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TUNE IN

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01

“Our environment, the world in which we live and work, is a mirror of our attitudes and expectations.”

– Earl Nightingale

02

“You can’t make positive choices for the rest of your life without an environment that makes those choices easy, natural, and enjoyable.”

– Deepak Chopra

03

“Organising is what you do before you do something, so that when you do it, it is not all mixed up.”

– A.A. Milne

04

“For every minute spent organising, an hour is earned.”

– Anonymous

MAKING THE BEST OF YOUR OFFICE SPACE

By TARA THIAGARAJAN
tara.thiagarajan@leaderonomics.com

AVERAGE working adults spend a great deal of their daily lives at work, where they are exposed to the same environment day in day out.

When we are exposed to the same thing every day, boredom is inevitable, especially if we are working in a stale, stuffy office. This can subsequently demotivate us from doing our best, or even from showing up for work.

If that is the case, we need to take steps to ensure that the physical environment in which we work is not only conducive for productivity, but also feels as comfortable as home.

LE T H E R E B E L I G H T !

The lighting in your office space influences the overall feel of your working environment, as well as your alertness in the workplace.

Research has shown that people who constantly work under artificial lighting are more exhausted at the end of the day compared to those who work under natural light.

Obviously, it is impossible to move your workplace outdoors or avoid artificial lighting completely. But by drawing back the blinds every once in a while, letting sunlight in may help you be more alert and focused.

SHUFFLE THINGS AROUND

Furniture in the office space should be organised in such a way that makes everything easy to find or navigate through.

If you aren’t allowed to re-position your desk or seating in any way, you could instead organise items on your desk to avoid clutter.

Everything should have its own place to return to after use. A tidy desk can make a significant difference in the way you work. As they say, “tidy desk, tidy mind”.

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Good ventilation is vital in an office environment.

Although its effects may not be immediate, poor ventilation can and will affect us over time.

In a poorly ventilated space, employees may begin to feel symptoms like nausea, headaches and dizziness, and fatigue just to name a few. This is known as sick building syndrome, or SBS.

Although SBS does not cause any serious harm, its effects can be debilitating and even depressing for employees.

To ensure that your office space is properly ventilated, you can open the windows to air out the office every morning. This gives everyone a chance to get a breath of fresh air instead of stale, poorly circulated air.

CONCLUSION

Even though the environment in which we work can influence us, we should also know how to adapt to different surroundings.

At the end of the day, we should be able to consistently produce quality work while taking steps to improve our working space.

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THE JOY OF HECKLING
GIVING OTHERS THE ROOM TO BACK OFF

By MITCH DITKOFF
editor@leaderonomics.com

E VERY person who has ever had a job has experienced at least one “moment of truth” in their work life—a time when all the chips were on the table and the decision of whether to go “all in” or not had to be made.

One such moment happened to me some years ago when I was facilitating an innovation workshop for 150 of Lucent Technology’s “best and brightest”—a room full of brilliant computer scientists and engineers with more PhDs than most politicians have excuses.

There I was, on stage, introducing my session with a slide show of quotes from legendary innovators, when a man in the 10th row stood up and screamed, “You legendary innovators, when a man in the session with a slide show of quotes from engineers with more PhD’s than some years ago when I was facilitating an innovation workshop for 150 of Lucent Technology’s “best and brightest”—a room full of brilliant computer scientists and engineers with more PhDs than most politicians have excuses.

There I was, on stage, introducing my session with a slide show of quotes from legendary innovators, when a man in the 10th row stood up and screamed, “You legendary innovators, when a man in the session with a slide show of quotes from engineers with more PhD’s than

Einstein and Garry Kasparov (a former Soviet Union Grand Chess Master).

My moment of confrontation, at Lucent, did not allow me the luxury of deep deliberation, planning, or calling my business partners for advice. I had to trust myself, be in the moment, and go with the flow. But even more than that, I had to be willing to reframe what seemed to be a problem into an opportunity. I had to make lemonade out of lemons, on the spot, and not squirt any in the eyes of the people I was there to serve. The man was on a roll. I couldn’t have asked for a better spokesperson to convey the message I was trying to get across that day—a message about the innate ability all human beings have to go beyond their limiting assumptions and tap into the realm where breakthrough insights abide.

