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NEW REFLECTIONS

THESE past few months seem to have flown by with very few moments of tranquility. When did September end? And October, November and nearly December along with it?

To a certain extent, 2014 was a scary year – on the career front, as well as with my family. Trying to be all I can be for everyone has been exhausting – but because I intentionally made the decision to be part of an organisation that is better aligned with my life goals, the added stress of internal conflict had gradually dissipated.

So it was with a touch of ‘PHEW! On the right track’ that I read our Roshan Thiran’s article on self-reflection as we prepare for 2015. Roshan stresses the importance of doing this regularly, with one of the key points of asking ourselves if our goals this year were aligned to our long-term goals. Along the same lines, Dr Victor Tan shares the 10 As of personal excellence – everything from awareness, to adaptability to appreciation – as we journey towards our personal development goals.

When The Leaderonomics Show was recorded with Datuk Sheila Majid, we may have hit some kind of record in our office – with so many of us present and singing along with the Queen of Jazz (although she explains why this is not necessarily the right moniker). Sheila talks about her trials and tribulations from the day she was first discovered. A few of our leaders reflect on their lessons learnt as well as highlight key workforce trends in 2015 and beyond.

As Hyma Pillay Santos into 2015, she covers her favourite movie, Forrest Gump, drawing on the pearls of wisdom from the inspirational character played by a young Tom Hanks. Last but not least, we close the year with some heart-warming and happy happenings following some past articles in our humble career guide.

I’m not sure if this is an inverse relationship, but the older I get, the more I value each day. So here’s to each new day leading up to our new year together!

Have a fantastic weekend and blessed New Year!

KAREN NEOH
Editor
leaderonomics.com

THE CURTAIN CALL

BY LIM LAY HSUAN
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CHRISTMAS has just passed and soon we will be saying goodbye to 2014 and ushering in the new year. It is time again to take stock of how our year has been and start preparing ourselves for 2015.

Kevin Daum, a contributor to Inc., suggested last year that we reflect, repent and renew:
- Reflect on our shortcomings and the lessons learnt from them.
- Repent and acknowledge our human flaws and take appropriate actions to improve ourselves.
- Renew our hope with clarity of mind and heart, and focus on the journey that lies ahead.

Before we draw the curtains on the year, let us take some time to do the following:

REWIND
Like history lessons, it is wise to look at past events of the year and learn from them. It is not about harping on past unpleasant issues, but to revisit how we have grown personally from them.

At the start of 2015, let us take some time to review:

- What went right?
- What were the challenges and look out for areas of improvement.
- What were the highlights?
- What were the lessons learnt from them.

How we have grown personally from them.

On the one hand, for the many of us whose year was more or less uneventful, what went wrong?

Let’s make sure we don’t repeat our mistakes.

In 2015, let’s all try to be more appreciative of our small and large blessings.

We should also make an effort to be a little bit more understanding, patient and kinder to the people around us.

PLAY
After a time of repose, and when you are all recharged and raring to go, it is time to face the world again with a new perspective and refreshed brand new you! Continue to feed your mind with thoughts and deeds that are noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable and excellent to help you refocus and realign your purpose in life.

Stay inquisitive and humble to learn new things. Be open for feedback from your peers and leaders so you can continue to discover yourself and grow as a person.

WISHING YOU A BLESSED NEW YEAR!

“We can’t rewind the past, nor fast-forward the future, so today, all we can do is play, record, pause and keep moving, until something should press the stop button.”

– Anthony Lissome

The opinions expressed in this career guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.
ARE YOU PREPARED FOR 2015?  
TIME FOR SELF-REFLECTION BEFORE THE START OF A NEW YEAR

By ROSHAN THIRAN
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This year has been an extremely tough year on many of us. As we come to the tail-end of yet another busy year, I have personally found that I can hardly find time to get many final operational matters resolved.

Yet, I know that one of the most important pieces of me continuing to be an effective leader for my organisation is to take time off and reflect. Trying to find five to six hours alone to reflect has become a nightmare with numerous phone calls, messages, distractions, children, and unresolved issues from this past year. Still, I know that taking time to reflect is critical for my personal success.

The practice of reflection goes back centuries and is rooted in numerous institutions including the Japanese samurai. Ben Franklin, one of my leadership heroes, had a daily ritual of reflection.

A sincere examination of ourselves is nearly easy. It involves the willingness to face and acknowledge our mistakes, failures and shortcomings. Albert Schweitzer, Nobel winner, believes reflection in life is critical to leadership as it allows you to take into account what you have neglected in thoughtlessness.

Interestingly, a key step in the Alcoholics Anonymous programme asks participants to make a probing and courageous moral inventory.

All great leaders reflect. Today, meditating and spending time alone in reflection and personal learning is a key part of the leadership journey.

In fact, many great organisations spend the month of December reflecting on services they rendered in the past 11 months and how they can further improve in the following year.

