SOME DATA ON BIG DATA

NICE TO HAVE OR BUSINESS IMPERATIVE?
PAGES 6–7
IT has been a while since we have had a movie where the fine line between reality and the virtual world of 3’s and 0’s made us all sit up and take notice, ponder our existence and fret over how excited or alarmed we should be (then again, I haven’t watched a new movie in ages). We know the importance of having the skills to adapt and embrace changes that happen at our workplaces – but what about change that is not easily defined, and yet permeates every aspect of our lives?

The phone, as young Alexander Graham Bell invented in the 19th century, has evolved dramatically in recent decades to transform lives. When we were young, my Ah Kong’s (grandpa’s) home still had the phone on the wall – you knew the type you’d hold the ear piece to your ear and speak into the other bit fixed to the wall. Imagine_lugging that thing around – with the first gen multiple football field-sized computers – and photo albums too! And a massive generator! OK the list goes on – but you get my point.

Far from running off to the hills and hiding from all forms of Wi-Fi access, I am most interested in seeing how data that is collected (ethically) can increase the efficiency of processes, facilitate having the right resources at the right place, at the right time – and even how disease patterns can be monitored. To this end, Bernard Marr explains what Big Data means, how it can be used, and why it is important to understand its relevance in our lives.

Is Big Data relevant for smaller and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)? Daniel Russell asserts that SMEs can indeed benefit from Big Data-style analytics, and shares five steps on how they can build sustainable data analytics capabilities. Joseph Tan has a different take on Big Data – and reminds us of its value in connecting with our own people, in addition to its promise of reaching clients and other external parties. Like other types of data, he stresses the point of knowing what to do with employee engagement data, and how companies need to make sense of it by identifying, for example, the leading indicators of the performance of managers.

Next up, our roving contributor Christopher Moore shares some of his own data – painstakingly gleaned from his travels and exposure to the business world throughout Asia Pacific. We learn for instance, where it is OK to call random strangers “Boss” and “Mam” and where it might raise some eyebrows! We frequently address the role of mentors and mentees – but what about change that is not easily defined, and yet permeates every aspect of our lives?

The stereotypical intern is often portrayed as a timid young adult photocopying documents, getting coffee for their boss, and running errands for everyone in the office. Some organisations tend to hire interns and take them for granted by making them do menial jobs that are not related to what they are interested in or are currently studying. Giving interns work that actually contributes significantly to the company shows that you entrust them with bigger, more meaningful responsibilities. Involving interns in meetings and asking for their opinions can make them feel like they matter to the company and that they are not there just to run errands, but to develop and learn new skills that will be useful to them when they enter the workforce.

Most people who apply for internships are either young university students or graduates. That does not mean that they are still children who should be talked down to. Interns should be treated as any other full-time employee who would like to be treated. Talk to them without assuming that they do not know about work life or how a business works, because you never know how knowledgeable they can be.

People sign up for internship programs to help them learn about what the workforce is like. It is a journey of self-discovery for them to figure out what they like and do not like in terms of their career. Therefore, it is important that employers treat them in a way that encourages and empowers them to ask questions and provide valuable opinions from fresh perspectives.

I encourage you all to never underestimate the abilities of interns because at some point in time, all of us started out at the very bottom, confused and slightly terrified of what awaited us in the future. So, be patient with us. Give us more responsibilities and empower us to find our places in this world.
MINING THE BIG DATA OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

By JOSEPH TAN
joseph.tan@leaderonomics.com

“Do I have a great job?”

“Do I have a great boss?”

THE JOBS FACTOR

According to Gallup, employees who have the opportunity to do what they love or do best, are six times more engaged and three times as likely to have a higher quality of life. The job becomes.

Here is a quick test – Whom have I recognised for doing a good job in the last seven days?

Motivate

THE LEADERSHIP FACTOR

The greater the overlap, the greater the job becomes.

For your employee engagement data to mean anything, it ought to provide diagnostic linkages back to the day-to-day behaviour of the manager.

Set expectations

The four vital roles of the manager which should be tracked are:

1. Identify talent
2. Develop

Enhance the performance appraisal process to focus on strengths while managing weaknesses.

As in most data-driven efforts, it is garbage in, garbage out. With human capital being the most under-utilised asset in today’s competitive environment, we dare not treat this subject of employee engagement lightly and approach this from purely an analytical perspective.