The more we are already “all in”, the easier it will be for us to respond with whatever comes our way. The faster he walked, the quieter the room got as I took my stance and readied myself for whatever was going to happen next.

Two feet from me, my inquisitor stopped, looked at me, eyes on fire, and began blurring. “This is amazing!” he said. “Amazing,” I replied. “What is amazing?” I asked. “The technique you taught,” he explained. “I just had an incredible breakthrough about something I’ve been struggling with for the past three years. Problem solved!”

UNEXPECTED ENDING

Happy for him and greatly relieved, I asked if he’d like to share it with the group—a task that would require the two of us to change roles for a few minutes, him taking centre stage as teacher and me taking his seat, in the 10th row, as student.

Which is exactly what we did.

The man was on a roll. I couldn’t have asked for a better spokesperson to convey the message I was trying to get across that day—a message about the innate ability all human beings have to go beyond their limiting assumptions and tap into the realm where breakthrough insights abide.

The dramatic and very visible shift my “heckler” had made from left-brained taxpayer to right-brained savant was the embodiment of a teaching I couldn’t have scripted in a hundred years.

No ex-... well... major heckling.

Throw in the X factor of stress, heavy workloads, constantly changing priorities, and a crumbling economy and you have a formula for... well... major heckling.

The man was on a roll. I couldn’t have asked for a better spokesperson to convey the message I was trying to get across that day—a message about the innate ability all human beings have to go beyond their limiting assumptions and tap into the realm where breakthrough insights abide.

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Food For thought

We never know when the moment of truth will come. We never know what it will look like and how we will respond. But we do know this: if we are awake and deeply engaged in our work, it will come. There is no escape.

The more we are already “all in”, the easier it will be for us to respond with whatever comes our way.

But even more than that, I had to be willing to reframe what seemed to be a problem into an opportunity. I had to make lemonade out of lemons, on the spot, and not squirt any in the eyes of the people I was there to serve.

MOMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

My task was not to find fault with the man who had made this great effort to be made.

One such moment happened to me some years ago when I was facilitating an innovation workshop for 150 of Lucent Technology’s “best and brightest”—a room full of brilliant computer scientists and engineers with more PhDs than...
HOME SWEET OFFICE
8 TIPS FOR AN ORGANISED AND PRODUCTIVE HOME OFFICE

By MICHAEL POH
editor@leaderonomics.com

ONE of the greatest benefits of a home office is the freedom to decorate and design it as you wish, but without letting either space lose their distinct identity. In other words, we shouldn’t blend the workplace with the rest of our personal space, i.e. home. Whether you call your ‘home office’ a blessing or a curse, one thing’s for sure: your mood and your productivity will be affected by how it is set up.

Just as a cluttered desk is a cluttered mind, a disorganised home office may be the source of unnecessary mind-blocks to new ideas and solutions. Think your home office is a mess and is ruining your productivity? Not to worry, because here are eight great tips to improve the organisation of your home office to make you more productive, keep the working mood positive and get back the focus you need to produce top quality work.

1. DON’T MIX WORK WITH PERSONAL LIFE
We’ll start with the most evident tip, blending work and pleasure as one. Even with the firmest intention to separate them in your home office at the initial stage, the two are bound to mix since your office is in your home.

What to do: Examine your home office from time to time to see how much of your workspace has been infested with distractions. Resolve to clear away your television, game consoles, and other forms of distractions to keep them out of sight. Maintain that boundary within your home where work begins and ends. Keep this workspace as distinct from your other rooms as possible because such differentiation can have a psychological effect on how you divide work and play.

2. GET GOOD SEATING SUPPORT
Are you getting the seat support you need? You may not think comfort and support matter to your productivity, because who has the time to enjoy a real good chair when engrossed with tons of work? As it turns out, that is precisely the reason why you should take note of your seating support if you are spending most of your time sitting while working.

According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, about 90% of adults experience back pain at some point in their life, and 50% of the working population have back pain every year in the United States. When you don’t pay attention to your back, the desk chair can take a toll on your health, mood and subsequently, your work productivity.

What to do: Check out www.ontimesupplies.com/community/kb/furniture-guides/ergonomic-desk-chair-guide.html if you’re keen on getting an ergonomically designed desk chair. If you are a little tight on budget, consider purchasing a seat support for your desk chair.