Reflection allows us to learn from mistakes. We all make mistakes – I have done so spectacularly at times. We have all been in situations where things don’t go exactly to plan. But how often do we take time to sit down to reflect on where it all went wrong?

Plato’s great words “know thyself” implies that a lifetime of self-investigation is the cornerstone for knowledge. John Dewey states, “We do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience.” Dewey understood what scientists are only figuring out today—all learning is obtained through reflection.

**THE POWER OF REFLECTION**

As we end this year, we need to take time to reflect on the past year. Here are 12 questions to quick-start your reflection process.

Take a few hours, maybe an afternoon, lock yourself in a private place or a café, and ask yourself these questions. Answer them honestly, and you will be surprised with what you learn from your actions and behaviour this year and how you need to improve, change and grow for the following year.

1. Did you manage to achieve the goals you set for the year? What were the goals you set for yourself? How did you fare? Were the goals realistic? Were the goals aligned to your long-term goals for your life?

2. What did you do well this year? What makes you most proud as you think of your achievements this past year? What were your “wins”? Did you take time to celebrate them? Why were these “wins” important to you in relation to your long-term goals?

3. Did you fail in any area? I recently wrote about writing out our failure resume often. At the end of the year, although we may dislike looking at our failures, it is a critical part of the reflection process. Especially if we plan to grow ourselves for the coming year.

4. What could you have done better? List down all the areas you feel you could have done better. Be honest with yourself and ask yourself how you could have managed the items on your list better.

As you jot down your thoughts, these new areas of improvement can be part of your personal development plan for the upcoming year.

5. Did you have any regrets this past year? Were there relationships that you could have managed better? Were there people you hurt? Did you pass up an opportunity which you regret? Did you end up wasting time on frivolous work?

List them all down and you will not make these same mistakes in the new year.

**YEAR END REFLECTIONS**

1. Did you manage to achieve the goals you set for the year? What were the goals you set for yourself? How did you fare? Were the goals realistic? Were the goals aligned to your long-term goals for your life?

2. What did you do well this year? What makes you most proud as you think of your achievements this past year? What were your “wins”? Did you take time to celebrate them? Why were these “wins” important to you in relation to your long-term goals?

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> TURN TO PAGE 4
The Reflective Model

Reflect

Plan

Act

Observe

Reflect

One final thing you can do as you finish your reflection is to write up a sentence to summarise your year. As the years go by, you can go back to each year and look at how each year has been a meaningful forward progress to your big end-goal or purpose.

Final Thoughts

Reflection is not easy to do. Most of us are so busy that we never find time to reflect. When we don’t reflect, we never really learn. This year end, especially if the fire in our eyes has diminished and we are going through life on auto-pilot, with the joy of life seemingly leaked out, do take time to take stock of life and reflect.

Socrates, Ben Franklin and most great leaders believed that reflection led to a productive and fulfilling life. I will end the year with a parting statement from Buddha who claims, “All that we are is the result of what we have thought.”

Happy reflecting and best wishes for a blessed 2015 from all of us at Leaderonomics!

Roshan is looking forward to 2015 after a tough 2014. He wishes each and every one of you a blessed time of reflection and an awesome 2015 ahead. Happy new year! Do check out www.leaderonomics.com for more articles by Roshan.

Are You Short-Changing Your Brain?

By TERRY SMALL
editor@leaderonomics.com

Your brain is a magical conductor of billions of tasks. We can barely comprehend how incredible the brain is. Yet many people short-change their brain’s incredible potential by eating too much junk food.

I have found that simple dietary changes can have a profound effect on brain health and function.

Neuroscientists have a lot to say about food and the brain. Here is a list of super brain foods. Try to get five of these every day:

- walnuts
- almonds
- blueberries
- celery
- cherries
- cocoa
- onions
- garlic
- tomatoes
- wild salmon
- flax – seeds or oil
- ginger
- tea – green, black, or oolong
- kidney beans – or other beans
- leafy greens
- olives and olive oil
- grapes – red or purple
- sage
- tumeric
- prunes

You wouldn’t put the wrong fuel in your car. But if you did... you can get a new car.

You only get one brain. That’s it. Take care of it.

Terry Small is a brain expert who resides in Canada and believes that anyone can learn how to learn easier, better, faster, and that learning to learn is the most important skill a person can acquire. For more Brain Bulletin articles, do check out www.leaderonomics.com

> From Page 3

6 What lessons did you learn?
Clearly list down all the lessons you learnt from the past year. Every year, I personally review all my lessons learnt from different people and situations. I even write an article (which has become a tradition in Starbiz and Leaderonomics.com) which outlines the lessons I learnt from corporate Malaysian leaders.

Do you clearly write out all your lessons learnt from the year? If you do not, you may soon forget the lesson and history may repeat itself.

7 Did you grow this year?
Have you grown emotionally, spiritually, physically and also in your relationship?

8 What were the five best books/articles you read this year and what did you learn from them?
If you are did not read at least five books this year, make it your goal to do so. What were some of the key lessons in your readings?

