LEGACY & SUCCESSION

ASIAN FAMILY BUSINESS - STEWARDS OR INHERITORS?

PAGES 6–7

Making an impact
How will people remember you?
Pg 03

JUST GOOGLE IT!
Is tech a tool or is it becoming/destroying our memory?
Pg 05

YOUR RINGGIT SAFE?
Leaving your mark by leading others to the path of healthy finance
Pg 08

PLAN FOR SUCCESS
Effective succession planning for organisational survival
Pg 10
SUCCESS FOR SUCCESS

IN my team, I see leaders who, interestingly, have been described through articles in this week's issue. Someone who appears to be passive, but who steps up and has bursts of self-confidence when she knows it is needed. Someone who is an excellent people developer — taking the time and having the patience to build others around her. Someone who has strengths, but who doesn't always apply them.

Across the board, they don't always see what they have in themselves — and so I have made it my quest to hone in on their strengths, help them acknowledge and build on their potential — and then become the bosses!

Be it in the organisations we work for, or in other informal settings, we may have observed the tussle for a leadership position when vacated by the previous leader. Without a solid and well thought out succession plan, many people internal and external to the organisation can be affected.

Christian Stewart specialises in governance and succession issues at the point where organisations and families intersect. He sheds some light on family run businesses and the sensitivities of succession planning that may differ from other organisations, as well as how we might navigate it effectively.

In our Top 10, Prema Jayabalan shares some best practices for choosing successors, while we also look at 12 steps to better organisational survival through effective succession planning.

On leaving a legacy, Eric Lau gently chides us to lead our lives in a way that will leave a positive impact (and memories) with everyone we touch.

While we are on the topic of impact and memories — the creators of Google certainly are the focus of our Brain Bulletin by Adeline Bosley this week. We delve into research and studies on the effect of technological tools on how we remember things, and indeed our ability to do so.

For our column A Day in the Life, Lim Lay Hassan had the opportunity to chat with a financial advisor — helping us to understand the role, and to perhaps choose a career that can impact individuals and their families on a different level.

In her debut article, Jean Selvam, who devotes much of her time to building young leaders, addresses a topic most of us have experienced at different points in our lives — how to have self-confidence.

Today we also celebrate Teachers’ Day! Jon Gordon talks about the power of a positive educator — the teachers and coaches in his life that have made a mark or spurred him on in times of uncertainty. He shares seven ways that we can all be positive educators.

Today we also celebrate Teachers’ Day! Jon Gordon talks about the power of a positive educator — the teachers and coaches in his life that have made a mark or spurred him on in times of uncertainty. He shares seven ways that we can all be positive educators.

IN light of Teacher’s Day, I wanted to highlight someone who had taught me numerous lessons throughout my schooling years.

Out of the many teachers I’ve had the pleasure of associating with during my school years, my secondary school class and mathematics teacher, Ms. Sugada, is someone I truly admire to this day.

Although I honed my math skills thanks to her guidance, I have also learned numerous things from her that she may not have intentionally taught me.

1. **PERSEVERE IN THE FACE OF FAILURE**

   When I was preparing for my PMR (a form three national paper) examinations, mathematics was one of my worst subjects in which I would always get Cs.

   However, she never lost her patience with me when I didn’t understand her explanations and would gladly repeat herself without a hint of annoyance in her voice.

   The way she never gave up on me made me realise that I did have the potential to not only pass, but also excel as long as I put extra time and effort into my work the way she did with her work.

   Her belief in me gave me the motivation I needed to study hard. Sure enough, my hard work resulted in straight As in the end.

2. **LEARNING IS CONTINUOUS**

   My teacher used to tell my classmates and I that we should always expand our horizons and that learning doesn’t stop once we step out of the school compound. Learning is something that will continuously happen to all of us until the day we die.

   She would always encourage us to read novels and biographies in our free time (after doing our homework, of course!) and that was something most teachers wouldn’t really think of telling their students.

3. **SHOW RESPECT TO BE RESPECTED**

   Although Ms. Sugada was my teacher and therefore, held a position of authority over my classmates and I, she treated us with kindness and respect.

   She never once talked down to my classmates and I like we were useless children. Instead, she treated us as individuals entering young adulthood. In return, we also showed our respect to her.

   The way she treated us showed me that we should always treat people with respect if we expect the same respect from others.

**FINAL WORDS**

Ms. Sugada’s words of advice continue to ring true to me today. It is important that we acknowledge the hard work our teachers do for us because they are the unsung heroes of our nation who help shape individuals into the mature adults they will be in the future.

So, take time out of your day to appreciate your teachers and show them that their hard work is not taken for granted. To all teachers, Happy Teachers’ Day!

**Ode to an Extraordinary Math Teacher**

**Try this!**

Do you have an opinion you’d like to share with us? Visit leaderonomics.com or write to us at editor@leaderonomics.com

Please provide your full name, occupation (designation and employer) and telephone number.