3. INVEST IN BETTER LIGHTING
We often neglect lighting. Is your desk lamp too bright or too dim for work? Are you getting sufficient natural light, the best kind, from the sun?

To have that, make sure your designated workspace has enough windows or openings to let the sunlight in. The exposure can boost your mood and improve your sleep patterns. In times of unfavourable weather or long working nights, it is essential to get some artificial lighting in your workspace.

What to do: Experiment with different intensities or light tones to find out which one works best for you. Depending on how spacious your workspace is, you might also consider having multiple, different light fixtures to set a comfortable mood for work. Try to get multiple light fixtures, and at least a desk lamp with direct exposure over your desk, which will facilitate the reading, writing or sketching of documents.

4. KEEP YOUR TECH UPDATED AND RELIABLE
If you’re going to be working at home most of the time, you’ve got to make sure that technology is your best accomplice. Do you get frequent technical faults with your existing devices such as your computer, printer or connections? If you do, I’m sure it is a major source of frustration at work.

> TURN TO PAGE 5
Changes are that you are holding on to your old devices and gadgets because they still work and you don’t find it economical to pay for an upgrade.

Well, think about how much time you’ve wasted instead, trying to troubleshoot and fix them, the ‘opportunity cost’. And don’t forget the negative effect it has on your mind!

System crashes and data losses close to an important deadline can cause more damage than it is worth.

What to do: Update your computer antivirus software and OS (operating system) and conduct regular maintenance checks on your devices. Keep important information backed up at intervals.

The other thing to consider about your home office technology is the additional features that some of your gadgets, devices and software have on offer.

What to do: Stop procrastinating and begin by listing down those features that will allow you to get things done more efficiently. For instance, if you’re a graphic designer, perhaps a second monitor will help speed things up.

After working for a while, you should have an idea of what might be missing in your home office that would significantly facilitate your work.

What to do: Start by drawing a map of your office. Once you have a rough plan of where each piece of furniture is to go, you can see how much space you have left for a workspace.

Remember that the key to an organised office is efficiency, and the more things you have around, the harder it is to keep everything in order. A typical disorganised office is when you have difficulties finding where you keep your documents. A workspace organised in too complex a manner may seem neat on the surface but will cause a lot of problems for sorting or filing as there are too many categories.

What to do: Keep things clean and minimal. When you are overly organised, you will tend to procrastinate keeping your workspace neat because it’s too time-consuming and tedious.

Eventually, you get clutter. This not only applies to the physical layout of your work area; it is the same in your computer.

Sort for easy access. The general rule is to keep the desktop as clear as possible with only a few files or apps that you’re working on.

Maintain a minimalist organisation and a clean desk (keep ugly wires out of sight with these gadgets) so your mind won’t wander from one thing to another.

You’ll feel less stressed and less distracted from your task.

What to do: What if you have no room for expansion? You should consider investing in some fine storage solutions such as a filing cabinet, shelves, files and folders.

Sure, the room may still look cramped with cabinets and shelves, but not seeing piles of documents when you’re working may just be good enough to calm your nerves for the rest of the day.

Of course, if you don’t want a hard time finding these documents when you need them, you must label them accordingly and have periodic filing sessions to manage your paperwork.

Remember that the purpose of these items or design is to help you sustain that positive mood and energy to work.

They can include anything: decor, plants, pets, photographs or posters. If you’re feeling a sense of dread working in your home office, ask yourself what would inspire you to keep you going? It could be your family, your kids, your goals, your favourite art pieces, the scenery outside your window, or even the mere sight of your favourite colour.

What to do: If you require a lot of creative thinking for your work, then be sure to put in place things that can help you spawn ideas, such as a sketchpad to doodle on or catch ideas that suddenly pop up.

The decor itself can have a huge impact on your mood, as does the furniture, so put some thought into them as well.

Incorporate a certain style or theme for your home office that you can identify with. If you’re going to spend some time in your home office, you’ll want to make sure you have pleasant surroundings to work in.

In some ways, an organised and productive home office takes a lot of experimentation and a bit of luck before you can get it just right. You will find yourself experimenting with new technology, organisation, processes and designs, and balancing it with your budget for the perfect home office.

Though it may be time consuming, it is an enjoyable process to observe how your home office evolves. Have fun!