9 What do you need to eliminate or reduce?
One of the tools I love from Prof Chan Kim’s Blue Ocean Strategy book is called ERRC (Eliminate, Reduce, Raise and Create). Let’s reflect on the “E” and the “R”.

10 What do you need to do more of?
The next part of the ERRC model is to reflect and list on things you need to RAISE. So, what are things you should be doing more of in the new year?

For example, if you currently exercise once a week, maybe it is time to raise it to three times a week. Think of areas you need to RAISE and do more of in your life.

11 What ‘different’ and ‘new’ things should you plan to do for the New Year?
The final part of the ERRC Model is to CREATE.

The idea here is to reflect on things you may have not tried in the past year and come up with a list of areas or activities that you should now incorporate into your life. For example, you may have approached a client-relationship in a specific way in the past and it did not seem to yield fruits. Maybe it is time to take a different approach and create a different relationship with your client.

12 Has this year changed your long-term goal?
We all need to have a long-term goal? Has this year changed your long-term relationship with your client.

Maybe it is time to take a different approach and create a different relationship with your client.

For example, you may have approached a client-relationship in a specific way in the past and it did not seem to yield fruits.

What were some of the key lessons in your readings?

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What were some of the key lessons in your readings?
MAYBANK is among Asia’s leading financial services groups, and the fourth largest bank in South-East Asia by assets. It is Malaysia’s home grown success story, the nation’s largest company by market capitalisation and a towering presence built over 50 years of growth in parallel with the nation’s history. Maybank now has a global network of 2,400 offices in 20 countries worldwide with a complete presence in ASEAN and in financial capitals of the world including London and New York.

TALENT BEYOND BOUNDARIES

CROSS border talent identification and movement have been rolled out to meet Maybank’s growing regional aspirations with the introduction of Maybank’s International Mobility Programme. This enables the Group to acquire the best talents capable of operating with deep local knowledge and strong global insights. In addition, the ability to manage across cultural and geographic barriers while having the right capabilities to perform, drive and deliver business results is imperative to achieve the Bank’s vision.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

MAYBANK employs many international talents who are working and contributing in sectors such as investment banking and information technology among others. The significant presence of foreign talents has helped to foster a truly international working environment in the bank. This augurs well for the organisation’s growth towards becoming a leading financial services provider in the region and beyond. The breadth of Maybank’s talent goes beyond banking and finance graduates as they employ many from different disciplines, such as engineering, science, law, communication – especially for entry level programmes - Global Maybank Apprentice Programme (GMAP).

WORKING with Maybank has broadened my horizon and allowed me to gain exposure to the culture of a larger organisation. My soft skills have improved as I have to collaborate with many stakeholders including colleagues from the region and I learnt that we have to customise our approaches and be sensitive to the culture and working styles of other nations.

Grace Sarmiento, Maybank Philippines Incorporated (MPI) Project managers group CFS reorganisation and SCMP

GMAP is very personal to me because I hold the wand to pave my rotations and plan my career. I have been rotated into retail banking, business banking and currently attached to group human capital’s talent sourcing and development and I look forward to a successful career in banking ahead.

Syeda Faraha Preanka – graduated with BSc in Pharmacology, King’s College London Global Maybank apprentice with Maybank

GLOBAl TALENT MANAGEMENT

MAYBANK has a framework in place to identify, assess and manage talents across borders. Succession management is one key aspect with talent reviews being conducted periodically at sector, country and group level. The exercise enables the bank to identify and assess readiness of leaders in the pipeline and craft suitable developmental plans for them. The framework also helps with cross-sectoral and cross-border talent identification and deployment and this has contributed to improvements in terms of cross-country succession, increase of non-Malaysian successors and as a result of this greater visibility, a third of the succession pool for Maybank is now newly discovered talents.

The strong traction is testimony to its robust Group Talent Management (TM) system where Maybank has deployed global best practice processes in identifying its talent pool, comparable to or better than top performing organisations worldwide. Benchmarked by Saratoga’s Institute LDA (Leadership Development Audit), the bank has been rated at Global best practice for five out of seven aspects and good practice for the remaining two.

HUMANISING FINANCIAL SERVICES

In recent years, Maybank has taken great strides, with strong growth but the bank’s mission statement – humanising financial services – has always been a driving factor in ensuring that it continues to humanise its services and products as Maybank makes its mark across the world. Through Maybank Foundation initiatives in health, education and the environment, Maybank has a strong commitment to Corporate Responsibility (CR). The Global CR Day where Maybankers from across the globe come together for a day to showcase a sustainable initiative undertaken by the Group is one of the highlights of Maybank’s humanising spirit.

Maybank Cambodia for example launched ‘Read a Book with Maybank: Enriching Lives through Reading & Learning’, an initiative to reach populations living in remote areas where educational services are not readily available. Two hundred and seventy-seven Maybankers visited seven villages in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap to spread the joy of reading and improve access to quality reading materials.

