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OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

This week we explore the world of sales. Most people I meet fear selling roles. They hate to be rejected and so they miss out on great opportunities.

Salespeople generally achieve great things against the odds, and are rightfully lauded and praised in most organisations, much to the dismay of “operational” people who prefer not to sell or deal with customers.

I grew up as a finance person, but when I started running a business, I realised instantly that the most important function of the chief executive officer (CEO) and in the organisation had to deal with customers.

This brings me to my introduction of a man who has overcome great odds to achieve greatness as a journalist and an editor. This man is Sandy Clarke from the United Kingdom who helps to found a radio station. He now becomes editor of the leadership site in Asia, Leaderonomics.com.

Sandy was born with a physical condition which affects co-ordination and balance, and weakness on his left side causing pain most of the time.

Physically, it causes a number of challenges to be overcome, which means there are obstacles that he is forced to meet head-on on a daily basis.

As his condition stems from damage to the right-hand side of the brain, abilities we take for granted, such as spatial awareness, sense of direction, and communication can be a struggle.

His pain and problems still exist today, but he has overcome them all to become a journalist of distinction in the UK. Before that, he was a press officer at the Scottish Parliament, and latterly engaged and inspires our readers. If you would like to suggest a specific theme or topic on leadership for us to explore, contact us by email at editor@leaderonomics.com

We are committed to providing content that engages and inspires our readers. If you would like to suggest a specific topic or theme on leadership for us to explore, contact us by email at editor@leaderonomics.com

So, this issue explores this critical function. I personally believe that knowledge is perhaps the most valuable thing that you can have that nobody can take away. So use it to your advantage.

It is not about impressing but rather about making an impression.

EMPLOYER

If you have made it this far, the next step is empowerment.

What is empowerment? It is not about having all the ingredients and recipes and being completely unmotivated to “look” repeat a mantra, read, and relax. Then go out and fight!

SELL

This is the final step of the journey, where you give it your all. Keep what you have in mind but do not be afraid to change these steps, re-order them or even innovate something new! Sell with all your heart and the battle will inevitably be won.

FINALY...

Perhaps it’s not so much a product that you’re trying to sell, but rather you’re promoting yourself.

You transmute an idea – an intangible form, or a product, which is tangible, through your body language – you breathe life into creative thoughts that cannot speak for themselves, and they come alive through your speech.

If you can tell their story and it is accepted; there you have it – a sale.

So I part ways with you here with the above pitch – S.A.L.E.S.

TRY THIS!

If you found a particular article insightful or interesting, we would love to know your thoughts. Please email us at editor@leaderonomics.com

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The opinions expressed in this career guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.

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Alternatively, look us up by typing “Leaderonomics Media” on your web browser.

Sit back and enjoy what we have in store for you!
CALLING all jobseekers out there; if you have not already marked your calendar for the Mega Careers & Study Fair 2015 happening this Aug 22–23 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC), you should.

It is not often that a bevy of employers would gather for an entire weekend in a purposeful effort to meet you and other jobseekers or prospective postgraduate students.

Following its huge success in February this year, the second instalment of 2015 is expected to draw in 50,000 visitor. The fair will bring together 150 leading graduate employers as well as universities from Malaysia and abroad, all under one roof.

A GOLD MINE OF JOB AND EDUCATION OPTIONS

For jobseekers, this could be a good opportunity to get first-hand information of what employers are really looking for. Or, you could use it to explore different career options.

Many people tend to underestimate the power of networking and communication skills, especially when getting to meet face-to-face with potential employers. Perhaps one of the biggest advantages of a fair like this is that you would also become aware of the competition you are going to face in the same position.

Likewise, for prospective students, getting a glimpse of the career path of your choice may also be a good guide to your course of study. Jobseekers may sometimes find it beneficial to up-skill with more education.

A UNIQUE 3-IN-1 EVENT

The Mega Careers & Study Fair 2015 is made up of three segments that complement one another.

MALAYSIA’S 100 CAREERS FAIR

Comprising the country’s most popular graduate employers, offering the best internship and job opportunities for top talents

CAREERBUILDER FAIR

CareerBuilder (formerly known as JobCentral) – Malaysia’s fastest growing job search portal – brings together quality employers with lots to offer to professionals from all work levels and sectors.