**Quotes**

01. “Carve your name on hearts, not tombstones. A legacy is etched into the minds of others and the stories they share about you.” — Shannon L. Alder

02. “The choices we make about the lives we live determine the kinds of legacies we leave.” — Tavis Smiley

03. “A true leader works themselves out of a job.” — Myles Munroe

04. “One of the things we often miss in succession planning is that it should be gradual and thoughtful, with lots of sharing of information and knowledge and perspective, so that it’s almost a non-event when it happens.” — Anne M. Mulcahy


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LEAVING A LEGACY, MAKING AN IMPACT

MAXIMISING YOUR POTENTIAL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By ERIC LAU

editor@leaderonomics.com

LEGACY is a big and power-packed word. Simply defined, legacy is the positive impact one leaves behind. Where will the world be if not for the wonderful legacies that many of the heroes of our society have left us?

Consider Mother Teresa: Literally thousands of the underprivileged were touched because one woman chose to love unconditionally.

Consider Nelson Mandela: An entire nation’s curse of discrimination was broken because one man courageously fought against injustice.

Consider Mark Zuckerberg: The entire landscape of social media was impacted drastically because one man relentlessly pursued a vision to connect people.

Thankfully, the list of world famous “legency leavers” is numerous. However, the ability to leave a legacy is not only confined to these giants of the world. Ordinary folk like you and I can leave meaningful legacies that are within our circle of influence.

Deep down, embedded into each individual’s heart is the desire to leave a legacy. We all want to make a difference, to be remembered and to feel that we have contributed something to the world.

For some people, this can be a driving force leading to great undertakings and extraordinary contributions to human-kind. But for most of us with more modest abilities, our impact to this world cannot be overlooked.

Here are four ways to leave a legacy:

1. CULTIVATE A SINCERE HEART TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We cannot achieve anything that is of significant value unless we first have a sincere desire to make an impact. Once true desire is ignited, its fire will consume a person’s energy and focus resulting in courageous action and perseverance.

When Blake Mycoskie, founder of Toms Shoes was doing some volunteer work in the outskirts of Buenos Aires in 2006, he noticed that many of the children were running through the streets barefoot.

His compassionate heart took over and he led them to start up Tom Shoes, an organisation with a unique business model.

For every pair of shoes sold, a new pair of shoes will be donated to an impoverished child in a third world nation. What we are excited and passionate about will drive our actions, leaving a positive impact.

2. BUILD AROUND YOUR TALENTS

The legacies that we can potentially leave behind will also very likely evolve around our talents. We usually do well in what we are naturally talented to do.

This spirit of excellence often reaps a harvest of positive impact.

Consider Susan Boyle, the singer who came into international spotlight when she appeared on the reality TV show, Britain’s Got Talent in 2009. Despite being a 47-year-old woman who did not seem to have the “physical package” of a typical young, beautiful and attractive star, she bravely went for it and sang her own version of “I Dreamed a Dream” from Les Misérables.

Although she did not win the competition, the world recognised her unique musical talent. To date, she has launched seven successful albums. Her rags-to-riches story is a powerful inspiration to the “underdogs” of the world.

When our talents are magnified, our legacies can be maximised.

3. WORK WITHIN YOUR CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

Many people do not fulfil their legacy potential because they think they do not have the right platform to make a difference.

Instead of waiting for the perfect opportunity or the "perfect break", just work with what you have within your circle of influence.

After the Beatles were rejected by numerous recording companies, they had no choice but to play in local clubs. They worked hard with whatever opportunity that came their way and performed about 270 nights in just over a year and a half. By the time they had their first burst of success in 1964, they had performed live an estimated 12,000 times.

Their hard work paid off. History records them as one of the most influential music bands of all time. Their legacy rings strong even to this day.

Think big, start small and build deep. You’ll be amazed what doors will open when we launch in faith, stay faithful and work hard.

4. DON’T DO IT FOR THE MONEY

Great legacies are often birthed from a motivation to achieve significance. People achieve great things because they want to make a difference.

When Muhammad Yunus founded Grameen Bank, the goal was not to make money. His motivation was noble.

He simply wanted to provide micro-financing to the poor so that they can run their own businesses and make a decent living and hence, break the cycle of poverty in society.

Those whose sole purpose is to make money seldom make an impact in the lives of others. Success may be attained but significance and legacy will be lacking.

When businesses have a compelling reason for their existence that goes beyond making profits, it operates in a totally different atmosphere.

Employees are more motivated in their work because they believe their organisation is making an impact in society.

In many situations, when they get their motives right, the money follows anyway. Leaving a legacy is about making an impact for the present and the future.

American entrepreneur, author and motivational speaker, Jim Rohn says that “all good men and women must take responsibility to create legacies that will take the next generation to a level we could only imagine.”

When we leave our legacies behind, we are merely sowing seeds of greatness for the next generation to reap through the inspiration we provide and through the doors that we open for them. What legacy would you leave behind?

**LEGACY LEAVES: THE BEATLES**

When we leave our legacies behind, we are merely sowing seeds of greatness for the next generation to reap through the inspiration we provide and through the doors that we open for them. What legacy would you leave behind?