MAYBANK is ranked among the top 20 Strongest Banks in the World by Bloomberg Markets magazine and received recognition as the only Asian organisation to be listed in the Towers Watson Global High Performing Company Norm list for its superior financial performance and best People Practices. The bank also made history in the Malaysia 100 Leading Graduate Employers Award Ranking by winning the top spot, making it the first financial institution to be crowned as the nation’s preferred employer. Recently, Maybank also bagged the prestigious "Brand of the Year" award at the World Branding Forum for the banking category, under national winners for Malaysia.

Maybank at the recent M100 awards.

BEING a non-banking graduate does not stop me from giving my full commitment to the business. Although the learning curve for me is steep, I am grateful to have senior managers and leaders who value my personal growth as much as they value the business growth.

Abdul Rasyid Ramlan – graduated with BA in Political Science, University of Pittsburgh Business development executive in Maybank Islamic

GO Ahead and explore your opportunities with the nation’s new No. 1 employer at www.maybank.com/mycareer
INSPIRE THE WORLD
CREATE THE FUTURE

SAMSUNG MALAYSIA WINS GOLD

With 21,625 operations in 150 countries, the Samsung brand has made its way around the world and is currently one of the top multinational conglomerates. Equally important, Samsung is quickly on its way to “inspire the World. Create the future.”

Well aligned with its core values of people, excellence, change, integrity, and co-prosper- ity, the company’s excellence with handling both its customers and employees has accorded it many awards. For Samsung Electronics Malaysia, it is exactly its 45 years of establishment. To add to the accolade, Samsung Malaysia Electronics was recognised in this year’s Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management (MIHRA), winning gold under the employee of choice category.

It all starts in the strategy.

To achieve its vision, the human resources (HR) team in Samsung has set three main strategies:

1. ROBUST TALENT MANAGEMENT

Samsung’s vigorous and organised hiring process ensures that the company is able to find the talent to lead the company into the future while ensuring a good fit to the company’s culture.

Initiatives to drive future leaders of Samsung and to build a young talent pool include the SMART Scholarship programme, Samsung Asia Elite Programme, Strategic Internship/Programme, and Samsung career initiatives targeting current and future employees. Beyond that, Samsung also ensures that top talents are nurtured, engaged, and retained through a planned career progression and development for its employees, which includes career mapping and job rotation.

2. PERFORMANCE-DRIVEN ORGANISATION

The move to build an organisation with deliberate investment into people development through its global leadership and local growth leadership training programmes, leaders are prepared to face challenges in ever-competitive market situations.

The core of Samsung’s SUCCESSEFUL PEOPLE is the company’s people, who, through a strong strategy focus, speedily self-empowerment, customer focus, crisis awareness, and continuous innovation, ultimately Samsung seeks to reinforce good performance through a simple reward and recognition process, as well as recognising the leaders who continue to grow the company forward.

A good integrated performance management system has also been deployed to monitor individual performances. In addition to the formal performance review, the company acknowledges employees performing well through an internal nomination and review system.

During monthly team meetings, the core of Samsung’s mission to be the best in the month awarded to those who demonstrate outstanding performance.

3. GREAT WORK PLACE (CVP)

CVP is a complement to strategy of robust talent management and retention of top talents, Samsung looks to create a Great Work Place (CVP) by cultivating a “work smart, think hard, and build trust” mindset in their employees.

Work smart

Samsung proactively sets the stage for employees to take ownership in their respective roles and organisational goals that can individually concentrate on meaningful work as a part of its overall strategy.

One of the efficient management objectives of Samsung is to continuously improve procedures, so there is no penalty. In doing so, it enables employees to move more rapidly in assignments that closely relate to their potential, and that would translate into the organisational success.

The creative idea that encourages employees at all levels to contribute suggestions for improving current business operations. Significantly, with the walk-talk talk from the top management to all employees, employees are driven to question the status quo.

“Your ideas are an important source of innovation for us.”

Work hard

Employees are encouraged to come up with creative ideas and solutions to meet fast-changing market demands. In the process, Samsung recognises the best performers.

Think hard

It is no secret that one of the key attributes of Samsung’s success is creativity and innovation. Samsung seeks to create new values with new perspectives that go beyond conventional practices.

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Work smart

Samsung’s campaign will be realised and continuously improved. Employees will then take a better and smart approach to managing their work and life to become market-driven individuals.

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EXCELLENCE is defined as the condition of surpassing some standards of expectation. It is the dream of human life and a pursuit of all practitioners for employees to achieve personal excellence in the workplace.

To achieve personal excellence, organisations need to focus on the growth and development of individuals. In this respect, there are 10 critical areas of improvements which can contribute to this achievement.

1. AWARENESS

It is important for employees in a company to develop and improve. This serves as an asset to the HR division in the company. To do so, people must be aware of the areas that need learning or improvement. They need to:

- uncover their blind spots which block them from change
- validate that their assumptions of the marketplace are relevant
- check the areas they have become complacent in and which affect their performance
- be discerning about their counter-productive habits that may affect their performance
- reassess their attitude regularly to ensure that they do not get in the way of their growth.