After all, isn’t it the right of every human being to be treated as a unique individual? This is the starting point of engagement that works.

Joseph Tan is CEO of Leaderonomics. Good Monday. His passion is to work with performance-focused leaders to capture the hearts and minds of their employees through a strengths-based and accountability-driven approach.

3. Select a proven engagement survey which links results to managerial behaviour and employee strengths.

4. Put in place a talent management programme to increase the engagement level of employees with potential for growth.

5. Enhance job descriptions to make it more outcome-based so that there is room for the demonstration of unique talents and strengths.

6. Enhance the performance appraisal process to focus on strengths while managing weaknesses.

In Gallup’s state of worldwide engagement study (2013), only 13% of employees worldwide are engaged, 63% are disengaged while 24% are actively disengaged. This is a glaring leverage for productivity that most organisational leaders are missing out on.

Here are the findings.

According to Gallup, employees who have the opportunity to do what they love or do best, are six times more engaged and three times as likely to have a higher quality of life. The job becomes.

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The greater the overlap, the greater the job becomes.

Although there are many components that make up a great job like experience, knowledge and skills but the one part that makes that crucial difference is a personal one – it is your unique talents – the way you are naturally wired to think, feel and behave. When my job offers me the opportunity to exercise my unique set of talents, then I am no longer making a living, rather my life is in the making!

Unlike generations ago, when workers came to work for the purpose of finding a meal, today’s workforce is looking to find a sense of meaning. This appears to be the trend as affluence becomes the norm and the workplace is becoming more than just a place for “doing work”, rather it is for doing meaningful work.

The mantra appears to be – “I want my work to matter because I want my life to matter.”

THE ENGAGEMENT CRITICAL

In Gallup’s state of worldwide engagement study (2013), only 13% of employees worldwide are engaged, 63% are disengaged while 24% are actively disengaged. This is a glaring leverage for productivity that most organisational leaders are missing out on.

Instead of purchasing the next greatest tool or system, have you considered similar investment in improving the level of employee engagement?

Furthermore, without the right levels of employee engagement, even the best possible tools will be under-utilised because technology is only as good as the whole-hearted commitment of the user.

The next time you are planning to “data-mine” the big data of employee engagement, consider the following preparatory steps to ensure that the data becomes meaningful diagnostics for developing great bosses and creating great jobs for employees:

The value is to be found in what it can communicate clearly what is expected and then ensures that the employee has the right materials and equipment to do a good job.

According to Marcus Buckingham, “It is better to work for a great manager in an old-fashioned company than for a terrible manager in a company offering an enlightened employee-focused culture.”

A little bit more:

Another element of employee engagement that should be tracked is whether the employee senses that he or she is first treated as an individual. Ironically, it is only when I am first treated as an individual that I have the motivation to perform well as an employee.

In other words, when an engaged employee talks about his role, he is using terms which describes not a series of tasks to be accomplished, rather it is described in a series of satisfying moments.

For your employee engagement data to mean anything, it ought to provide diagnostic linkages back to the day-to-day behaviour of the managers.

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Joseph Tan is CEO of Leaderonomics. Good Monday. His passion is to work with performance-focused leaders to capture the hearts and minds of their employees through a strengths-based and accountability-driven approach.

Much of what is shared in the article above comes from his work as a Gallup-certified strengths coach. If you would like to enhance the engagement level of your organisation, email training@leaderonomics.com for more details.
GATHERING OF MINDS AT LEADERSHIP SESSION

By NINA TI and SU-ANN CHENG
editor@leaderonomics.com

FOR the eighth consecutive year, Frost & Sullivan’s flagship conference – Growth, Innovation and Leadership (GIL) 2015 Malaysia – brought together visionary leaders and senior executives from all over the country, this time at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Kuala Lumpur on April 14.

Special guests, key speakers, industry think-tanks and over 260 delegates from various industries participated in the annual event to share and discuss opportunities and strategies to leverage innovation in the quest to address global market challenges.

This year’s conference turned the spotlight on “Convergence”, drawing in elements of technology and connectivity, which are creating some of the most volatile market disruptions.