POSTGRADASIA POSTGRADUATE STUDIES FAIR

Offering prospective students some of the best advice, guidance and first-hand information as the largest and longest-running education fair of its kind for the last 10 years.

ONE-STOP CENTRE

In addition, you will also get the chance to meet the winner of Apprentice Asia, Jonathan Yubat of the Philippines, who will be sharing his insights and experiences. Whether you are a jobseeker or a student, there is undoubtedly much to learn from the 29-year-old who was not only the youngest contestant of the reality show, but who also beat 11 others in seizing the prized job with Tan Sri Tony Fernandes.

A career fair like this is nothing but a convenient, one-stop shopping spot for your dream job, internship or education path.

MALAYSIA’S 100 LEADING GRADUATE EMPLOYERS TAKING PART THIS YEAR

- Accenture Solutions
- Afcon Bank
- Alliance Bank Malaysia Bhd
- Bank Islam Malaysia Bhd
- Bank Rakyat
- Celcom Axiata Bhd
- Citibank Bhd
- Dell Global Business Center Sdn Bhd
- Deloitte
- Employees Provident Fund
- EY MALAYSIA
- Genting Malaysia Bhd
- HWBDA Malaysia Sdn Bhd
- KPMG in Malaysia
- Maybank
- RHB Banking Group
- S P Setia
- Sime Darby Industrial
- Sunway Group
- Taylor’s Education Group
- UGI (M) Sdn Bhd
- United Overseas Bank (M) Bhd

Meet LinkedIn.com

The world’s largest professional network will be at the fair to help jobseekers impress their prospective clients through quality online profiling.

Special talks by Jonathan Yubat – Winner of The Apprentice Asia

Jonathan will be speaking to visitors on both days at the Social Media Hub, as well as giving away signed copies of his book “From Grit to Great” to lucky visitors.

Exclusive activities by one FM, Fly FM and iFM4U FM

Two of Malaysia’s most popular radio stations will be at the fair to bring excitement to the crowd.

Malaysia’s 100 Social Media Hub

Entertaining presentations by persons from both industry and academia, including exclusive presentations by LinkedIn.com and Fly FM.

MPH Bookfest

A dedicated book showcase for avid readers with interesting titles from many categories.

Appearance by Leo and Leona

Grab this photo opportunity with Leo and Leona courtesy of Sunway Pyramid.

CareerBuilder Malaysia

A better job awaits all as jobseekers will be able to drop their résumé with CareerBuilder and pick up the latest copy of Malaysia’s Salary Guide 2015/16.

‘Road to Success’ Guided Tours

Jobseekers will be guided on sector-specific tours on both days of the fair to direct them to their favourite employers.

Personality Test & Career Guidance by postgradasia

Both jobseekers and prospective students alike can know more about themselves at the postgradasia Postgraduate Studies Fair section of the fair.

Hourly Cash Giveaway

All visitors will get the chance to win instant cash every hour on both days of the fair.

LILY CHAN, regional commercial director, GTI Media Malaysia

“The Mega Careers & Study Fair is the only Gen Y fair in Malaysia, where all Gen Y’s are given opportunities to carve their career paths with the Malaysia’s 100 Leading Graduate Employers.”

RAYMOND CHEH, chief operating officer, CareerBuilder Malaysia

“We welcome everyone to come to the Mega Careers & Study Fair to connect with top employers & course providers in charting the course to your dream careers! As the saying goes ‘The best way to predict the future is to create it’, so visit the fair to start creating yours!”
The industry has changed, and your customers want something different. Your sales team plays a critical role in helping your customers gain clarity and diagnose their problems.

Can your sales team engage and influence your customers? Do they know what your customers really want? Is it their job to simply make a sale, or to create and deliver real value?

WE CAN EMPOWER YOUR PEOPLE AND STRENGTHEN YOUR STRATEGY

Our suite of workshops and consulting services will equip your people to:

• Make well-informed recommendations.
• Understand the difference between traditional product-based selling and solutions-driven consultative selling.
• Develop meaningful solutions that make a significant impact.
• Build a coherent, compelling sales case for your client, and drive profit for your business.