Abraham Maslow, world renowned psychologist and philosopher, said it best, “What is necessary to change a person is his awareness of himself.”

2. ATTITUDE

A patient went to a doctor. He told the doctor that there was something seriously wrong with him. It hurt when he touched his head.

In fact, every part of the body that he touched felt painful. His doctor indicated that this was serious and ran a battery of tests. When he finally got home, he came back, the doctor asked what was wrong.

The patient replied, “Oh, it is simple. According to the X-ray, you have a broken finger, so you felt pain wherever you touched.”

Likewise, if one has the wrong attitude, one would blame others except himself/herself.

Attitude is important for two simple reasons. First, without a proper attitude, one may not even be aware of areas to improve.

Secondly, awareness can be quite futile if one does not have the right attitude towards self-improvement. To achieve personal excellence requires intelligent and capable individuals are prevented from greater achievements because of their attitude. To achieve this, they argue that it is others who need to change and not them.

One can persuade people with positive attitudes take responsibility for the problems they face. They solve problems and find better solutions.

They take charge to improve things for the better. That certainly is a great achievement. Likewise, in the workplace, in essence, excellence is not a skill, it is an attitude.

3. ACTION

There can be no excellence without action. Without the illustration, if a person wants to improve public speaking skills, he or she has to go through the discipline of mastering the art.

Likewise, if a manager wants to improve on the working relationship with others, he or she needs to make an effort to build interpersonal and leadership skills.

4. ABILITY

A fundamental way to achieve personal excellence is to develop the ability to do one’s tasks better each time around. This requires constant upgrading of one’s knowledge and skills in various areas of work.

By being willing to take on more responsibilities, one can develop more skills and gain more experience. The key is to keep an open mind and be ready to learn and grow.

Do not be afraid to make mistakes. Seize every opportunity for improvement. Don’t be shy to ask those who know more or have more experience.

Besides learning from others, there is a need for self-learning. This requires strict discipline in building a strong body of knowledge about specific areas of work.

One can constantly do research on the latest information about a specific topic and build up an area of expertise to be effective. One needs to continuously “sharpen the saw.”

Today, the avenue for learning goes beyond the work to informal training and formal education.

In our digital era, there are limitless opportunities to acquire vast and in-depth knowledge through internet learning via various online portals.

5. AIM

A critical aspect of achieving personal excellence is having an aim. This requires setting clear goals and specific measurements to monitor progress.

People who achieve excellent results know the importance of planning and plotting the right strategies to achieve desired results effectively. Findings of a Harvard Business School study indicated that only 3% of people are successful, with 30% some what successful, and the other two-thirds simply watch life pass them by. The difference lies in having a clear and tangible aim in life.

A person without an aim is like a ship without a destination. In this respect, I know of many great performers in the corporate world who have a clear “to do” list every day. They list down things they are to accomplish and schedule the completion dates according to priorities.

Each day, they start out with their lists. By the end of the day, they strike out tasks with a sense of satisfaction.

They will then diligently bring forward unaccomplished tasks to the next day’s list and the process is repeated each day.

The results achieved through this process are always magical, and such results only happen to those who aim and who continue to achieve each item on their lists.

6. ADAPTABILITY

Excellence is a moving target. Thus, there can be no personal excellence if one does not possess the sense of adaptability. In the kingdom, survival of a species is determined by the degree of adaptability to their environment rather than who those, who cannot, become extinct.

Similarly, to achieve personal excellence requires one to continuously anticipate, prepare and respond to changes in their environment. Therefore, individuals have to adapt to new management styles once new leaders replace old ones.

When a company is taken over or merged, employees need to adapt to the new corporate culture in order to survive.

With the introduction of new information technology systems, they need to learn to use them to do their work. With increasing competition and customer sophistication, individuals in organisations will need to develop new knowledge, skills and experience to keep up with the increasing expectations of stakeholders.

Charles Darwin was spot on when he said, “It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best adapt to change.”

7. AFFABILITY

Affability is the way of being pleasant and having a friendly disposition. An image of an organisation is often created by the affability of its employees.

If employees are unfriendly and discourteous, customers will shy away from dealing with the company.

Often a company spends millions to build its brand name only to have its employees tarnish it because they are rude to customers.

Companies that take time to develop affability among their employees will see their efforts handsomely rewarded with happier and more satisfied customers, playing a big part in customer retention.

The characteristics of affability are not innate; they can be cultivated to achieve personal excellence as part of a person’s development.

Thus, individuals who just not attend product training or technical training; they should also attend soft skill training such as interpersonal skills and customer service excellence.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY

A common cause for non-performance in work is no clear ownership with regards to accountability. The common excuse is “I thought someone was supposed to do it.”

Each individual who has been assigned specific tasks must hold himself/herself accountable for producing the desired results.

One can blame the system, the policy, the technology or the process for contributing to the condition of non-performance.

