many others, Bezos and his team don’t do ROI (return on investment) calculations when attempting something new.

Furthermore, they withstand criticisms during failures.

Nevertheless, Amazon’s experimental character has constantly enabled the company to achieve many new heights.

LITTLE BETS TO BECOME BETTER

WHEN GREAT IDEAS COME FROM SMALL DISCOVERIES

TYPES OF INNOVATORS

The aforementioned individuals treat problems in a nonlinear way.

University of Chicago economist David Galesman calls them “experimental innovators”.

According to him, there are two kinds of innovators:

★ The conceptual innovator
They have a propensity to chase their novel philosophies and usually attain great breakthroughs early in life. They are geniuses and rarities. Such an example is Mozart.

★ The experimental innovator
They are determined and readily accept failures as a norm as they progress. For example, Beethoven used experiments to slowly distinguish his style from Mozart’s.

They don’t start out by analysing the feasibility of an idea; neither do they place their stakes highly on one thing.

They do things to discover what they should do. They triumph by making numerous little bets.

Little Bets were written to suggest how we can use many little bets and creative approaches to recognise prospects and achieve great heights.

Little bets are tangible actions performed to discover, test, and develop ideas. A creative possibility, once refined and reiterat-ed, is useful for manoeuvring in the unknown or inventing new things – even solving problems.

With a vision, persistence can lead to outstanding outcomes. However, without good understanding, proficiency, and know-how, experimental innovation works best.

Professor Saras Saravathy from the University of Virginia studies how entrepreneurs make decisions. Instead of evading mistakes, they seek to learn from them, just as chefs improve to get new recipes.

Stanford University’s d.school (institute of design) and IDEO consultancy-founders David Kelley and George Kembel provided Sims with insights from design thinking that infused this book. It teaches us to creatively construct solutions, rather than to begin with the answer.

Our flawed education system overly emphasises memorisation, left-brain analytical skills, top-down learning and avoidance of mistakes, suffocating our right-brain’s capacity to create, discover, or adopt the experimental approach, which allows for trial and error.

Scientific management break jobs down into iterative, sequential tasks, then assign deadlines to optimise efficiency.

Henry Ford was an endorser of this style. General Motors’ tendency to overplan and adhere to rigid systems hindered innovation and almost led to its death.

No longer can accurate predictions be made based on past experiences, as the global landscape changes more abruptly each day. Experimental innovation does not replace linear thinking. Rather, it complements it. Little bets will prove to be a more pragmatic approach in this ever-changing era.

BIG BETS VS LITTLE BETS

Former Hewlett-Packard (HP) executive vice president Ned Barnholdt inspired the title for this book. As HP grew, they thought in terms of bigger bets – only looking for opportunities in billion-dollar markets.

However, many failures quickly ensued due to the overlooked intangible factors like market dynamics. Alas, that was how Barnholdt learnt the importance of making a lot of little bets.

Ironically, HP’s co-founder Bill Hewlett was an experimental person. He uses small bets to uncover hidden opportunities.

During Hewlett and David Packard’s time, HP never used experimental discovery processes. Instead, they researched their way to overplan and adhere to rigid procedures; failure is inevitable and instrumental.

THE GOOD IN LITTLE BETS

Two distinct advantages of the “little bets” approach are:

★ Affordable loss principle
Focus on what we can afford to lose rather than assume how much we can expect to gain.

★ Means development
Facilitate the development of means as we expand on an idea.

Our means can be assessed by:

★ Who they are (values and tastes).
★ What they know (expertise, skills, experience).
★ Who they know (network).
★ Our monetary resources.

These advantages are exemplified in the story of Pixar. Pixar’s lead technologist and president, Ed Catmull, had a vision to make a feature-length computer-animated film, so he recruited collaborators with complementary means, such as graphics technology specialist Ahoy Ray Smith and Disney animator John Lasseter to expand ideas and guide adaptations.

Steve Jobs, who bought over Pixar, thought in terms of affordable losses when he gave Catmull the green light to develop his team’s skills to make films. Pixar expected nothing from them and the cost of the animation team was minimal. The affordable losses principle reveals something important about the “little bets” approach; failure is inevitable and instrumental.