According to analysts at Frost & Sullivan, Malaysia’s social networking users are expected to nearly double to 25.6 million people in 2020. Ninety-five per cent of all netizens, or Internet users, will be active social network users, presenting a huge potential for digital marketing and e-commerce,” says Barry Lim, director of Frost & Sullivan Asia-Pacific.

Change brings challenges, and with ample preparation, companies will undoubtedly find the disruption threatening. Manoj Menon, senior partner and managing director of Frost & Sullivan Asia-Pacific believes that most companies in Malaysia are unaware of new technologies that will soon arrive to threaten market positions and worse, send strategies, R&D and product development teams into tailspins.

Delegates were treated to a plethora of latest research findings, including the top 50 disruptive technologies, along with insights on what should be done to get ahead of the threat.

Key analysts who took to the stage to share their latest findings in the GIL Bytes Presentation, warned that the future is changing rapidly.

They offered delegates a huge chunk of insider data that covered market trends and issues, including the future of the telecommunication industry, impacts of cheap crude oil, emerging markets in the region as well as governance in the digital age, among many others.

Not only was GIL 2015 a rare opportunity for networking, its one-day programme included a number of interactive sessions with market experts who shared critical insights into game-changing trends that are impacting the country’s economy and its industries.

Finally, the conference’s agenda included an extensive session with some of Malaysia’s top chief executive officers, who revealed perceptive and visionary approaches in shaping their companies in this highly innovative and turbulent market environment.

HUMILITY IS A GREAT VIRTUE

THERE was a palpable hum in the air, as delegates hurriedly took their seats to hear one of Malaysia’s most prominent leaders speak on leadership in this country. That leader was none other than Datuk Seri Idris Jala, CEO of Pemandu and minister in the Prime Minister’s Department, who headlined a session aptly titled “Legends of Asia” at the recent Frost & Sullivan forum.

Speaking with his usual wit, humour and candour, Datuk Seri Idris drew examples from his unique career in the private sector, the government sector and as a member of cabinet, to share these leadership tips:

1 To be a very successful leader you have to leverage both the emotion and intellect. If you use one of the two, you are using only half of your capability. We must push our intellect as well as our emotion. Communication cannot be just done rationally; it has to reach out to the hearts of people.

2 What separates a good leader and a GREAT leader is “Strength of Conviction”. A great leader should have the ability to follow through on his conviction.

3 Vulnerability is a virtue. Every leader should know that he/she cannot control everything that happens in our life. This makes the leader humble. Humility is a great part of leadership. Humility should not be misunderstood with lack of assertiveness or being direct. The graveyard is full of people who thought they were indispensable. Leaders should also know when to put a full-stop and let their teams continue the journey.

4 The only way to develop your leadership is by doing it. No amount of education can help you become a great leader. Leadership is honed through experience.

5 Failure is the best teacher, but do not make it a habit. Do not repeat your failures.
MAH SING’S UNSTOPPABLE

GROWING ITS BUSINESS AND PEOPLE

Festival Lakecity, one of Mah Sing’s ventures.

WELL-ROUNDED SKILLS

2015

- IAI Awards – Best Company for Leadership / Property Development / Malaysia
- Property Insight Malaysia’s Prestigious Developer Awards 2015 – Top 10 Developers
- Social Media Excellence Awards 2015 – Lifestyle Developer
- Malaysia Best Employer Brand Award 2015

2014

- Euromoney 2014 – Best Managed Company (Malaysia)
- PropertyGuru.com People’s Choice Award 2014 – Developer of the Year – Mah Sing Group Berhad
- The Malaysian Reserve Property Press Awards 2014 – Most Outstanding Developer of the Year
- Euromoney Best Developer Overall in Malaysia
- Malaysia HR Awards MIHRM 2014 – Silver winner – Mah Sing Group Berhad

2015

- IAI Awards – Best Company for Leadership / Property Development / Malaysia
- Property Insight Malaysia’s Prestigious Developer Awards 2015 – Top 10 Developers
- Social Media Excellence Awards 2015 – Lifestyle Developer
- Malaysia Best Employer Brand Award 2015

THE MAH SING EXPERIENCE

WONG SIAW LI
Senior general manager
Business development

In my five years with Mah Sing, I was given the golden opportunity to grow with the company with wide exposure throughout the country and overseas, and successfully acquiring new projects namely Merdin @ Medini in Iskandar Malaysia, Sutera Avenue in Kota Kinabalu, Lakeville in Taman Wawasan and Festival City in Puchong.