However, it is only by holding ourselves accountable for the tasks assigned to us that we can make a difference in the organisation.

He/she would do whatever it takes to eliminate the barriers or constraints in the workplace.

Some of the greatest achievements in the workplace are created by individuals who are accountable for the condition. They hold themselves accountable for things that are not done properly.

They take the initiatives to change things around for the better.

9. ACHIEVEMENT

One of the best satisfactions that can be derived from the workplace is a sense of achievement. Achievement is the process of personal excellence.

It is Henry Ford who said, “One cannot build a reputation based on what one intends to do.”

An individual can only build a reputation of personal excellence through the achievements that he or she has chalked up. In fact, the best way to show that there is value through the constant process of achieving set goals and targets.

This is a good way to stay away from “company policies”. An individual who continuously achieves and produces results has no need to worry about what others think of them.

It is difficult to argue with clear and consistent achievements that are aligned with organisational goals.

Stop indulging in unproductive “political manoeuvres” to “look good” or claim credit. Instead, embrace this aspect of personal excellence through one’s achievements and certainly speak more convincingly than all the manipulative moves one makes in the workplace—which only the way, would eventually backfire.

10. APPRECIATION

One great aspect of human character is the ability to appreciate others and the things around us.

As a result, one should appreciate the opportunity of working in an organisation. And to show appreciation, one can focus on one’s job and excel at it.

Likewise, we should appreciate customers, for without them, a company has no problem. And if in one of our training programmes on Changing Mindsets, we had a session whereby participants undertook an appreciation exercise.

The participants were required to list out at least three things they appreciated about their work, their company and their country.

The participants were then requested to list out the things they can do to return their appreciation.

In fact, there are two ways this is a good exercise for every individual.

People are fond of asking for more without giving much thought to what they already have. Truly, what we do not appreciate, deprecates.

In fact, many executives do not even fully-utilise the existing resources and yet ask for more.

For a start, they can make the best use of what they already have and start clocking up some achievements. It is time individuals in organisations understand this universal truth: before you can get more of what you ask, you have to first appreciate what you already have.

To do that requires individuals to start analysing what they can do with whatever resources they have.

Only when one has achieved success with the available resources can one have the credibility and influence to bargain for more.

As they say, it is difficult to argue with success. And that is personal excellence at work.

Dr Victor SI Tan is an international thought leader on people, the law, and CEO of KL Strategic Change Consulting Group. He is the author of 10 management and organisational leadership books and dozens of articles, and the winner of Success of Tan Sih Tiong Plow of Public Bank Ltd. He is also a panel of speaker for Leaderonomics. If you are interested in his courses please email people@leaderonomics.com.
PASSION RULES

‘QUEEN OF JAZZ’ SAYS GLAMOUR IS ONLY SKIN DEEP

By Cindy Yap
editor@leaderonomics.com

Sheila strategies patiently waited for the right moment and approached him for his blessings while waiting for her results. “He thought that I wasn’t doing anything anyway and that I would probably fail up my time,” she says.

After a demo which got a local label interested, she was offered a contract to record an album. Before her second album, an international label bought the contract and Emo, which helped her penetrate the Indonesian market, was born.

STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE, NOT MEDIOCRITY

“Do it for the passion, not for the glamour,” she advises.

“There are bound to be challenges in whatever you do,” Sheila says. But if you like doing what you do, the passion will drive you and keep you motivated to overcome those challenges.

“I went into music because I love music, performing and singing. If you’re in this industry for the glamorous life, you’re going to get very disappointed and disheartened as the glamour is merely superficial,” she emphasises, adding that entering the fraternity for the wrong reasons will make you mediocre.

“Many people today work on mediocrity and nobody is striving for excellence anymore. That is the wrong attitude. If you put your heart and soul into it, you will come up with something truly magical,” she enthuses.

Instead of letting fate go to her head, she’s happy to have a family that keeps her grounded. “Once the makeup head, she’s happy to have a family that

BE GRATEFUL ON FAILURE

Make the best out of every situation and never give up. Always have hope that tomorrow will be a better day. When you look at problems faced by others, you’ll realise that your issues are so minute compared with what others are going through.

MORE HARD WORK THAN GLAMOUR

For a young person starting out in life, Sheila has this simple advice to offer: “Like what you do, then you’ll excel in it.”

“Be highly-disciplined, as no one is going to dictate your work hours and schedule. Bear in mind that it involves a lot more hard work than glamour,” she says.

WORK ON YOUR STRENGTHS

Through the years, Sheila continues to inspire many women to empower themselves to be proactive and not afraid to live their dreams.

She advises women to identify their strengths and work on them. “You’re not the same as the next woman, so don’t compare yourself with another.”

5 MALAYSIANS MUST STAY UNITED

When writing songs, Sheila draws inspiration by observing the people and things around her. Her song, Ikhlas tells a story of unity in diversity.

“We are Malaysians, thus we ought to take care of our country,” says Sheila, adding that we ought to be grateful for this safe country Sheila muses that Malaysians must stay united, especially with the current landscape of controversial racial and religious issues.