Michael Poh is a freelance blogger and regular contributor for Hongkiat.com. He believes in the power of the written word to influence and inspire. An enthusiastic video gamer, Michael is also an engaged in various physical activities in his spare time. To connect with Michael, email us at editor@leadeconomics.com. For more leadership content, visit www.leadeconomics.com.
THE ECONOMICS OF ERGONOMICS

BY KAREN KEONG

INVESTMENT in the health, safety and wellbeing of employees has increasingly been acknowledged as a core part of business in recent years. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Ergonomics Association (IEA), ergonomic methods and approaches can help organizations achieve better performance, lower medical claims costs, and increased productivity.

PRODUCITIVITY AND EFFICIENCY

To improve productivity and competitiveness, organizations should work towards creating an open office environment that values human rights and climate that nurtures employee engagement.

In addition to delivering on its employee value proposition, if an organization wants to ensure ongoing engagement of its employees and encourage them to work harder and change their roles, it must improve efficiency. Thus, it can increase safety and productivity, and ultimately business performance.

IN CONCLUSION

As with any personal health, we have an obligation to ourselves and our coworkers to take care of our collective health and wellness. Leading in the right manner can result in positive financial returns for the organization.

Let us first consider how ergonomics programmes in which companies can find savings in the long term.

In a review of recent studies, the Institute of Work and Health at the University of British Columbia found that participatory ergonomics programmes in which workers, supervisors and other workplace parties jointly identify and address work-related risk factors can be beneficial to the health and safety of the entire organization.

By TARA THIAGARajan

WHAT ON EARTH IS ERGONOMICS?

In the context of our workplace, we would like to define ergonomics as the study of human factors in the workplace, but two of them will be the main source of information.

One aspect of ergonomics, perhaps the most important, is the use of employment. This is where psychology, the study of human factors, begins to make a world of difference to how we feel, what we do and how we spend our time.

Expert ergonomists do much of their time analyzing and understanding employees’ behavior in the workplace. That is where psychology, the study of human factors, begins to make a world of difference to how we feel, what we do and how we spend our time.

Reduced medical claims cost

In addition, one must consider the indirect costs of such incidents, impact on family and consequent societal costs.

WHAT TO DO?

To avoid overspending and unforeseeable costs, the organization must consider the position and parameters of the air-conditioning system and the direction of air flow by interacting with the employee.

Check knee and leg clearance of on each, do go to the ILO website.

Checklists of ergonomic checkpoints. As there are 132 checkpoints, I have included 26 ergonomic checkpoints, some of which are not mandatory.

For standing workers, provide chairs or stools for occasional sitting, where people can sit with feet placed flat on the floor, and backrests or chairs support the lumbar area.
LEADERS IN TROUBLED TIMES

By THOMAS CHAN
thomas.chan@leaderonomics.com

SINCE Sinek, a renowned author on leadership methods and qualities, constantly accentuates the types of inspiration one can impart when in a position of leadership. During his TEDTalk presentation entitled “Why good leaders make you feel safe”, he passionately expressed his views on what leadership is, and what it means to those who hold such positions.

Sinek explained that, in order to survive from the dangers of the world, evolution has turned us into social beings, making us live and work together inside a circle of safety.

Trust and cooperation does not surface unless we feel safe, and can coexist in a good system of survival. So how do we come to that deep sense of trust and cooperation?

Personally, I believe we should start with the question: how do we trust someone, or something? Even heroes in action movies “trust no one”.

But Sinek believes otherwise: it should be our initiative to trust others first and take the risk, because it lets them know that we have confidence in them.

LEADERS IN TROUBLED TIMES

Trust is complex, and can be earned or lost for many reasons, thus becoming more critical during periods of uncertainty such as in the case of an organisational crisis.

Great leaders are known to sacrifice the numbers to save their people in a tough economic climate. Would we trust such leaders if we have been assured of our positions during a crisis?

According to researcher Dr. Aneil K. Mishra, with regards to human trustworthiness, studies have shown that trust is based on emotional belief that the other party is competent, open, and reliable. Of course, there are also multiple aspects to be taken into consideration. Leaders also have a heavy responsibility of leading the company away from impending losses.

Professional analysts advise that for interpersonal relationships, trust and cooperation can only materialise when employees feel that their environment and futures are safe.

Sinek offers more, adding that, “Trust and cooperation are very important; the problem with the concept of trust and cooperation is that they are feelings and not instructions”.