Koh Earn Soo and his team take the best books and summarise them into shorter, readable content in the hope of inspiring people to read more and learn more. To read the rest of this summary and summaries of other bestsellers, subscribe to www. thebestbooksummary.com. For more articles by Earn Soo, visit www. leaderonomics.com
By SABRINA KAMARUDDIN
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A

BOUT to graduate but still don’t know where you want to go? Here are three things you need to know to lead you in the right direction.

Right now, it feels like time is running out and you need to make a tough decision: who should you become for the rest of your life? It’s such a crushing question to answer, and you need to answer it quick, but the truth is that you’re not ready yet — because you simply don’t know what you want to do with your life.

Before you commit prematurely to becoming a hesitant copywriter, engineer or financial adviser, pause for a second and sort out the basic things first.

By starting with these three areas, you’ll be heading down the right path in no time.

1. KNOW THE ROLE YOU PLAY

You reflect those indi-
ciduals in class who are comfort-
able speaking in front of others, and with people, and have things generally going very well for them. “I want to be confident like him or her,” you may say. But the rea-
son that he or she is confident is because things are going well, and the person knows the role that he or she is playing.

If you think about it, you are the most confident when everything is just right. Confidence is associated with success because confident people are the best version of themselves at that point of time. Your confidence is boosted when you are with close friends, when you are doing something you’re good at, and when you get to do the things you enjoy. It’s also boosted when things are aligned with your personal values and your beliefs.

In other words, you don’t create a legend by forcing a great goalkeeper to play striker — you allow him to do what he does best.

So, it’s equally important that you always play the right role for yourself, and play it well.

Reflect on some things:

- Values: What are your values? What are the things that you will never compromise?
- Strengths: What activities are you good at? When do you thrive?

Knowing these things about yourself will steer you away from wanting to conform to someone else’s definition of “confidence”. Focus on what works for you. There are many ways you can discover your values and strengths. Formal tests like Clifton StrengthsFinder are powerful tools that can access online.

More importantly, however, is to reflect on the experiences that you have had. The more experience you’ve had, the easier it is to know your strengths.

However, your confidence in your role must be productive — it must be able to take you to where you want or need to be. This leads to my next point.

2. KNOW WHERE YOU’RE GOING

Whenever I get the chance, I always ask the successful people I know or meet — “What do you want to do?”

They have found it already.

There’s nothing wrong with not knowing what your end goal is.

Not even the most successful knew where they were headed. But, what they did know, were the smaller goals that they wanted to achieve. Eventually, your smaller achievements will lead you to greater ones.

Think about what you want, even if it’s vague or whimsical. Don’t expect yourself to have a perfect five or 10-year plan, because nobody does.

Questions you need to ask yourself:

- What do you want for yourself?
- What do I want for myself? This may include lifestyle (I want to work around friendly people), a purpose to serve (I want to help the environment)
- How much do I want it?
- How fast do I want it?
- How can I achieve it?
- How do I do it?

YOUR GOALS WILL BE FOCUSED, REFOCUSED, OR CHANGING ENTIRELY AS TIME PASSES — AND THAT’S OKAY.

What matters more is that you are motivated into action right NOW, and that you always remember to take time to reflect and renew when necessary.

3. KNOW YOUR POSSIBILITIES

Everyone is motivated by different things. Some are motivated by proven facts, and others are motivated by the “if” factor.

We often don’t do the things we want to do because we are afraid or reluctant to do it. We are afraid because we don’t know how easy it actually is to do them.

This is where demystifying comes in — it makes you see how great achievements are made up of achievable steps that even you can take.

Many complicated projects are made up of the simplest things. Despite that, most of us are more inclined to think that we don’t have the necessary skills to do it.

However, if you really think about it, it isn’t as impossible as it seems.

If you’re not already a burst-
ing optimist, a good way to start demystifying is to always be on the lookout for solutions, which are found in places you don’t usually look (otherwise you would have found it already).

This is why it’s so important to open your eyes and ears to stories, experiences and knowledge shared by others, because the most important lessons you will learn are the subtle ones.

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DIOIDE YOUNGSTERS

ONE more week before the school holiday starts! Get ready to explore the fun and excitement that DIOIDE Camps have to offer this holiday season. Sign up now to be part of this exhilarating camp experience! DIOIDE Camps are specially designed for youth aged 12–19 who are eager to explore their leadership potential and become great leaders of the future!

Sign up now to be a super leader and impact your community at http://leaderonomics.com/youth or email us at diode@leaderonomics.com. Hurry! Seats are selling like hotcakes!