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Contact Dinesh at 012 985 6835 or dinesh.draj@leaderonomics.com to schedule a free consultation.
A global leader in the pharmaceutical industry, Pfizer is no doubt an established household name, renowned for its continuous efforts in creating a healthier world. Every day, some 300 employees of Pfizer Malaysia – in eight offices throughout the country – commit themselves to advance wellness, improve the well-being of people and raise the health literacy of Malaysians.

True to its motto of “Working Together for a Healthier World”, Pfizer leads the field in the improvement of human life and the battle against diseases while engaging and caring for its employees and external parties. This cooperative relationship involves various stakeholders outside the organisation such as patients, healthcare providers, government agencies and non-governmental organisations, and more importantly, their own band of passionate individuals who make up the company. Pfizer is an organisation that values its talent and one that firmly believes that great people make a great company. It is no surprise then that Pfizer was chosen one of Malaysia’s 100 Leading Graduate Employers.

BEING A PART OF THE Pfizer FAMILY
There is a big focus on nurturing diversity and inclusion for everyone. For Pfizerians, it is no more then just a job. “Career success means different things to different people,” says Beth McCormick, Pfizer’s vice-president of talent planning and inclusion. “We guide employees to determine their own definition of success and then we provide the tools, programmes, environment and skills to help them realise those career goals,” she adds.

To achieve this, the company offers ample opportunities for growth and development. Through its incubation Labs series, Pfizerians get to learn about available career options. More than 70% of its management positions and all of its senior leadership positions are filled internally. To ensure that their talent pool remains top-notch, Pfizer’s Education Assistance Programme offers access to trainings and courses for professional certificates, diploma, degrees, masters and its equivalent. Such investment is vital in cultivating and upgrading employees’ knowledge and skill sets. Pfizerians are encouraged to take ownership of their job, which leads to higher motivation, increased productivity and effective outcomes.

Pfizer Malaysia was one of the first companies to implement the three-month maternity leave in 2006. Other employee perks include subsidised gym memberships for employees to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

At Pfizer, it is not all about work and no play. Pfizer’s well-planned offices provide a positive working experience. Other perks include subsidised gym memberships for employees to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Pfizer Malaysia’s senior leadership team while the overall workforce consists of 66% women employees.

PFIZER: LEADING BY EXAMPLE

PFIZERIANS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Pfizer’s commitment to making the world a healthier place goes far beyond the laboratory and the boardroom. The company believes in creating a positive impact in the community and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

This community promise has been validated with Pfizer being honoured recently by Frost & Sullivan as the CSR company of the year in community health. Pfizerians are encouraged to volunteer for a host of community programmes, which allows them to contribute and give back to the local community.

Susan Low, BT project manager of Pfizer Malaysia says, “In Pfizer, we are allowed to take time off during work days to volunteer for the CSR programmes initiated by the company. “It was an eye opener for me. The thought of being able to serve the underprivileged community and help them identify their medical problems brings a lot of satisfaction! Although it was challenging and tiring, it was all worth it knowing that communities would benefit.”

John McKenzie, country manager of Pfizer Malaysia says, “We believe the option of flexible work hours in Pfizer leads to better job performance and long-term career satisfaction. It is key for us to provide opportunity for career progression and flexibility in how colleagues can achieve their goals.”

Making the workplace a better place
Pfizer supports the Government’s initiative to increase women representation in leadership roles. There is an equal male-to-female ratio in Pfizer Malaysia’s senior leadership team while the overall workforce consists of 66% women employees.

Enriching talents to work towards a healthier world
Pfizerians are encouraged to volunteer for a host of community programmes, which allows them to contribute and give back to the local community.

Pfizer is an organisation that values its talent and one that firmly believes that great people make a great company.
SCALABILITY is high on the agenda for many CEOs (chief executive officers), and rightly so. From sales and revenue perspective the pressure is a breeze for one. Scale the sales force and scale the revenue (with a lot of luck, the profitability will follow).

Of course scaling the business is not isolated to just sales force. All other core and supporting functions can get bigger initially, on paper, but there are challenges. With scale comes potential problems. Look at the revenue generation engine of the organisation, the sales department, and explore some common scenarios that can play out:

Clearly this is not an exhaustive list, but here are three scenarios to avoid:

**SCALE WITHOUT LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY**

Often, the decision to scale is driven by decent revenue being generated from an existing or small sales force. The numbers are strong, the profit is solid and increasing, increasing the headcount should result in the requisite growth factor. The issue is that capability doesn’t scale at the same rate as headcount. So growth headroom is not particularly difficult or lengthy task. But finding and developing capable talent can be. While the capability is, so does the revenue. But where pain is readily felt, the impact on profits or the business is carrying the costs without the returns.