It is true that we cannot simply instruct a person to trust in us, nor to cooperate with us.

But, there is always someone who seems more appealing to the crowd than others, whose character seems to gain trust from others easily. How do we secure the trust of, and cooperation from others?

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Danger is a constant; it will never go away, either in our work or private life. Let’s just say, in the case of an economic crisis, it is not unusual to admit we fear for our jobs or positions.

The dangers of this situation are so complex that they affect a substantial part of one’s life, such as family financial commitments, investments, and also retirement plans.

Practically, in today’s Malaysian society, unemployment is unacceptable. There are both pros and cons to a dangerous situation. While we realise the responsibility of independence, we should also build on our clarity and creativity in finding ways to solve problems.

Good leaders realise that this can lead to an individualistic culture, where the strongest will survive, the rich become richer, and competition among employees to perform will be at an all-time high.

Yet, Sinek’s preposition is to start from the condition inside an organisation (the inner circle).

Similar to the concept of a functional family system, we trust in each other to provide for the family, and keep each other happy and safe.

RANK AND FILE

We should always bear in mind that leadership is a choice, not a rank. There are many people in the senior-most levels of organisations that we know of, but they may not strike us as true leaders.

Time and again, we notice or come in contact with people from very senior levels who seem to possess no leadership qualities.

They could be from senior management, and as employees, we do what they say because they have authority over us. But if we had the choice, we would not follow them.

On the other hand, there exists people at lower levels of the organisation who have no authority, and yet are absolute leaders with a loyal following. Why is that?

The answer is because these individuals have chosen to look after the people around them.

With such a strong emotional gesture, wouldn’t you feel appreciated and motivated to work harder for this sort of leader?

Sinek says, “We call them leaders because they are the ones who go first. We call them leaders because they take the risk first before anybody else does. We call them leaders because they will choose to sacrifice so that their people may be safe and protected, and so their people may gain.

“And when we do that, the natural response is that our people will sacrifice for us. They will see that their leader’s vision comes to life. Why? Because they know that we would have done the same for them.”

In some cases, people call this strategic influence, where one nurtures key relationships to the point where people’s actions and values are shaped through his/her ability to maintain everyone’s satisfaction levels.

The people we are referring to can be both clients and employees. In many spheres, influence usually indicates power.

It is considered a critical skill to be able to influence others to work for you, unless you still think you can get things done alone, without outside help.

This skill should not be limited to just the people from the middle or upper levels of management.

In Sinek’s presentation, he notes that in order for employees to feel secure and work with unwavering trust, companies need to consistently develop and maintain a conducive workplace environment for people to carry out their responsibilities.

This environment is not just physical, but is shaped and coloured by the behaviour of leaders.
THE IMPLICATIONS FOR HR

From a HR perspective, “big data” is a dynamic gold mine for the prospective employer, which can cover all areas of HR management including the full lifecycle of HR functionality across different categories, disciplines and borders.

More importantly, “big data” will deliver tangible results after processing an inordinately huge amount of data collected from various sources, both internal and as external.

Imagine the leverage that you would have if you were able to do any of the following:
- Know where to place your online recruitment advertisement for best results at optimal cost.
- Understand the effectiveness of job vacancy advertising through various media and pinpoint which media brings about the best returns.
- Have a clear picture of the demographic profile of your potential workforce and their media preference when searching for jobs.
- Create more effective recruitment and advertising strategies and also identify the target candidates quickly and more effectively.
- Know the effectiveness of your entire talent management including what attracts potential employees.

A technology-enabled solution that meets even half of the above requirements would give you a distinct competitive advantage. This is what modern businesses yearn for.

However, the trick is to put this massive amount of information to work for you, not only for HR, but for the entire organisation.

Doing so gives greater visibility and demonstrates innovation and leadership for the HR team.

To effectively leverage on this intricate and voluminous set of data, you may want to engage the services of “data scientists”, a new profession that marries the science of information management with the demands of the latest technological innovations.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

In an increasingly competitive and challenging business environment, organisations around the globe are looking to make a difference in the way they project and brand themselves.

As analytics become a trending innovation in the technology space, it is more so for HR analytics.

For organisations that have yet to use information systems such as SAP, PeopleSoft or SAAS, this might be your stepping stone.