The Beatles continue to make an impact. The evidence of that can be found in current musical artists as well as the number of books still written about the band.
BEST PRACTICES FOR CHOOSING A SUCCESSOR

By Prema Jayabalan
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R ESEARCH carried out by Heidrick & Struggles and Stanford University’s Rock Center for Corporate Governance states that more than half of the organisations today are unable to quickly appoint a successor, should the need to replace the current CEO arise. This indicates that proper succession planning has not been done beforehand. Planning is needed to manage unforeseen circumstances, such as a sudden demise or permanent disability of a CEO, or a sudden termination.

Succession planning involves the process of transferring the reins of the organisation, when a vacancy occurs in the key leadership role. However, that is not the only key factor in succession planning. Most of the time, a checklist of potential candidates who can take over a head's role is prepared. But what about the ways to handle succession planning? How do you go about appointing a successor? What are things you need to look into? Well, here are some practices that contribute to a positive outcome in succession planning:

1. PLAN AHEAD

Succession planning is part of human resources (HR) management and should not be conducted during a crisis. Hence, do not wait until a leader is planning to leave. Start planning now and be prepared to face any circumstances that may occur without warning. Being caught off guard to face any circumstances that may occur can put an organisation in much turmoil without a suitable candidate to take over, without warning. Being caught off guard to face any circumstances that may occur can put an organisation in much turmoil without a suitable candidate to take over, without warning.

2. CREDIBLE FORECAST ANALYSIS

Firstly, it’s imperative to have a solid understanding of what challenges the organisation is likely to face in the next five to 10 years, and what capabilities are needed of the CEO to ensure the organisation does not sink in this sea of hurdles. Directors should not assume that a younger version of the current CEO is the answer to that.

GE’s previous three CEOs (Reg Jones, Jack Welch and Jeff Immelt) had completely different personalities. According to Forbes, in leadership succession, GE has done a good job of looking “through the windshield” rather than “in the rear-view mirror” to understand the leadership skills required of the next CEO.

3. DEVELOPING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Development practices vary between internal and external candidates. Internally, the process of development embarks with identifying and grooming a small number of people who show potential of taking the lead. Investing about two to four years to develop an executive can be very beneficial to an organisation. This could involve rotating the individual in various functional areas, taking on international assignments or spearheading a division. External candidates, on the other hand, are identified through executive search firms. As potential CEO successors, they are first absorbed into other positions inside the organisation. The management then invests in strategic approaches for the candidates’ development and explores the candidates’ strengths. Both the former CEO of Starbucks, Jim Donald and the CEO of Cisco Systems, John Thomas Chambers landed their CEO positions in this manner.

4. CEO AND DIRECTORS SHOULD BE ON BOARD

The CEO and board of directors have to be fully involved and committed in this process. This is not an initiative of the HR department. There should be regular reviews between the CEO and the board with a healthy flow of feedback: working together to identify the criteria for the next successor and taking accountability for responsibilities.

5. USE BUSINESS STRATEGY AS A BENCHMARK

There should be a good reason for your succession planning and this can be accomplished by aligning the plan with your business strategy. By “connecting the dots”, an organisation can give coherent explanation that ties to the need for succession planning based on the business case of the organisation or the outcome of not doing it.

6. SIMPLE AND STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

Do not complicate things. Refrain from including excessive, difficult assessment ideas in the process for succession planning. You may think that this will add to quality. On the contrary, too many complexities can prove to be challenging for potential candidates. Remember that the planning process is a tool that emphasises on development, hence keep it simple.

7. FOCUS ON ALL LEVELS

Your approach to talent development should cross all levels of the organisation. It should not be confined to just certain positions or levels. You may never know where you will find the next CEO and sometimes, the results could be pleasantly surprising.

8. BE REALISTIC

Development plans and ideas are not promises but most of the time, they are communicated in such a way that frustrates potential candidates. So, don’t pull the legs of high performing leads with development plans that are unrealistic. Approach them only if there is a realistic chance of a succession taking place.

9. DIVERSIFY

If your organisation wants diversity in leadership, then succession planning should also look into promoting women employees and minorities. The next dynamic and extraordinary successor with the ability to bring the organisation to greater heights may be amongst these group of employees.

10. KEEP POLITICAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS AT BAY

The process of succession planning may invite many political, irrational and emotional outbursts from the succession planning team and those around them. It can sometimes come from the CEO who is having difficulty “letting go” or from team members who have their own personal agenda. It’s crucial for these elements to be managed tactfully without being influenced by emotional and political feelings. There is no book that specifically teaches you how to manage these emotions when working as a team. This learning comes gradually with experience and emotional intelligence.

Prema Jayabalan believes that succession planning is a crucial element that can make or break an organisation. Do share your thoughts with her by dropping her a note at editor@leaderonomics.com
By ADELINE TAY
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HERE was once a time where everyone would turn to each other for answers to both seemingly simple questions, e.g. “What colour is the dress?” and tough questions, e.g. “What should I eat today?” Thanks to technology and the arrival of search engines, we no longer need to consult our fellow human beings for such matters. Google is here to do the work for us.

Gone are the days where the first person we go to for answers is our mother and the first place we go to is the library.

Today, information is literally at our fingertips. It has become almost like an automatic response for people to whip out their smartphones and consult Google the instant they want to know something.

Just so you get a perspective on how prominent this behaviour is, check out Figure 1. Google, the most popular search engine today, reported an average of approximately 5.7 billion searches a day!