My team and I have gained new knowledge and experience in both technical and marketing as there are never two projects or products that are the same.

The company is always quick to adapt to market trends and cater for the needs in each locality.

NEVER A DULL MOMENT IN MAH SING

SOO JOON KIN
Executive Sales and marketing

The key factor that encouraged me to join Mah Sing is that it is a reputable fast-paced company and there is always something to look forward to.

The company started out with residential products to industrial to commercial, and now we have several integrated developments in the pipeline.

Mah Sing’s events are always exciting; the launch at Lakeville Residence was graced by the Miss Malaysia Tourism delegates, a talk at D’Sara Sentral by Mahmood Abdul Razak from MRT Corp and a weekend event that collaborated with Mini Cooper at Icon City!

THE MAH SING EXPERIENCE

PAUL CHO HENG BOON
Deputy general manager
Corporate communications

There is a wealth of information and experience that the company has to offer – with its employees.

This is what excites me as an employee, as each and every day brings with it a new challenge, a new learning and a new experience.

You will need to push yourself to perform to the best.

Teams work together fluidly and supportively to achieve common objectives, a key element to one’s working experience in any company.

Granted that Mah Sing is well-known for its fast-paced environment, it also places importance on the development of its people.

There is no shortage of opportunities to grow within its breath of diversified projects.

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Senior general manager
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BIG DATA EXPLAINED
IN LESS THAN 2 MINUTES...TO ABSOLUTELY ANYONE

BY BERNARD MARK
EDITOR@LIDERONOMICS.COM

THE past few years has seen an explo-
sion in the number of platforms avail-
able for big data analytical tools. The
open source Hadoop framework is free
and is continually refined by its commu-
ity. But there are also proprietary
options, and most have a strong focus
on businesses and organisations. So
how do you pick the right tool for you?

HORTONWORKS DATA PLATFORM (HDP)
Unlike many other big data plat-
forms, HDP’s offering completely
splits the open source Hadoop con-
cept into two distinct levels. The first is
built through the Apache Software
Foundation. They make their money
offering services, getting them running
and providing the tools you need.

MICROSOFT HONDA INSIGHTS
Microsoft’s flagship analyti-
cal offering. Although it is based
on Hortonworks Data Platform, but ta-
lored to work with their own Azure
cloud services and SQL Server database
management system. A big advantage
for businesses is that it integrates with
Azure, meaning even users with the
basic SaaS can still upload their data
analytically.

AMAZON WEB SERVICES (AWS)
Although many think of them as public
domain, Amazon also makes money by
selling the magic that makes their business
run so smoothly to other companies. The
business model was based on big data but
they provide a personal information to offer
a digital shopping experience. Amazon Web
Services includes its Elastic Cloud
Compute and Elastic MapReduce ser-
vice to offer large-scale data storage
and analysis in the cloud.

INFOR BIG DATA
Infor is a global leader of business
management solutions. Their industry-
specific solutions help companies
increase productivity, reduce costs,
and achieve business objectives.

PIVOTAL BIG DATA SUITE
Pivotal is a division of VMware. It
introduces new industry-defining
platforms for cloud native, big data
applications. Pivotal offers a suite of
products that enable organizations to
build and manage cloud-native
applications.

SPLUNK ENTERPRISE
This platform allows users to search
through billions of lines of machine
generated data that businesses generate.

CENTRAL COHER
cwas founded by former
ple of Google, Yahoo, Facebook and
and offers open source as well
as commercial technologies based
on big data solutions with the label Cloudera
Distributions including Hadoop,
Hadoop.

IBM BIG DATA PLATFORM
IBM is the world’s largest
provider of data and
services designed to make com-
plete sense out of big data
as it relates to businesses. The
company offers its own
Hadoop distribution
known as Infosphere BigInsights.

SPLUNK ENTERPRISE
This platform allows users to search
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MOBILE

FACEBOOK
Slack is the de facto
network of a large
organisation. It has
been around to
challenge competitors
such as Twitter and
LinkedIn, particularly among
the younger demographic.