Investing in a custom built solution tailored to meet the needs of the business would definitely give high visibility to your organisation.

This is crucial as HR would then be seen as a strategic business driver in the organisation, rather than just an operational and administrative unit.

“The ability to handle extremely large data volumes,” predicts Yvonne Genovese, vice president and analyst at Gartner, “will become a core skill in businesses and organisations.”

“Increasingly, they will be looking to use new forms of information – such as text, context, and social media – to identify decision-supporting patterns. This is what Gartner calls a pattern-based strategy.”

PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS

Technology companies are pushing the barriers of innovation when it comes to HR analytics.

Predictive analytics (see Figure 1) is the latest buzzword in the management pages of technology journals globally.

What this means is that such technology has created an unseen sophistication and intelligence that is able to predict the future based on past trends, and analyse the future outcomes of business decisions based on the data currently available.

On top of the smart HR dashboard, more organisations are turning to predictive HR analytics to give them an in-depth overview of their workforce and to make predictions on the future behaviour of their employees.

This is a most welcome addition when it comes to hiring, training, developing and managing employees, especially where it involves diversity in culture or other factors.

Case study: Impact of predictive analytics

Xerox reduced call centre turnover by gathering and studying data on the characteristics and job performance of frontline employees, then applying what it learned to the hiring process.

Evolv, an analytics firm found that employees without call centre experience were just as successful as those who had it, allowing Xerox to broaden its candidate pool.

Armed with such detailed information on what made a successful hire, Xerox was able to reduce attrition by 20%.

Given that it costs Xerox US$5,000 to train a call centre employee, that reduction had a real financial impact.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Predictive analytics solutions certainly look like the future of technology. Moving forward, it is high time for HR practitioners in Malaysia to look into big data and HR analytics.
THE SKY’S THE LIMIT
CHARMING CAPTAIN OVERCOMES DYSLEXIA TO BECOME GUINNESS WORLD RECORD HOLDER

By CINDY YAP
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CAPTAIN James Anthony Tan, born with dyslexia, did not allow his condition to hold him back. Against all odds, he set a new world record in 2013 as the youngest pilot (at age 21) to fly solo around the world by the Guinness Book of World Records.

Now 23, Tan, who hails from Sungai Long, Kajang was also awarded “2013 Man of the Year” by the World Record Academy.

Flying a 30-year-old, single-engine Cessna 210 Eagle aircraft through 21 countries and completing 22,000 miles in 50 days, Tan, who often professes his love for Malaysia, admits being emotional before touching down at Subang Skypark.

He says: “Throughout the entire project, which took one year and four months of my life in total, the only time I felt emotional was while crossing the border of Thailand into Malaysia. I was crying my eyes out. I couldn’t speak.”

Tan shares with The Leaderonomics Show how he first saw a Boeing 747 during a family trip to the United Kingdom, which triggered his passion in aviation.

“My first thought was how pretty she looked!” he beams. He was also impressed at how cool the captain looked.

After seeing a jet fighter fly 90 degrees straight up in the air, his initial excitement turned into passion and he has not looked back since. He started flying at 18, became a fully qualified pilot at 20 and set the world record at 21.

Tan used to be a full-time private jet pilot, flying VIPs around Europe, America, parts of Asia and the Middle East.

He explains: “There are different types of pilots. Most people think of pilots with big planes and air hostesses. I was mostly ferry flying, which involved delivering a new, bare condition aircraft across oceans and continents, and leaving it with its new owner.”

His first job involved flying an SR22, a four-seater aircraft from Oxford to Bangkok and back.

After receiving the job offer through a call he received while watching a movie in his sister’s house, he went for training the next day and took off four days after that.

“Prior to that, I had never done a cross continental flight in a personal aircraft. No training, no experience,” he raves.

TRULY, CHARMLINGLY BLESSED
Feeling very thankful for the opportunities presented to him by people he had never met or flown with, Tan professes to be hardworking and one who would go the extra mile to pursue his passion.

“I’m also very charming!” he gushes. Exhibiting strong people skills throughout his interview, the confident and media-savvy lad reveals how he grew up as an anti-social person, lacking confidence until the age of 16.

“I hated wearing fine clothes; never did my hair and personal grooming was never in the equation. Something just snapped and caused the change.”

His smooth sailing journey in life started out with challenges when diagnosed with dyslexia, a learning disability, at age 8.