Compare that with the number of average searches made per day 15 years ago, and you can see for yourself that the numbers have increased drastically.

Seeing how Google has become such a big part of the modern lifestyle, the question we should ask ourselves (not Google) is whether this has made an impact on the way our brains process and handle information.

Perhaps, now that Google is acting as the ultimate information storage system, our brains are free to think about more important things...

But do we?

**TRANSCENDENT MEMORY**

During the days before the Internet came into existence, people had been using an external memory bank to keep track of information which they themselves could not remember. These “memory banks” were typically someone close to them, like a spouse: a husband relies on his wife to keep track of where things are placed in the house, while the wife relies on her spouse: a husband relies on his wife to keep track of information which they know they can access later on, such as those that are readily available using search engines. This tendency to forget information that is easily accessible is known as the Google Effect.

Here are some other interesting findings from her research:

- People are primed to look to the Internet first for knowledge.
- People don’t make the effort to remember since they can always look up this information later.
- People tend to recall the places where the information are kept/ found better than they can recall the information themselves.

In her research, Sparrow concluded that the Internet has indeed become our primary external storage system. This might not be the good news you think it is.

Apparently, our behaviour is shaping the way our brain works. A renowned author and writer, Nicholas Carr, is highly critical of the impact that the Internet has had on our cognitive functions and his main argument is that the Internet is literally changing the structure of our brains in a way that diminishes our capacity for concentration and contemplation.

For instance, neuroimaging studies have shown that our brains are learning to disregard information found online. This connection becomes stronger each time we experience it. This means that the more we use Google, the less likely we are to retain what we see.

Although Google seems to be the main topic here but let us not forget how we are increasingly relying more on other forms of technology to store information. Take a minute and check out the “Test and Challenge Yourself” below to see if you have fallen to the seduction of what technology can offer.

**THE GOOGLE EFFECT**

According to a study conducted by Betsy Sparrow, a psychologist at Columbia University, people are less likely to remember information which they know they can access later on, such as those that are readily available using search engines. This tendency to forget information that is easily accessible is known as the Google Effect.

Here are some other interesting findings from her research:

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- People don’t make the effort to remember since they can always look up this information later.
- People tend to recall the places where the information are kept/ found better than they can recall the information themselves.

**FINAL THOUGHTS: TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL**

Technology certainly has value in our lives. As such, we ought to appreciate the immense possibilities that it offers and utilise it to maximise productivity.

However, at the same time, I personally believe that we need to know when to switch it off so we can get in touch with people and life around us.

For a start, you can put your smartphones away at the dining table. Technological tools were first invented to make life easier for us, and sure enough they have.

However, the time has come for us to question ourselves whether we are indeed masters of these technologies, or have we become overly dependent on them to a point where “we can’t live without Wi-Fi”.

■ Adeline Tay, who completed her Masters in Education (Educational Psychology) at Sydney University, hopes this would be a topic of discussion in your next mamak visit. To engage with her, write to editor@leadonromics.com

**TEST AND CHALLENGE YOURSELF**

See if the following statements apply to you and ask yourself (and each other) if you are relying a bit too much on technology to serve as your memory bank.

- You no longer make the effort to remember phone numbers.
- You Google things which, you know, you probably know the answer to, but do it anyway so you can be sure.
- You Google things which you know, you probably know how to fix to your destination yourself.
- You keep track of your friends’ birthdays even when you probably know how to get to

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**#BirthdateChallenge**

Without checking your Facebook or calendar, record a short video of yourself recalling the birthdays [date and month] of five friends under 30 seconds. The five friends will then be automatically nominated to do the same task.

However, if you fail to do so, you’re required to write the words “#BirthdateChallenge” on your forehead and are only allowed to remove it after 24 hours.
Asian Family Business: Stewards or Inheritors?  

By Christian Stewart  
editor@leaderonomics.com

It is often said that the first generation creates the family firm, while the second generation is the one that carries on the family firm. In Asian family firms, the traditional approach is for the founder to appoint the second generation as their successors in the family business. Very often, this second generation would be equal shareholders among all of the legitimate heirs in the family. In the Asian context, the appropriate governance structure is to see all of the children of the founder become equal shareholders, with equal capital investments, paid before birth. In the context of today’s globalised economy where the second generation may no longer live on the same continent as the founder, the issue of governance and succession at the family firm needs to be addressed.

The new generation is faced with a challenge of whether or not to continue working in the same family business, issues which are not specific to the Asian context. The Asia-Pacific region is home to many large family businesses, and it is often said that the first generation created the family firm, while the second generation is the one that must carry on the family firm. The issue of governance and succession at the family firm is a significant challenge that needs to be addressed.

In an Asian family business, it is common practice to have a “Steward” and an “Inheritance” to ensure that the business continues under family ownership. This can be achieved through the development of a family constitution or a trust structure. The two roles are often combined, and the Steward is a member of the second generation, while the Inheritance is a member of the first generation. The Steward is responsible for running the business day-to-day, while the Inheritance is responsible for ensuring that the business continues under family ownership.