DATES:

Dec 1–6, 2014 [Dec 15–20, 2014 (Youth Leadership Camps: 14–16 years old)]
Dec 3–6, 2014 [Tweens Leadership Camp: 12–13 years old]
Dec 8–13, 2014 [School Leavers Camp: 17–19 years old]

VENUE:

Starfresh AgroPark, Seremban
(Youth Leadership Camps & Tweens Leadership Camp)
SUFES Campsite, Tapah (School Leavers Camp)
BE TRUE TO YOURSELF AND DON’T BE AFRAID TO ROCK THE BOAT

HERE COMES THE SUN

PUSHING THROUGH WITH THE BEATLES

BY HYMA PILLAY
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“Here comes the sun,
And I say, it’s all right,
Little darling,
The smiles returning to the faces.”

THIS IS MY GO-TO SONG AT THE END OF MY MOST DIFFICULT DAYS.

As I settle down after a hectic, messy, brain-draining long day, I like to plug in my headphones and zone out from the world for a little while, listening to this song. Its lyrics are very simple. Just these few lines tell you that tomorrow, the sun will rise, that it will be a new day, and everything will be okay.

As a smile returns to my face, I know that I can have the strength to go through another day, brace for another storm, still knowing that things will be all right.

The Beatles, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr, is one of the most iconic bands in the music industry. Years after their final tour, the band is still talked about highly in the industry.

There are a lot of things we can learn from The Beatles. Here are some leadership lessons I have drawn from their music:

1. PUSH THE LIMITS
   The Beatles gained fame by creating its own unique sound. Its music was more advanced and versatile compared with others; it chose not to follow the norm of the music genre at that time and was bold enough to stick to its own style — something that certainly did not backfire on it.

   Just like the band, we shouldn’t be afraid of taking risks and pushing boundaries. At times, people can be so afraid of change that they don’t realise that small changes can bring great impact. Be true to yourself and don’t be afraid to rock the boat.

2. YOUR TEAM MEMBERS ARE IMPORTANT
   Each member of the band was incredibly talented in his own way. By working together and unfurling their talents, they were able to create songs with catchy beats and meaningful lyrics.

   They also learnt to surround themselves with great people who could help them with their success, for example, the acclaimed producer George Martin and media ambassador Ed Sullivan. Take a look at the people in your team. How can each of them help in making sure your team brings out nothing but the best?

   Each of you will have your own set of strengths and weaknesses. Leverage on the strengths of each team member and work together to help each other improve. You can achieve great things if you put your hands and minds together.

3. ALWAYS GIVE YOUR BEST
   No matter what the situation is, The Beatles always gave its very best at everything it did. Whether it was a big concert or a small performance on a TV show, it always managed to give a splendid, jaw-dropping performance.

   The same applies to us. In our jobs, at home, and in everything we do, always give all that you can.

   Why settle for less when you can achieve the best? Especially when the power to get the best results is in your own hands.

4. FIGHT FOR YOURSELF
   When he was 14, Harrison was invited by McCartney to watch the band play. At that time, The Beatles had not been officially formed.

   Harrison auditioned for the role of lead guitarist for Lennon. Although Lennon was impressed by Harrison’s skills, Lennon thought that he was too young for the band.

   Nevertheless, Harrison didn’t take “no” for an answer. He continued to push Lennon with persistence. Finally, after a month, he was accepted as a lead guitarist.

   If you set yourself up for something, know that it is only normal that obstacles will come your way. Be persistent and don’t let them bring you down too easily.

   Fight for what you want, and it will definitely be worth it in the end.

The Beatles’ hard work, persistence and dedication brought beautiful music to people across the globe. Its songs have helped people through hard times, and have given them reason to dance through the happy times.

If you have been inspired by musicians, movie stars, authors or famous people, do write to us at editor@leaderonomics.com and tell us how this person inspired you to be a better leader.

And when all the broken-hearted people living in the world agree
There will be an answer, let it be

For though they may be parted
There is still a chance that they will see
There will be an answer, let it be.”

– Let it Be, The Beatles

Hyma Pillay is operations leader for Leaderonomics.com editorial team. She occasionally travels back to the 60s because she believes that that was the time when they made the best music. You can email her at hyma.pillay@leaderonomics.com

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