**SCALE WITHOUT LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY**

This is a big one. Finding capable sales talent is not a walk in the park. If you have another thing altogether, often, salespeople are more than capable of managing positions themselves. If this is found within the organisation, there can still be a strong call for a sales manager to scale the capability. It’s a fast process and day-to-day management. Grant the sales manager the authority to:

* increase sales capability rapidly
* focus on the weak team members, or decline in revenue during the lag time.

**THE MANAGEMENT FOCUS**

Managers are often either great at managing or great at selling, but rarely both. It’s difficult to do both if it isn’t that they can’t, but just that it’s difficult to achieve both concurrently. Strong “selling” managers often manage their sales budget, but a strong “marketing” manager can be a brain drain waiting to happen. Being a “people manager” usually means their most difficult moments, and at a time where revenue compensation is involved (because of your sales capability). There is a great challenge to avoid.

Mike Adams is a senior faculty of Leaderonomics. For a chance at winning a “Golden Ticket” to SPARK, do get the auditions on September 15, 2015 at the Leaderonomics Office. For more details and to register please go to: leaderonomics.org/spark

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**SCALING YOUR COMPANY? 3 ISSUES TO AVOID!**

**CHAIRMAN TEAM VS TEAM OF CHAMPIONS**

The modern rules of selling

**VALUES**

Having a set of values that the champion team upholds can make a team more than just a team. While culture can be quite tangible, values are highly tangible. They offer a framework for people to follow and a solid check against which to base decision making. Values can be reinforced and communicated. They also provide a beacon to drive behavior.

**BEHAVIORS**

Ultimately, active is the promoter for execution and results. Define the behaviors and actions that create optimal results and that are aligned to the culture. Ensure that these behaviors are understood and weaved into the fabric of the salesperson’s mindset. Behaviors that create optimal results benefit the organisation just as they benefit the individual.

However, not all teams have taken the time to define theirs and implement them into their organization. Don’t drown out these behaviors become habitual and reinforcing strong habits will create a strong culture. This is one area where the champion team can provide on-going support.

* Behaviors and skills, while desirable, are not necessarily easy to do and people need equipping to succeed.

**SALES DEVELOPMENT AND SELLING**

Developing, empowering and upskilling your sales force is a continuous and ruthless pursuit. Unfortunately, for some organisations it doesn’t always start. Champion teams constantly refine and improve on skills. It is more of a habit. A sports club wouldn’t dream of holding their team without adequate preparation. So why should your sales team be any different?

Champion teams are high performing teams that are proactive and patient until high performance is the norm.

**PARTNING THOUGHTS**

This is an intricate balance of talent, capability and culture, which, when finely tuned within your unique organisation, can create a self-propagating cycle.

Well developed and managed talent creates strong execution capability that positively impacts on culture. In turn, strong culture attracts great talent and great talent enables strong capability.

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**THAT’S ENOUGH! STARTED**

The next thing that I would like to share is on the alternative points of view in sales and business. Sometimes, what you read in the manual is wrong. My experience has taught me that in real life, things work differently. Here are five alternative perspectives.

1. **The customer is always right**
2. **An apex of power is not shared**
3. **It’s the sales and not the customer’s mistake**
4. **Every sales rep is a go-go-go sales rep**
5. **The sales force is a relentless pursuit**

**LEADERSHIP**

Leadership is not a fancy title or a position of authority. Leadership is the ability to influence the team to rally the troops for battle, to inspire and empower people to be and do more. Leaders not only lead but also willingly follow. Wherein managers may merely be tolerated but not followed. Leadership creates a champion team, where all of the people are pulling in the same direction.

**CULTURE**

This is probably one of the most important aspects of creating a champion team. Culture is so important that it pulls all of the other variables together.

Getting clear on exactly what the right culture looks like, is the first step to being able to drive this through the team’s time well invested.

There are some factors that are important to consider. Firstly, the culture must be aligned to the attainment of business objectives and revenue targets.