In any Asian family business, it is important to develop a healthy and positive culture, which is often seen as a key factor in the success of the business. This includes developing a strong family constitution or trust structure, as well as ensuring that there is a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each generation.

To ensure that an Asian family business continues under family ownership, it is essential to develop a strong family constitution, which should outline the roles and responsibilities of each generation, as well as the processes for governance and succession at the family firm. This can be achieved through the development of a trust structure or a family constitution, which should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

The role of the Steward is to run the business day-to-day, while the role of the Inheritance is to ensure that the business continues under family ownership. This requires a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each generation, as well as the processes for governance and succession at the family firm.

The Asian family business culture is often seen as a key factor in the success of the business, and it is important to develop a strong family constitution or trust structure to ensure that the business continues under family ownership. This includes developing a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each generation, as well as the processes for governance and succession at the family firm.
THE ROAD TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM

BY LIM LAY HSUAN
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WHEN it comes to personal finance and money matters, we can sometimes be clueless in what we want to achieve. Moreover, there are many financial products out there to overwhelm us with promises of return of investment, etc.

Even if we know what we want, how we work towards our financial goals may have been through our own research, trial and error, or through advice or recommendations from close friends and family members.

Have we ever considered engaging an expert in the field to help us utilise our money?

THE SPARK OF INTEREST

Coming from a humble family, Guna’s knack for numbers was identified early in his life. As a child, he used to help his father, who owned a newspaper vendor business, to sort out newspapers. He also used to help sell newspapers at one of their family stalls by the roadside before going to school.

“In secondary school, Accounting Principles was one of my favourite subjects. It is no coincidence that what I’m doing now opens the doors of opportunity to deal with numbers,” says Guna, who cites Robert Kiyosaki as one of his role models and a true educator.

We caught up with Gunaseelan Kannan, known as Guna, who is among a handful of licensed financial advisors in Malaysia, to learn about the role he plays in this financial space.

THE ROLE DEBUNKED

“Essentially, I provide clients with financial advice based on their requirements and needs – always with clients’ best interest in mind. This role involves researching and recommending clients on available and relevant products and services to ensure clients are always aware of market changes,” explains Guna, who holds a post-graduate Masters degree in Business Administration (Finance) from Multimedia University.

To execute his role effectively, Guna regularly meets clients based on appointments set by his case manager. In an introductory meeting, he will get to know his clients and their needs, and build solid relationships with them. Based on their response, Guna will provide advice, and recommend products and services that best meet their requirements.

He also meets up with existing clients from time to time to explore further avenues of investments that are aligned with their financial goals.

THE STRINGENT PROCESS

Knowing that at the end of the day, financial advisors are also out there to secure a sale, I was skeptical as to how they operate in the best interest of clients paying for their service.

“The Malaysian regulatory bodies have very stringent requirements to become a licensed financial advisor. This is aimed to uphold high ethics and integrity of the profession,” assures Guna, who is happily married and is a proud father of a young daughter.

“It is not enough to hold a Registered Financial Planner (RFP) or Certified Financial Planner (CFP) certification. The regulators will go through your personal records from the Malaysian Department of Insolvency, CCRIS (Central Credit Reference Information System) report from Bank Negara and credit profiles from CTOS, a leading credit reporting agency.

“Once these records are satisfactorily cleared, the licence, renewable on a yearly basis, is finally issued to the person,” clarifies Guna, a CFP holder and a recognised financial advisor by the financial Planning Association of Malaysia.

THE JOURNEY THUS FAR

Guna admitted says that the industry is still in its infancy in Malaysia. Generally, the public lacks awareness and the necessary knowledge of financial planning. Let alone the importance of engaging a credible person to help them execute a plan to achieve their financial goals.

After all, fee-based advisory services are quite new to Malaysian consumers, at least from an individual’s perspective.

“It is my personal goal to see people learn to articulate and write down their financial objectives. I hope to one day write a book on financial planning in an effort to transfer my knowledge to the masses,” replies Guna to the question of what he wants to achieve through his profession.

“If I would say that my journey as a financial advisor has just started. There is still so much more to learn and accomplish in the industry and from your peers. It is a continuous process of discovery and learning,” says Guna, who cites Robert Kiyosaki as one of his role models and a true educator.

PARTING ADVICE

We asked Guna what advice would he give to those who might want to explore this career option. His response: “You need to make sure you have these qualities – integrity, honesty, truthfulness and truthfulness. Without these traits, you won’t go far as a financial advisor.”

“It is also of utmost importance to always prioritise the client’s needs above your own. Our duty as financial advisors is to give the best recommendations to clients without bias,” concludes Guna.

CONCLUSION

In whatever we do in our careers, it still holds true that we recognise why we do the things we do in our work. And once we know our purpose, we can then execute our roles excellently.