MICROSOFT
Microsoft has been
big data involves
integrating
will be sold.

IBM
IBM Watson Analytics has just
launched Watson Analytics, an
integrated business intelligence and analytics tool
for every enterprise. The
name is something
of a misnomer since
and data-driven
underway.

GOOGLE
Google’s domination of
search continues to
influence big data
and is continuing
efforts to diversify into other areas of
everyday life. 2014 saw the launch of
home automation firm Nest – creators
of the smart thermostat. In turn, Nest
used their newfound
wealth to engage brands
that makes “home hubs” – used to
connect and control everything from
lighting and security cameras and automatic gates.

THE OTHER BIG DATA PLATFORMS

THEIR PLANS FOR 2015

Big data is undoubtedly getting bigger in 2015.
Last year saw it moving into the mainstream as companies
of all shapes and sizes started to get to grips with the possibilities
of big data, and this year will only see more of that.
Expect new product and service announce-
ments from the established big names, as well as a
flood of innovative start-ups hitting the market over the
next 12 months. This is a run through of big data
companies to expect to hear from in 2015.

7
mystarjob.com, Saturday 30 May 2015

6
mystarjob.com,
GOING NATIVE

5 UNIQUELY MALAYSIAN ASPECTS OF THE BUSINESS CULTURE

By CHRISTOPHER MOORE
editor@leaderonomics.com

As a foreigner who’s worked in multiple countries in Asia, it’s always interesting and amusing (in a good way) to compare the business cultures in different places and compare them to see where the quirks lie. Here is a list of “Malaysian-isms” that you might not even realize are unique to this diverse country!

1. **“I’LL DO MY BEST”**

   Whenever I ask anyone in Malaysia (it doesn’t matter whether I work with them to do something for me, the answer is always the same: “I’ll do my best.”)

   It doesn’t matter whether you are asking them to build a third Petronas Twin Tower or just to make your coffee a little kurang panas, the response is always the same.

2. **THE SACRED LUNCH HOUR**

   Shortly after my arrival in Malaysia, I innocently asked my team to take a short lunch one day as we had something urgent to finish. The shocked looks on their faces haunt me to this day.

   When I asked why the team couldn’t do this, their response was simply “because it’s lunch time.” I learnt a valuable lesson from this, of course!

3. **“YES, ANYTHING?”**

   Many of the common English phrases used in Malaysia are direct translations from the Malay language. Some examples are “Yes, anything?”, “Can or not?”, and “Yes, tell me”.

   In many Australian offices, if you’re still around at 6pm you’d better know how to turn the lights off!

4. **BOSS AND MA’AM**

   Malaysia is a country which has what we call “high power distance”, meaning there is a perceived gap between employees and managers.

   This means we tend to defer to bosses and always refer to them with a respectful title such as “boss” or “ma’am”. It also means we sometimes stay quiet even if the boss is heading down the wrong path.

5. **WRAPPING UP**

   Every country has its unique culture and in an increasingly global environment, it’s always important—and fun!—to be aware of them and to always be able to adapt to the circumstances around you.

   Always take note of cultural differences, especially if you’re visiting or planning to work in another country, to avoid those little missteps that can derail a whole trip.

Christopher Moore is an Australian finance professional who can eat spicy food. He is living and working in Malaysia, with plans to stay. If you are interested to get in touch with Christopher, email editor@leaderonomics.com
Leaderonomics conducts an exclusive range of simulations that help you and your team develop valuable functional and leadership skills. Designed by Silega Switzerland, content is contextualised by our local experts to ensure learning is fully captured as you enjoy these experiential discovery sessions.

**SILEGA COLD WAR™ (TEAM ALIGNMENT)**
Even the best plans fail without alignment, engagement and commitment. Experience common obstacles to organisational productivity such as the lack of trust, poor communication and stakeholder management, and the impact of egos and conflict. Discover practical ways to improve team performance and how internal strength defines the external strength of your organisation.

**SILEGA COMMANDER™ (LEADERSHIP)**
How would you cope with changing business realities and increased competition? Would you conserve or innovate, cooperate or compete, support or lead? Does your organisation have what it takes to survive and succeed in challenging environments? Find out in this experiential session.