Tan admits being ashamed of his condition as a kid, especially with the prejudicial mindset towards special kids in the 1990s.

He recalls with sadness how he and his mother had planned for a school dedicated to special education, which didn’t take off due to the hurtful comments and objections by the neighbourhood, adding that this perception has changed dramatically in recent years.

MEMORABLE MOMENTS
Tan has had many anxious encounters throughout his aviation career, but the most memorable was when radio contact was lost for 2.5 hours while flying from Japan to Siberia over the frozen sea.

“After losing my No. 1 radio and GPS, I flew across the North Pacific alone without being able to communicate with Russia.”

“Finally, I heard someone talking and quickly asked for assistance to inform Russia I was coming in, so please do not shoot me down!” he enthuses.

Tan shares two exciting episodes which he holds dear to his heart.

In one incident, he was informed of a typhoon before taking off from Taiwan to Fukuoka, but decided to go ahead.

“Once I got onto the runway, I encountered a storm I have never even seen in my entire career. It was all red, with lightning and thunder everywhere!”

Calling it “youthful ignorance”, he claims that it was the worst flight of his life, being thrown around and flying with the aircraft wings being flipped from side to side.

“I was scared and couldn’t believe how stupid I was,” he adds.

Another incident was when he witnessed a volcanic eruption as he was flying across Sibera approaching the lower side of the North Pole. He was afraid that the spewing volcanic ash would cause the aircraft engine to stall.

Luckily, Tan managed to climb to 23,000 ft before being greeted by the beautiful sight of the blue sky, a layer of ash right underneath the sky and gorgeous white ice below.

To be a Good Pilot
1. CONFIDENCE and HUMILITY
   - Do not be overly confident. Be humble.
   - Listen to your elders. Although they may be annoying, they have lived longer than you have. Some things can only be learnt by experience.

2. DECISIVENESS
   - A moment of hesitation in making a quick, accurate decision in a dire situation can cause absolute failure.

3. LUCK
   - Luck is ‘Labour Under Correct Knowledge’. Be in the know on what’s going on around you. Science can give you a rough estimation, but trust your gut and follow your heart.

Q: How would the world be if everyone could sense or read other people’s thoughts?
A: If we could ‘sense’ and ‘hear’ what’s going on in each other’s mind, it is a pointless gift in terms of changing the world if we’re unable to feel the pain, joy, frustration or enjoyment. So, it is more important to experience the feelings and emotions they’re going through.

Q: If my motives are wrong, should I stop giving?
A: Yes. The reason why I do charity work (he feeds the homeless and provides English lessons to the underprivileged) is because I feel happy and good about it. I might sound selfish here, but if you’re giving because it’s part of the social protocol, everyone else is doing it or you have to, don’t waste your time.

The most important thing is to have fun; and do it with a sincere and glad heart.
A FORMER LAB GENETICIST EXPLAINS WHY ADAPTING TO CHANGES IS PART OF OUR DNA

By NADIA RADHUAN
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For thousands of years, different species have survived due to evolution. For example, Darwin’s finches have survived in the Galapagos Islands by changing their beaks to adapt to a specific niche in feeding. Through this adaptation, the species thrived with sufficient food for the entire colony. Even in our bodies, cells change their behaviour constantly depending on our daily intake of nutrients. Hence, if change takes place in our lives on a daily basis, why do we resist it so much? The threat of adapting to changes can be real and scary. When our minds dread change, we resist it as something foreign.

HOW DO I MANAGE CHANGE?

During the end of my last two semesters in university majoring in genetics, it dawned on me that this was not the path I wanted to follow for the rest of my life. After spending one semester fully committed to my final year project on Gene Identification and another semester working in a banana plant culture lab, I suddenly realised that life in the research lab was not for me. Instead, I wanted a change, and after making this decision, my adventure in discovering new careers began.

SPURRED INTO ACTION

John Kotter wrote a very interesting book entitled Our Iceberg is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions which outlined several processes on change, which I found relatable. According to Kotter, the first step is in setting up the stage. We must first understand why change is necessary by facing and identifying problems that will in turn create a sense of urgency. When I worked at the research lab, I had a culture plant on the petri dish from 8am to 5pm. Due to strict guidelines on preventing contamination, researchers like me were not allowed to speak. This enforced daily silence for a long period of time truly demotivated me. That was when I realised, I really needed a breath of fresh air in my career. This realisation spurred me into action immediately.