Secondly, every person on the team must contribute to the culture and thrive. Being a part of the culture, the leaders.

There is no place on the team for people who don’t meet those two criteria. People who can’t contribute to the culture will.end up diluting it, and those who are not thriving won’t add to the culture are not the right fit.

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**THE MODERN RULES OF SELLING**

**LET’S TALK SALES**

By Mike Adams

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**HIS is an era of disruption. The social and mobile explosion has changed the customer landscape forever. For some sectors their explosion is migrating through a rapid transformation.**

**LEADERSHIP**

* Mike Adams is a senior faculty of Leaderonomics. For a chance at winning a “Golden Ticket” to SPARK, do get the auditions on September 15, 2015 at the Leaderonomics Office.

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**SPARK LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME IS BACK!**

CALLING all youths between the ages of 13-18 years old on your leadership journey! Are you ready to step up and become a budding leader, to make your mark and make an impact? Join us at the state-of-the-art premises of Epson College in Malaysia. The adventure starts from December 13-15, 2015.

For a chance at winning a “Golden Ticket” to SPARK, do get the auditions on September 15, 2015 at the Leaderonomics Office. For more details and to register please go to: leaderonomics.org/spark
AN EXECUTIVE’S INSIDER SECRETS FOR MAKING THE SALE

By BRIAN FIELKOW
editor@leaderonomics.com

Driving me crazy when people perceive the sales process as glad-handing or wineing and dining. Salespeople are professionals. Yet as a company president and business owner, I see sales from a different perspective.

I’ve been contacted by salespeople for just about every product or service imaginable, and have seen excellence and disasters. The best salespeople not only know their product or service inside out but have also taken the time to study my company and its culture.

The odds of success are so much higher when the sales pitch is tailored to how the company operates.

HERE ARE SIX TIPS.

1. UNDERSTAND THE ORGANISATION

Many sales professionals assume that approaching the chief executive officer (CEO) is key to making a sale. In most cases, that assumption is wrong.

If a person goes right to the proverbial top of my company, he or she is by-passing the people who will make or break the relationship.

As CEO, I am not going to usurp the decision-making authority vested in my employees. If a purchasing decision is made that circumvents these employees, this is certain to demoralise and deflate them.

I am more concerned about employee respect, empowerment and morale than any product or service. If salespeople understand my company enough to find the relevant decision maker, their chances of success increase dramatically. I will receive a positive recommendation from my decision makers, then they will have my attention.

2. UNDERSTAND THAT ORGANISATIONS CHANGE

When a company is of modest size, a certain senior executive might confer with the salesperson directly. As companies grow and responsibilities change, though, stay tuned. Don’t bank on yesterday.

For example, I used to handle my company’s benefits. Over time, I transferred that responsibility to another executive better suited for the task.

Despite several attempts to informing a certain salesman of the change, he refused to recognise it. He continued to bypass the right party, thinking he’d be okay as long as I was around.

A competitor studied our organisation, went through the correct channels and built credibility with the right people. Who do you suppose is handling my company’s business now? I am running a business, not a country club.

Never rely on a relationship with a company executive as a long-term sales strategy. People change and roles change.

3. BECOME A STRATEGIC ASSET

My company was relocating and building a new office building. I was very involved with the new office planning and have met with several prospective vendors.

But one immediately began to promote their furniture, prices or service. Only one salesperson came in with a different game plan.

He asked, ”Why do you have an office in the first place? After all, you could perform most things remotely. So, why are you spending the capital on an office?”

These questions led to a discussion about teamwork, the need for communication and tearing down silos. All these are core values in my company.

This value-based discussion led to some strategic thinking about my company’s office design, including the limitations of the space and the organisation’s vision for the future.

The sales representative offered to prepare a preliminary design that was aligned with my company’s objectives and values.

He indicated that my company was free to use the design and could choose another vendor if he could not meet our objectives when it was time to buy furniture.

This ranks as textbook perfection for positioning a product or service for a sale at the executive level. This salesperson took a commoditised product (office furniture) and approached it as a strategic sale. The vendor showed how his products support my company’s values and strategic goals.

4. RESPECT MY TIME

Take the advice of President Woodrow Wilson. When an official congratulated the president on introducing the vogue of short speeches, he inquired about the preparation time involved.