**SILEGA EXPEDITION™ (DECISION MAKING & PLANNING)**
How would you deal with resource constraints, time pressure, data overload and unexpected crises on the ultimate challenge? In this board-game based simulation, teams embark on an intense climbing expedition where their choices determine success, or otherwise. Does your team have the ability to persevere, and the kind of leadership required to thrive in tough conditions?

"The Leaderonomics growth partner and faculty took the time to understand the organisational needs in terms of training. The Leaderonomics faculty was quick to set the tone and pace at the start of the training and facilitated the session effectively. Because the training product Silega Cold War™ is innovative and encouraged high participation and teamwork within and across teams, the training was interesting and impactful throughout. At the end of the Cold War simulation, he was able to guide participants to relate back to real life challenges faced by the organisation and initial action plans to address those challenges were suggested for further follow-up. It was a truly engaging and enjoyable session." – David Chin, Head of ACCA Malaysia
Small Data, Big Insights
5 Key Steps to Building Sustainable Analytics Capability for SMEs

By Daniel Russell
editor@leaderonomics.com

We have all heard the claims. Big Data is the next frontier for innovation, competition, and productivity. Big Data is a management revolution. Big Data is the new currency. Clearly, the data presented by Big Data is numerous.

Today, there are many examples of how companies are tapping into Big Data to bring amazing new products and services to market.

While large, global companies are relying more and more on Big Data, entrepreneurs tend to prefer using instinct to make decisions versus taking a data-oriented approach to decision making.

However, the 2011 movie Moneyball demonstrated that reliance on instinct can provide a clear advantage over human judgment (or instinct).

Jorge Borgheweshaw said, “Beware of false knowledge; it is more dangerous than ignorance.” Business decisions informed by analytics yield more value than decisions informed by instincts.

What About SMEs?
Despite the hype surrounding Big Data, few SMEs have provided a clear advantage over human judgment (or instinct). Small and medium enter-
prises (SMEs) can also benefit from Big Data-style analytics in the same way large, high-tech companies.

Access to tools like BigQuery by Google, Hadoop, and NoSQL has made business analytics accessible to tech-savvy entrepreneurs.

Data visualisation tools such as iCharts, Raw, Google Charts, Bonsai, and many others make it easy for budding data scientists to make insights come to life.

While the data and tools are plentiful, many are still intimidated by Big Data.

Deloitte Analytics has worked with hundreds of companies who are just getting started with Big Data and provides five key steps to building sustainable analytics capabilities.

1. Identify the Desired Insights to Drive Business Objectives
Perhaps the data scientist’s most important skill is the ability to understand the organisation’s questions, problems and strategic challenges, and then translating them into data analysis projects.

While some have argued that the scientific method is no longer needed in working with Big Data, we recommend that organisations continue to use specific domain knowledge, creativity, and critical thinking to develop hypotheses which are tested using analytics.

Famous mathematician John Tukey once said, “Better to have an approximate answer to the right question than a precise answer to the wrong question.”

2. Identify Existing Data Assets and Data Requirements
Once one clearly understands the organisation’s operational performance, the next step is to identify what data exists to help inform the hypothesis.

Here too, data scientists will need to have good knowledge of the organisation’s operations, systems, and staff to learn what data is collected, how it is stored and accessed, as well as how to determine the accuracy of the data.

Often data scientists will have to use existing data as “proxy variables” to substitute for desired data that is not available.

Examples of “proxy variables” include gross domestic product as a proxy for standard of living, salary as a proxy for job seniority, company tenure as a proxy for expertise, and number of customer visits as a proxy for loyalty.

Clearly, one can think of many examples where the proxy variable would not substitute for the target variable, but generally the relationships hold.

More data may be needed to be able to conduct the necessary analysis and the organisation may choose to access data from other sources.

3. Implement Data Management Processes
Big Data is not a “once and done” endeavour. The promise of Big Data is to help companies see around the corner of the next disruptive innovation.

Continually collecting data to assess trends is vital to predictive analytics.

Data collection must be built into organisations’ day-to-day processes to ensure accuracy and timeliness.

One of the key hallmarks of Big Data is “velocity.” Velocity in this sense is the need for organisations to continually warehouse, integrate and analyse new data in real time.

With a clear understanding of the key insights needed to run the business today and into the future, as well as the data needed to generate these insights, companies will need to create a roadmap for data management.