Care to share your story of your dream profession with us? Send us a short write-up of your journey with us at editor@leaderonomics.com. To read more career insights, visit www.leaderonomics.com

IN THIS PROFESSION, I CAN CONVEY MY SINCERE INTENTION TO INDIVIDUALS AND CORPORATIONS ALIKE OF THE WAY HEALTHY FINANCE SHOULD BE.
In this spirit, here are seven ways we can transform lives and inspire young minds around you better. It makes you better, it makes everyone that being a positive educator not only these teachers had on my life, it's clear best. W

By JON GORDON

W

1. BE POSITIVELY CONTAGIOUS

Research shows that emotions are contagious. Sincere smiles, kind words, encouragement and positive energy inflect people in a positive way. On the flip side, your students are just as likely to catch your bad mood as the flu. So each day you come to school you have a choice. You can be a germ or a big dose of Vitamin C. When you choose to be positively contagious, your energy has a positive impact on your students, your colleagues and ultimately your school culture.

Your students will remember very little of what you said but they will remember 100% of how you made them feel. I remember Liota and her smile and her energy has a positive impact on your students, your colleagues and ultimately your school culture. I realise they were all teachers who made a difference in my life.

2. TAKE A DAILY ‘THANK YOU WALK’

It's simple, it's powerful, and it's a great way to feed yourself with positivity. How does it work?

You simply take a walk... outside, in a mall, at school, on a treadmill, or anywhere else you can think of, and think about all the things, big and small, that you are grateful for.

It is often said that you can't be stressed and thankful at the same time. So when you combine gratitude with physical exercise, you give yourself a double boost of positive energy.

You flood your brain and body with positive emotions and natural anti-depressants that uplift you rather than the stress hormones that drain your energy and slowly kill you. By the time you get to school you are ready for a great day.

3. CELEBRATE SUCCESS

One of the simplest, most powerful things you can do for yourself and your students is to celebrate your daily successes. Instead of thinking of all things that went wrong at school each day focus on the one thing that went right.

Try this: Each night before you go to bed, think about the one great thing that went right during your day. If you do this, you'll look forward to creating more success tomorrow.

Have your students do this as well. Each night they will go to bed feeling like a success and they will wake up with more confidence to take on the day.

4. EXPECT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

When positive educators walk into their classrooms, they expect to make a difference in their students' lives. In fact, making a difference is the very reason why they became a teacher in the first place and this purpose continues to fuel them and their teaching.

They come to school each day thinking of ways they can make a difference and expecting that their actions and lessons will lead to positive outcomes for their students.

They win in their mind first and then they win in the hearts and minds of their students.

5. BELIEVE IN YOUR STUDENTS MORE THAN THEY BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES

I tried to quit lacrosse during my freshman year in high school but Coach Caiazza wouldn't let me. He told me that I was going to play in college one day. He had a vision for me that I couldn't even fathom. He believed in me more than I believed in myself. I ended up going to Cornell University and the experience of playing lacrosse there changed my life forever.

The difference between success and failure is belief and so often this belief is instilled in us by someone else. Coach Caiazza was that person for me and it changed my life.

You can be that person for one of your students if you believe in them and see their potential rather than their limitations.

6. DEVELOP POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Author Andy Stanley once said, “Rules without relationship lead to rebellion.” Far too many principals share rules with their teachers but they don't have a relationship with them.

And far too many teachers don’t have positive relationships with their students. So what happens? Teachers and students disengage from the mission of the school.

7. SHOW YOU CARE

It’s a simple fact. The best educators stand out by showing their students and colleagues that they care about them.

Standardised test scores rise when teachers make time to really know their students. Teacher performance improves when principals create engaged relationships with their teachers.

Teamwork is enhanced when educators know and care about one another. Parents are more supportive when educators communicate with their student’s parents.

The most powerful form of positive energy is love and this love transforms students, people and schools when it is put into action.

Create your own unique way to show your students and colleagues you care about them. As a result, you will not only feel more positive yourself but you will develop positive kids who create a more positive world.

CONCLUSION

If you commit to being a positive educator, I encourage you to read and commit to The Positive Teacher Pledge (see sidebar story).

I’ve had many educators approach me and tell me that my books helped them realise they needed to focus less on rules and invest more in their relationships. The result was a dramatic increase in teacher and student performance, morale and engagement.

To develop positive relationships you need to enhance communication, build trust, listen to them, make time for them, recognise them, show them you care through your actions and mentor them.

Take the time to give them your best and they will give you their best.

So today and every day I will be positive and strive to make a positive impact on my students, school and the world.

THE POSITIVE TEACHER PLEDGE

- I pledge to be a positive teacher and positive influence on my fellow educators, students and school.
- I promise to be positively contagious and share more smiles, laughter, encouragement and joy with those around me.
- I vow to stay positive in the face of negatives.
- When I am surrounded by pessimism, I will choose optimism.
- When I feel fear, I will choose faith.
- When I want to hate, I will choose love.
- When I want to be better, I will choose to get better.
- When I experience a challenge, I will look for opportunities to learn and grow and help others grow.
- When faced with adversity, I will find strength.
- When I experience a setback, I will be resilient.
- When I meet failure, I will fall forward and create a future success.
- I will believe that being positive not only makes me better, it makes my students better.
- So today and every day I will be positive and strive to make a positive impact on my students, school and the world!
HOW TO RETAIN AND GROW YOUR TALENTED PLAYERS

BY MORAG BARRETT
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FROM the blogs and articles I am reading it would appear that managers are not necessarily doing the things that matter most; for example, building effective working relationships with their team members, to build an engaged team and retain their talented players.