Below are snippets of Sheila’s answers in The Thinkeronomics segment. If happiness was the national currency, what kind of work would make you rich? Teaching people to have a good attitude.

If no one would ever find out, what crazy things would you do? I don’t even know! I’ve reached a stage of my life where I don’t want to be crazy. To have another baby, perhaps?!

Which is more important to you when following a leader – results or religious issues.

What are two impossible things you have done in your life? Having another baby, perhaps?!
VINESH NAIDU
What was the one big thing you learnt about yourself, or the work of your team in 2014?

JOSEPH TAN
1. What it takes to create sustainable high-performance is a cultural (not competency) strategy to capture the hearts and minds of every employee.

2. The role of behavioural economics: A decade ago, the buzzword for achieving performance was quality - now, quality is a given and it is expected. With production processes being more consistent and streamlined, what else can we rely on for higher gains?

It is the ability to engage the employee at a behavioural and attitudinal level that will provide new frontiers of performance achievement.

LILY CHEAH
1. In 2014, we started the Engagement team, and it has been a fantastic and rewarding journey building it up from scratch. I’ve been reminded of the importance of embracing ‘learning pains’.

No growth can occur without some form of discomfort, pain and even some fear of the unknown. Yet the mantra of continuous growth is something we must embrace if we want to even touch the realm of authenticity, innovation and creativity in our work, and grow in our ability to contribute further to our organisation.

2. Areas to pay attention to in the coming years, especially before Generation Z enters in and muddies the waters even more!

3. I’d encourage HR practitioners to look further into the space of employer branding.

According to the Towers Watson 2014 Global Workforce Study, “image” remains one of the top five drivers of employee engagement in Malaysia. Methods do not necessarily need to be traditional, but the point is that we do need to make some effort at ‘noise’ to communicate who we are, ultimately so that we can attract the right people for our organisations.

Non-sterile communication: As individuals who are now ‘numb’ to the experience of regularly being bombarded by content, we have become much more sophisticated and selective about the kind of content we pay attention to.

Any communication that focuses on just the cascading of numbers to drive for growth because this will lead to a silo-mentality and territorialism. Think in terms of creating a culture of accountability where employees are guided more by a sense of personal responsibility rather than by job jurisdiction. The company that succeeds is the company that can engage, not exert.

Management of generational differences: As a Gen-Y myself, I continue to (consistently) get earfuls from HR practitioners and business leaders on frustrations of dealing with Gen-Y in the workplace. At the same time, I hear peers airing their own woes in regards to their workplaces.

I believe the skill of successfully uniting and getting the best out of the various generations (with their preferences, habits and all) is a key skill that managers must nail down in the coming years, especially before Generation Z enters in and muddies the waters even more!

By KAREN NEOH
karen.neoh@leaderonomics.com

A UMOST seven months ago, I took a leap of faith, left what many people might have thought was a dream job, and joined a group of amazing individuals.

Aside from their technical skills and experience, the thing that inspires me day after day is the undying zeal of Leaderonomics to change the world, and not in that fuzzy dream-sequence-imagination of Utopia, but with a clear and not in that fuzzy dream-sequence-imagination of Utopia, but with a clear and not in that fuzzy dream-sequence-imagination of Utopia, but with a clear and not in that fuzzy dream-sequence-imagination of Utopia, but with a clear and not in that fuzzy dream-sequence-imagination of Utopia, but with a clear and not in that fuzzy dream-sequence-imagination of Utopia, but with a clear and not in that fuzzy dream-sequence-imagination of Utopia, but with a clear and not in that fuzzy dream-sequence-imagination of Utopia, but with a clear and not in that fuzzy dream-sequence-imagination of Utopia, but with a clear and not in that fuzzy dream-sequence-imagination of Utopia, but with a clear and not in that fuzzy dream-sequence-imagination of Utopia, but with a clear and 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RUN, FORREST, RUN!
TAking on 2015, THE GUMP WAY

By HYMA PILLAY
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T'S that season again, the end of yet another year. It's the time of the year where we reflect on the past 12 months that just flew past, time to start putting down our new resolutions and goals for the next year.

For myself, 2015 is shaping up to look like an exciting, yet frightening year. It promises big changes and a few uncertainties. I'm sure many of you could relate to this.

A new year usually brings the prospect of new experiences, opportunities and changes. As we prepare to take on 2015, I'd like to share insights from one of my all time favourite movies, Forrest Gump. If you have not watched the movie, (I strongly recommend you do) please be warned that there are spoilers ahead.

The movie revolves around a man named Forrest Gump, who was a simple and gentle man. Throughout the many adventures and obstacles he faced in life, Forrest never failed to remain true to his good nature. He was brave, honest and ever ready to help those in need.