Data management is the process of continually collecting the needed data elements, ensuring accuracy, storing them, and updating analyses with new data in real time.

4. Connect Analytics, Marketing Campaign Tools, and Social Channels to Engage Customers
Using the web to generate interest and provide services to customers has helped propel many startup SMEs to greatness.

A wide variety of tools is available to help organisations better understand their customers’ online behaviour.

Ad preference testing, referral source, page views, time on page, website pathways, conversion tracking, and other analytics provide valuable information to online marketers.

Connecting data from social media channels to website analytics adds further insights.

Adding customer segmentation, loyalty and purchase history can truly drive differentiated performance.

The most sophisticated companies today are leveraging behavioural science and “choice architecture” to provide customers with tailored offers that get them to buy more relevant products and services for their unique needs.

“Choice architecture” is simply designing interfaces, policies, and options so that they are presented in ways which help make it easier to choose the right action.

Examples of this include, making healthier food options standard on menus, presenting bundled value pricing first, and renewals for ongoing services automatic.

5. Learn, Iterate, Expand, and Stay Nimble
Just as markets and the competitive landscape changes frequently, business and analytics strategies must continually evolve to stay ahead.

Just as it’s better to get an approximate answer to the right question, it’s better to get approximate insights to the future than perfect reporting on the past.

Through practice and iteration, predictive analytics will become more accurate and, more importantly, questions will get better.

New insights can try new things like experimenting with new marketing channels, new products, and new promotions and are able to get quicker and more actionable feedback to evaluate effectiveness.

Running effective real-time experiments such as these rely on working quickly to evaluate and refine the initiatives that are working — or stop failures before they do too much damage.

Concluding Thoughts
By continually working to improve data quality and expanding data collection and access, organisations will be better equipped to respond quickly and generate the insights needed to stay ahead in the future.

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“AIA: An Engaged Workforce, a Successful Organisation”

When people go to work, they shouldn’t have to leave their heart at home.

– Betty Bender

Engagement is attributed as the key to a successful organisation, as having brought together 1,500 employees on a road trip to celebrate their numerous successes.

AIA employees on this bold outing when their employees joined the AIA Red Hunt, a weekend of fun activities organised by AIA to create an opportunity for its people to foster new relationships and rekindle old ones.

After integrating its businesses in Malaysia over the past two years, the celebration of achievements and sharing of new directions was timely as AIA prepares to embark on its next growth phase.

“Before we move forward on our growth trajectory, we wanted to remind ourselves about what we have achieved together, and how achieving our vision of becoming the No.1 insurer in Malaysia will only happen if we continue to work together as one team,” said Khim Tan, AIA Bhd’s chief human resources officer.

To start the point home, AIA initiated one of the largest team-building activities on Batu Ferringhi beach for the AIA Red Colony. Over 50 teams of 20 employees completed a series of challenges designed in partnership with Leaderonomics, to promote effective communication and teamwork.

As more tasks were completed and more activities revealed (such as the Real Unity tree and the new AIA song), employees were proudly reminded of their commendable achievements as a team, and their efforts were affirmed, acknowledged and celebrated.

AIA employees also spread cheer onto the streets of Georgetown, by randomly handing out balloons and lollies to passers-by, shopowners and tourists.

The celebration continued well into the night at the AIA Red Beach Party, where everybody had their fair share of great food and live entertainment.

Seeing these employees congregate together and enjoy each other’s company in such a celebratory setting was an amazing depiction of an engaged workforce, something truly memorable that Khim was proud to witness.
HAVING APPROACHED SOMEONE TO BE YOUR MENTOR, OR CONSIDERED SOMEONE WHO COULD BE YOUR MENTEES?

BY ALVIN DAN

ENGAGING IN A MENTORSHIP IS KEY FOR GROWTH

I believe many would agree that being mentored means being open for growth. In psychology, there is a theory called scaffolding. It basically states that a mentor becomes a scaffold during the learning process and supports the needs of mentees in order to help them achieve their goals. Once the mentee has become autonomous, the support is reduced gradually, allowing for a much accelerated growth.

Research shows that youths who have a mentor do better in school academically and socially, are willing to participate in school activities and have a better attitude towards life. In our camps, by utilising the idea of mentorship, we keep to a healthy camper to faculty ratio (7:1), and the main facilitator will stay with the group throughout the duration of camp.