Let’s be clear, talented employees always have a choice whether or not to work for you, or work for your organisation. Even in a tough hiring market they are not “trapped”, they have a choice.

VALUE YOUR TALENTS

Here are five simple steps to ensure you are sending the message that you value your star employees:

1 PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR TALENTED PLAYERS

Make sure that you spend more time with your star employees than your troublesome employees. Find ways to involve them in your star employees’ work and growth.

2 CONDUCT A ‘STAY-INTEVIEW’

Many organisations conduct ‘exit-interviews’ when people are leaving a company, but by then it is too late, your talented employee has already made the decision to leave.

Instead, get ahead of the game, and sit down with your team members today and find out what motivates them; what their career aspirations are and what frustrates them. Ask why they choose to stay with the company and what might cause them to leave. Identify how you can help and involve them in creating a development plan that keeps them in your organisation.

3 TACKLE POOR PERFORMANCE IMMEDIATELY

Before an employee becomes ‘actively disengaged’, there are usually tell-tale signs and symptoms that indicate all is not well – results may drop, attitudes become cynical. Ensure that you clearly articulate expectations and hold everyone accountable for both the results they achieve and how they go about achieving those results.

4 TAKE A TALENT SNAPSHOT

Are you leveraging the strengths of everyone on your team or relying on just a few ‘go-to’ people? Identify opportunities to develop your team members through on-the-job experience, coaching, changes to assignments or team roles. Give your employees the opportunity to do their best work and ensure that they look forward to coming to work every day.

5 DEVELOP LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS OF FIRST-LINE MANAGERS

Best-in-class organisations provide training and tools to managers to help them better engage their employees. Gallup’s quote that “people join companies, but leave managers” is as true today as it has ever been. Research continues to demonstrate that a person’s immediate line manager is the single biggest influence on their engagement – and whether they decide to stay.

Given that employee turnover can cost between 33%-250% of annual salary, it clearly makes good business sense to help managers keep their employees engaged.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What steps are you taking to keep your talented players engaged and growing your own leaders? What additional advice do you have?

Morag Barrett is the best-selling author of Cultivate: The Power of Winning Relationships and CEO of SkyTeam (www.skyteam.com), an international HR consulting and leadership development company. Morag’s experience ranges from senior executive coaching to developing leaders and teams across Europe, America and Asia. For more articles on leadership and personal development, visit www.leaderonomics.com. Send us your feedback at editor@leaderonomics.com

12 STEPS TO A BETTER ORGANISATIONAL SURVIVAL

SUCCESSION planning is not just about identifying potential key leadership roles as successors. It is also about setting up proper succession processes that reach across ranks. This includes identifying high potentials in the lowest levels of an organisation, and grooming them through development efforts to expand their knowledge, skills and competencies.

Here is a 12-step process (adapted from Halogen Software) to an effective succession plan to ensure the right talent pools are created to further take an organisation to greater heights.

Step 1 Identify all areas/functions currently strategic to organisation’s success and survival.

Step 2 Identify key roles and employees in these strategic areas/functions.

Step 3 Identify emerging areas/functions that will be strategic to future success and survival.

Step 4 Identify roles and employees in these emerging areas/functions.

Step 5 For each area/function/role, identify competencies, knowledge, skills and experience required for exceptional performance.

Step 6 Identify learning resources and initiatives that can help develop each competency.

Step 7 Identify high-performing employees.

Step 8 Identify all high-potential employees – those who demonstrate interest, drive and passion to progress in their careers.

Step 9 Hold “stay-interviews” with high-performing and high-potential employees. Find out what motivates, engages and frustrates them.

Step 10 Create talent pools for each current and emerging strategic area/function.

Step 11 Recruit from these talent pools when opportunities or vacancies open up.

Step 12 Repeat Step 1 and onwards.
SPEAK OUT AND LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

HOW TO TAKE CHARGE AND MAKE CHANGES TOWARDS BECOMING MORE SELF-CONFIDENT

By JEAN SELVAM

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VER the weekend, I had an interesting conversation with a few secondary school students regarding self-confidence. They all had different perceptions on this subject. Some felt that self-confidence meant being bossy, while others believed that only certain personalities can have confidence. Some even decided that they did not have this attribute. I was surprised by their reflections and wondered why they were unable to see themselves, what I saw in them. These students are motivated, smart, kind and above all, inspiring. As the conversation continued, I began seeing a clearer picture and reflected on my own perception of self-confidence as I was growing up. Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines self-confidence as “confidence in oneself and in one’s powers and abilities.” However in some communities, the definition is thought to be similar to arrogance and ego. This certainly discourages members of the community from building this skill and perceiving self-confidence as a strength. This unfortunate definition is even more intensified if this characteristic is displayed by a woman! So most young girls are trained and expected to be docile and passive. I was one of them.

SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE

As a young girl, I was very tomboyish, loud and demanding (in a sweet way of course). But I was often told to speak softly and not be demanding in any way. Though it was advice that came from a caring and loving place, it taught me to not only be quieter and gentler, but also to be more passive. These characteristics certainly affected my level of confidence. I was not taught how to be confident in myself and to speak up when I needed to, neither did I understand the difference between arrogance and self-confidence. Eventually, I realised that it was easy for people to take advantage of my personality in different ways, and this was apparent in my family life, friendships, at college and at work. Don’t get me wrong! I am happy with the person I am today but I certainly wished that I could have learnt the importance of being confident in myself. Now I know that part of being self-confident is having the skills to speak up and take charge of my own life because certainly, no one else can or will do that for me.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

It took a lot of reflecting and motivation to build up my self-confidence, and honestly, it is still in the process. So the question here is how to take charge of my life differently and start building self-confidence? It can be difficult to do when people around you already see you as a passive person or a “yes man” or “yes woman”. This can be an extremely frustrating situation to be in when a person is trying to change the circumstances of his (or her) life. However, I have come to realise that this may be my own fault, because I have not taken charge of making any changes. I was overly concerned about wanting to be liked or not offending the other person. I would tell myself that it was not a big deal and not worth having a conflict over that particular issue. Ultimately, the question is what does this mean for my self-confidence?

RESOLVING THE ISSUE

So back to the question above, how do I begin to take charge and start making some changes? How do I build my confidence but at the same time, still remain the person I am? The answer is to realise why and what it is about you that allows people to take you for granted. Take accountability for your behaviour, such as the passivity and low self-esteem. It is often easy to blame parents and even the community because you feel they should have guided you better. But in truth, we fail to see that they are teaching us what they know and believe to be good traits. On our part, we have to review our “passive” behaviour and be motivated to make the necessary changes.

TAKING THE BULL BY THE HORN

The next step is to be driven to change these aspects of yourself and gradually build your self-confidence. Of course, it is easier said than done! However, when we have taken the time to reflect and take accountability of our own behaviours, we will gradually begin to notice little opportunities that allow us to build self-confidence. For me, it started with the feeling of discomfort or frustration when someone would take advantage of my passivity. I could feel myself wanting to say “something” for my opinion to be heard. This was a small step towards building self-confidence and speaking out loud. It was certainly more nerve wracking in some situations more than others, but I also felt proud for being able to express my thoughts. Of course it would not be smooth sailing in all situations, but the end result is the huge possibility of feeling confident about your abilities and being courageous enough to stand up for yourself, in a variety of situations; big or small.

THE END RESULT IS THE HUGE POSSIBILITY OF FEELING CONFIDENT ABOUT YOUR ABILITIES AND BEING COURAGEOUS ENOUGH TO STAND UP FOR YOURSELF, IN A VARIETY OF SITUATIONS; BIG OR SMALL.

IN CONCLUSION

These are the little things that I have done to start building my self-confidence and I know that it can only be achieved if I am motivated to take charge and make positive changes in my life. What I have learnt during this process is that I need to feel comfortable with myself and in any environment. I want to be heard and not to be taken for granted. I am still a rather quiet and passive person, but I do not view it as a negative characteristic. What is different is that I have added another strength; self-confidence.

EDITOR’S NOTE:
Jean has a special passion in working with children and teens because she finds joy in being able to connect with them and see the world through their eyes. She believes that everyone has strengths and can be empowered to lead a life filled with positivity, strength and true happiness. In contrast to this “people-person” side of her, she loves spending quiet time reading and singing to herself! She also craves adventure and travelling, and feels restless if she doesn’t have the opportunity to do that.
I agree with your article “Driving Workplace Diversity” (April 18) that diversity is important in an organisation as it reflects the multiplicity of the Malaysian society as a whole. However, discrimination still happens especially when a cancer survivor applies for jobs. I am a cancer survivor. I was diagnosed with lymphoma in 2013. At that time, I was working in Kuala Lumpur (KL) with a leading bank. I went back to my hometown, Penang, for treatment. It took two years for me to get better. I was still employed by the same bank then (prolonged illness leave). I must say that the support given me by the bank was tremendous. I was really fortunate to be working for a company that supports its employee both morally and financially. Now I am cured and the doctor has given me the green light to return to work. My doctor advised me to work in Penang as it will be easy for me to undergo my monthly check-ups. Unfortunately, my bank was unable to grant me a transfer as there were no openings for my job scope in the Penang branch. If I do go back to KL, I have to apply for a three-day leave every month for check-ups because of logistics. This was unproductive for the bank and me. Therefore, I started applying for jobs in Penang. It is very frustrating having to explain the two-year gap in my career. I try not to tell them, but they get to know when asking for my pay slip. They discriminate me even further when they ask me whether I will be able to handle stress. We cancer survivors are able to handle stress. We have been to hell and back. We have battled cancer and have come out survivors. We are strong and we think differently. We will add diversity in any company where we are employed. We are independent and I would call all cancer survivors, warriors. I understand why human resources managers think twice about hiring a cancer survivor. During interviews, I was asked whether the cancer would come back. These kinds of questions are insensitive and uncalled for. Life doesn’t give you a guarantee. You can also get killed while crossing the road. In the United States, cancer survivors are legally protected by state and federal laws, such as the Disabilities Act and the Family and Medical Leave Act. According to these laws, prospective employers cannot ask about a job candidate’s health. I am not sure if we are protected by any similar laws in Malaysia.

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