In his book, Kotter explains that the next step for effective change is to look for the right people. While not everyone was happy about the idea of me changing my career (especially my professors and parents), I sought out and met a few experienced people from the genetics field who gave me sound advice. Input from the right kind of people will help you see things from a different perspective. There may be options you have not explored which can in turn help you through the process of changing. Once the problem has been rationalised, it’s time to decide what to do next, by developing a change strategy and adapting a vision.

WHY DO WE RESIST CHANGE?

According to Rosabeth Kanter, professor of business at Harvard Business School, “Leadership is about change, but what is a leader to do when faced with ubiquitous resistance? Resistance to change manifests itself in many ways, from foot-dragging and inertia to petty sabotage to outright rebellions.” The best tool for leaders of change is to understand the predictable, universal sources of resistance in each situation and then strategise around them.”

As Kanter mentions in her article, “Ten Reasons People Resist Change, many sources of resistance in each situation and then strategise around them.”

DESTROY YOUR FEARS BY SHARING THEM

As mentioned, one of the barriers to embracing change is the fear of the unknown. By clarifying how the future will be different from the past, we can imagine the coming reality, which will help us ease into making new changes. However, one of the many mistakes that we make is to think that we are doing this alone and that the change is just for us.

As mentioned, one of the barriers to embracing change is the fear of the unknown. By clarifying how the future will be different from the past, we can imagine the coming reality, which will help us ease into making new changes. However, one of the many mistakes that we make is to think that we are doing this alone and that the change is just for us.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Today I am happy working at a company that produces leadership content and training for the corporate sector. My job lets me do things I really love, which is inspiring and developing people on a daily basis. I have had a steep learning curve and, on many occasions, stepped outside my comfort zone.

There are opportunities for change everywhere. Now, reflect back and take a long look at the past three years. Are YOU still in the same spot?
Do you find strong women attractive? Strength, self-sufficiency, and leadership are positive qualities. International Women's Day (IWD) this year will be celebrated on March 8, 2015. All around the world, thousands of events will be held to recognize women's contributions and achievements.

Encourage:

- Greater awareness of women's equality.
- More women in senior leadership roles.
- Equal recognition of women in the arts.
- Growth of women-owned businesses.
- Increased financial independence of women.
- More women in science, engineering and technology.
- Fairer recognition of women in sport.
- Awareness of women's contributions and achievements.

In modern times, we can acknowledge women's visibility as impressive role models in every aspect of life. We love strong, independent women who move with courage, make unconventional choices, and forge their own paths through life.

So mark this day on your calendar as an occasion to support and say thanks!

INTERNS HAVE IT BEST

For most graduates, the big question is where do you go from here?

1 Job Opportunity

For new graduates, an internship is an opportunity provided by the employer for potential employees. But it is more than just a soft landing into the workforce for you. It is a way of holding the door open for future career opportunities. You get to know industry leaders and their businesses and they get to learn about you and your potential.

2 Employability

Internships are a large part of establishing a firm footing in the industry. It brands you as employable, and in many streams today such as IT (information technology) and finance, internships are almost a necessity. It isn’t very hard to see how easily you can jump off a page with a big company name on your resume.

3 Hands-on Experience

Don’t wait for an actual job to happen. Before embarking on your career, as an intern you may enjoy the wonderful opportunity of familiarising yourself with the working culture of a variety of employers.

You will learn the ropes as an intern, but with less pressure and expectations. In fact, this is the best place to practise falling down and getting up, without being seriously hurt.

4 Your Value Increases

Internships are about learning, first and foremost. You want to be in a position where you’re constantly sponging more knowledge and gaining more experience about the people, the projects, and the overall landscape of the industry.

Good internships set you up for greater success once you go full-time.

How do I become an intern?

The MY ASEAN Internship programme is inviting applicants for a 10-week internship programme with selected, top-notch organisations at various ASEAN locations.

As a collaboration between the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MITI) and Talent Corporation Malaysia (TalentCorp), this internship programme is available to those currently studying or have completed their studies in any university based in Malaysia.

MY ASEAN Internship is supported by 12 leading organisations with business operations in one or more ASEAN countries.

To learn more and to apply, visit ready4work.my.