We have seen campers who grow exponentially in their ability to take up responsibilities. By introducing a mentor in the group, youths get a better grasp of what they are expected to do and how they can grow themselves as leaders. They invariably fall back on mentors when they have a question, and that relationship alone makes camp an unforgettable experience.

Engaging in a mentorship means allowing another person to challenge our views.

Mentorship, however, is not a bed of roses. In any relationship involving more than one person, conflict is bound to happen. In the movie Karate Kid (1984), we see a fine example of mentorship whereby a boy called Daniel is taken under the wing of a karate master, sensei Miyagi. Sometimes mentorship can be perceived as being asked to do a series of seemingly meaningless tasks.

In the movie, Daniel is appalled when he is made to sand the deck of the house, wax the car and paint the fence instead of learning “proper” karate drills. But he doesn’t quit, and in the end he realises he had learnt something useful that would help him destroy his bully.

This brings me to my point that our views can be challenged, and it’s sometimes hard for the mentee to see the reason behind it. There are also mentors who challenge their mentees to have trust even when the latter cannot see the reason, at least for a short period of time.

A good mentor helps us to build the foundation to achieve our goals, and the important part of each challenge is for the mentee to understand the value of the process, not just the end result. Each challenge is presented to result in either one of two ways, to strengthen our resolve towards an idea or to lead us to review the idea so we can better serve the purpose of our goal.

While being challenged, mentees learn a myriad of new characters. Characters such as patience, honesty, faithfulness, submission, resilience and respect.

A good mentor understands that a person can learn important lessons even if they fail, as long as the person does not give up and stay down after the failure.

At the end of the day, the heart of the problem is always the problem of the heart.

BUILDING EACH OTHER’S LIFE

Building up the character of a person is the main point of mentorship, and challenges that are present in the lives of a mentee is an added opportunity to work on his or her character. Especially in this era of technology, the one thing that youths need to learn is the ability to communicate well on a face-to-face basis.

And because all healthy relationships are two-way streets, the mentors also stand to benefit. Besides building patience, patience, and more patience, they also increase their supervisory skills and wisdom, as they learn to facilitate rather than to take lead. This means that they might have to go through instances where the mentee decides to do something that will not bring benefit to the goal, and still be able to allow for that to happen because some lessons in life need to be attained through personal experience.

So while we continue to build youth leaders through our camp and club initiatives, and through the mentorship idea, maybe it is time for you to think of someone you can approach to be your mentor, and to consider someone who would be your mentee.

So go out there, make a difference in another person’s life. You will soon realise that in the process of doing that, your own life will change for the better too.

Alvin Dan is one of the youth programme executives at Leaderonomics, and is in charge of organising DIDOE leadership camps for secondary school students. His personal passion lies in community and personal development, believing that the community at large can do its share to make this world a better place. He plans to continue developing his expertise in counselling in order to assist and empower youths and families. To engage with Alvin, email editor@leaderonomics.com
I beg to differ with your article “Don’t Lose By A Peanut” (May 9), as I’ve known Chinese people who insist on giving guests the best parts of a dish. The business landscape is often a dynamic setting and to succeed in navigating it requires an acute awareness and understanding of the cultural undercurrents that keep relationships afloat.

In collectivistic cultures common across most Asian nations, the awareness of these cultural intricacies becomes even more important as business people are not only judged based on their capabilities but also how they carry themselves being in a complex web of relationships defined by dotted lines that can be rather obscure to the uninstructed outsider.

Although a seat at the dining table or one’s choice of picking peanuts may influence someone’s impression of you, certainly it wouldn’t be the straw that broke the camel’s back in a business deal (I’d think twice about doing business with a person who writes me off for choosing a bigger peanut).

Nonetheless, we can learn to shape better impressions of ourselves and subsequently our relationships by sharpening basic interpersonal skills such as observing and listening, empathy, and EQ.

If we can really practice these skills in our managing our relationships, our actions and intentions come across more authentic and respectful to the other person.

After all, in the grand scheme of things choosing the wrong seat is peanuts compared to what we bring to the table by being who we are.

NUR MELIA
Selangor

WRITE TO US
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