He said, “It depends. If I am to speak

IF SALESPEOPLE UNDERSTAND YOUR COMPANY ENOUGH TO FIND THE RELEVANT DECISION MAKER, THEIR CHANCES OF SUCCESS INCREASE DRAMATICALLY.

10 minutes, I need a week for preparation; if 15 minutes, three days, if half an hour, two days; if an hour, I am ready.”

Be prepared. Be concise. If there’s a need for background, do research before the meeting. Don’t use the meeting to prove a value proposition that I want to hear.

Instead, do the homework and use the meeting to investigate what’s giving the company pain (consultative selling).

Arrive at the meeting knowing with reasonable certainty about the company’s needs.

5. KNOW WHOM I TRUST

Cold calls and letters are not likely to land a meeting. The most effective salespeople operate within a network.

The odds of a meeting soar if a referral comes from a trusted business associate or adviser (not just some friend of a friend on Facebook or LinkedIn).

The odds of a meeting are increased if a salesperson has served as a valuable-added resource inside a network.

If a trusted source raves about a certain product or service, I will want to ensure that a meeting with the appropriate salesperson occurs.

Don’t try to get around my company’s gatekeeper. The gatekeeper is there for a reason. A salesperson pretending like he and I are old friends does not work.

My gatekeeper knows my trusted network quite well. Treating my company’s gatekeepers with disrespect means zero chances of doing business with my organisation.

6. LEAVE THE GIFTS AT HOME

At a previous company I worked for, a box arrived at my office with a beautiful Mont Blanc pen set and a request for an appointment. Needless to say, the vendor was banned and the gift returned.

Know and respect a company’s vendor gift policy. I don’t allow any sort of entertainment or gifts during the courtship.

It makes me feel like a salesperson is trying to buy my business. Once a vendor is selected, then limited, reasonable entertainment (such as a lunch) may be appropriate.

Never violate written or common sense integrity principles. There’s no faster way to kill the chances of doing business.
GREAT CEOS MUST LEARN THE SCIENCE AND ART OF SALES

By ROSHAN THIRAN

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In the United States (US), there is a rite of passage that most children go through. At the age of eight or nine, most kids start their first business manning a lemonade stall. This is where most of them encounter their first form of rejection, when a potential customer refuses to buy a drink from them. This is also where they get their first lesson in the most important function of all businesses—sales.

In most Asian countries, our exposure to sales comes much later in life, usually when we start a business and soon realise that regardless of how amazing our products or services are, if we can’t sell them, our business will soon collapse.

Most great Asian leaders, from Soichiro Honda, founder of Honda Motor to Sony founder, Akio Morita, were all “forced” to learn sales from an early age, benefiting their organisations in the process.

GREAT LEADERS ARE GREAT SALESPERSONS

Soichiro started his own auto repair business at age 22. Japan was hit badly by the Great Depression of the 1930s. Soichiro had started a little workshop called Tokai Seiki trying to develop the concept of the piston ring. He hoped to sell these rings to Toyota. He laboured day and night, even sleeping at the workshop. Soon he had no cash. He still remained positive that his idea would work so he pawned off his wife’s jewellery for working capital.

During his first sales call to Toyota, the engineers there laughed at him and told him that the rings did not meet their standards. He tried selling it again and again and finally won his first contract. With that sale, Honda Motors was finally born.

Soichiro learnt that sales makes a company. Products enable sales to happen but without sales, products have no value.

Years later, when Honda made its first foray into the US, Soichiro took it upon himself to relocate to there and be its first salesperson. He knew the importance of sales and took it upon himself to sell.

Most great chief executive officers (CEOs) view their primary role as salespeople. They sell their organisation and so can emphasise and support their sales teams.

GREAT LEADERS NEED TO BE ABLE TO ‘SELL’ THEIR VISION

Morita was one such person. Morita was born to a wealthy family involved in the sake brewing business for 14 generations. He was passionate about electronics and ditched his family business, and together with Manami Ichiba, with an initial capital of 190,000 yen (about US$500), formed the Tokyo Tushin Kogyo Kabushiki Kaisha (Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering Corp).

Japan in the 1950s was in a sorry state. It was regarded with disdain by most of the world. Morita knew he had to sell not only his company but his country. He came up with a vision for his company and for Japan.