Here are four inspiring lessons from Forrest Gump which could help you face the New Year:

DON'T BE HINDERED BY UNCERTAINTIES

"Life is like a box of chocolates -- you never know what you're going to get."
– Forrest Gump

The future is full of uncertainties. Like a box of chocolates, we get different flavours, sometimes we pick up the sweet, creamy fudge filled ones (my favourite!) while other times we might pick the ones that are less pleasing to our taste buds.

We can't tell for sure what it will be like, eight months down the road. Perhaps a great career acceleration opportunity is awaiting, or you might have to let go of something you hold to dearly, or move to a completely new environment.

Although things may seem bitter and difficult at first, but there's always a way to turn it around and make it into something wonderful. Take a different approach to the negative things.

There is a good thing to bring out from most situations. Things can get much better when you focus on the bright side. Most importantly, don't stop yourself from taking on new challenges. The next chocolate you pick could be the best in the box.

SET YOUR OWN PATH

Forrest: "What's my destiny, Mama?"
Mrs Gump: "You're going to have to figure that out for yourself."

We are so used to having people tell us what to do, and sometimes we tend to do what others believe is best for us, instead of what we want for ourselves.

For the New Year, stop allowing external people to set expectations for you. Believe in yourself and set your own path to achieve the things you want to.

LOOK FORWARD

"You've got to put the past behind you before you can move on."

We all have made mistakes and choices which we wish to correct. There's no point in dwelling on past mistakes. Although it is good to sometimes reflect back on mistakes, instead of letting them burden you or wear you down, let them instead be lessons for you to move on.

Mistakes and failures can be great teachers. Let the past remain in the past, and move forward to doing better next year.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

"From that day on, if I was going somewhere, I was running."

Forrest had to wear braces whenever he saw people yelling "Run, Forrest! Run!"

He didn't let the braces or his disability get in his way. He ran whenever he saw people yelling "Run, Forrest! Run!"

He decided to run, to flee from his bullies. He didn't let the braces or his disability get in his way. He ran until his braces broke, and then he kept on running.

"This is my favourite scene from the movie. It taught me that you are only limited by the limitations you allow yourself to have."

Theoretically, Forrest's disability should hinder him from running, but he challenged his disability. He didn't just run, he ran fast. Because of his speed, he earned a scholarship for university.

We often limit ourselves from doing certain things because we believe that we can't do it. Sometimes, all you need to do is just to start. Push and challenge yourself to do things you never thought you could.

Get on that first step to start your new business, apply for that job you thought you weren't competent enough for. Break down those limitations and go, achieve what you are meant to achieve!

My hope for all of you is that 2015 would be a wonderful year, that it will be the year of great positive changes, a year of "first steps" for new things, and a year of positive impacts. Happy New Year! (throws confetti)

HYMA Pillay is operations leader for the Leaderonomics editorial team and she enjoys yelling “Run, Forrest! Run!” whenever she sees people running. She has watched the movie Forrest Gump eight times, and never fails to be awed by the movie. She believes that it is one movie that everyone should watch. You can email her at editor@leaderonomics.com
**READERS ENGAGE**

The editorial team frequently receives feedback from readers. Zain Abbas, an expatriate residing in Kuala Lumpur wrote in after he read the "Find the 'Dinesh' of Your Life" story by Jonathan Allen Yabut featured in our pullout of Sept 27, 2014.

“Remarkable comeback story! If anyone wants to see how ‘never give up’ works, just look at Dinesh’s landing. I was fortunate to have found out at the right time about his success story when I was embarking on my entrepreneurial journey which has its ups and downs.

“In a way, he taught me to be firm, determined, believe in myself and move ahead. His perseverance teaches all of us to live life to the fullest and ‘never give up’. Best of luck Dinesh for the future.”

In our Merdeka issue of Aug 30, 2014 we ran a story about The day they shouted Merdeka! featuring several people who were actually in the stadium that historic day.

One story pictured Khoo Lan Phek as she was then, aged 17. Almost immediately, we received an email from the daughter of Datin Kalsom Abid who had been seeking her high school friend for decades. So the two friends reunited almost 60 years after parting ways, and shared this photo with us.

Long lost friends: Kalsom and her daughter Joy Wan Ismail (left) posing with Khoo (right).

**EDITOR’S NOTE**

Because of an editing error in our pullout of Dec 20, 2014 on page 8, the designation for Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood and the following sentence were misstated as:

‘Now back to head the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to prepare for the first ever WHS 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey, she endeavours to spend two to three years laying down procedures, influencing policies and turning them into action before leaving’ and should read:

‘Now heading the World Humanitarian Summit secretariat at the UN office for coordination of humanitarian affairs to prepare for the first ever WHS 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey, she endeavours to spend the two years engaging all stakeholders especially affected people, local and national NGOs, private sector, diaspora and youth. Presenting bold ideas and recommendations to reshape aid for the next century and influencing policies and turning them into action before leaving is her goal.’

**Also next week**

- **Going to work like every day is your first day**
- **Getting the best from the worst**
- **Meet the youth of SPARK Inspire and be inspired**
- **Millennials onwards upwards!**