Morita established that their core purpose was to be a pioneering company, which did the impossible.

In 1952, Morita decided to take a trip to the US and Europe to try to explore the market and see if he could sell abroad. During the trip, he learnt that nobody could pronounce “Tokyo Tushin Kabushiki Kaisha” (his company’s name).

If nobody could pronounce its name, how could he sell its products? He decided to change its name. Everyone frowned upon it. A name in Japan was a sacred cow. But to sell he had to do it.

After considerable research, the duo decided to use the name “Sony”, derived from the two words ‘Sonus’ (Latin for sound) and “Sonny” (English slang for bright, young and cute boys). To Morita, sales had to dictate even the company name. Ensuring he was known as any on Earth.

Sales is a complicated process. It requires working on both the customer’s heart and mind. It is a skill that is not genetically obtained but is learnt through hard work and practice.

Stephen King once claimed, “Talent is cheaper than table salt. What separates the talented (salesperson) from the successful one is a lot of hard work.”

LEARNING TO SELL

Most people assume that those who are masters in sales are genetically born with such talent. What they fail to understand is that sales is both an art and a science that needs to be developed, learnt and practised.

When I first moved to the US in the early 90s, I realised that I was a hopeless salesperson. I was frustrated that I could not even communicate, let alone convince my university professors on trivial academic matters. I decided to take matters into my own hands and learn how to communicate and sell.

I knew from the vast research that I had done that the best way to learn was to do something. So, I applied for a job as a door-to-door knife salesman. I would go around selling knives and kitchen utensils to housewives during my summer break.

Based on my orientation and various pep talks given by others who had succeeded in this venture, I assumed it was a piece of cake. I was in for a rude awakening. I failed miserably in my first month. I could not even sell a knife or a simple piece of kitchenware.

It came to the point where I was selling myself that I was just not cut out for sales. I convinced myself that selling was not part of my DNA. Yet, something deep inside me didn’t want to fail.

So, I said I would try to do this until I succeeded. I told myself I could only quit once I was named the top salesperson of the month.

The second month was just as painful but I told myself I would dedicate this month to observing the best salesperson and getting advice from as many successful sales folks as possible. I managed to sell a few pieces in the second month.

Then came the third month—I ended the month as the top salesperson in the company for that month! I could not believe it. I had learnt to sell and it had absolutely nothing to do with natural, genetic talent (at least for me)!

I immediately quit the following month.

Learning to sell was probably the most important business lesson I learnt (and most painful). I learnt a valuable lesson in my experience selling knives to housewives. I learnt that the most important part of selling had nothing to do with the product.

Instead, selling was all about listening and enabling the buyer to

TURN TO PAGE 10

Leaderonomics.com, Saturday 22 August 2015
PREPARING for a negotiation when a lot is on the line can elicit a tremendous amount of fear and negative thinking. This kind of thinking can mean the negotiation is lost before the salesperson has even started to prepare for it. The first war to be won is the battle inside the salesperson against defeatist thoughts.

By becoming clear on desired outcomes, he or she has the greatest chance at negotiation success and making a sale.

1 ELIMINATE ANXIETY
The brain loves options. A salesperson should always have more than one significant opportunity in the pipeline. This leads to increased confidence and less anxiety when negotiating.

Thus the salesperson doesn’t feel desperate and can more confidently acquire new business by directing negotiations to the point where the potential customer ends up selling the salesperson on why they should do business together.

2 SCORE A SMALL ‘YES’ OR TWO
Negotiate for what’s easy first and never assume a potential customer will say “yes” to everything. Sometimes, the prospect may offer to take a smaller order before going for bigger, more lucrative orders or contracts.

For the salesperson, getting a foot in the door can be the start of longer-term, more profitable partnership opportunities in the future.

A smaller win can help prove the worth of the services being sold. It gives the salesperson evidence of prior successful work to use in negotiations for bigger projects.

3 TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF LISTENING
Salespeople have two ears and one mouth for a reason. People love to be listened to. Taking the time to listen can set the sales professional apart from competitors who push too hard.

Even sharks become calm amid calm waters. So when negotiating, a salesperson should listen twice as much as she speaks and repeat to the customer what the client said and ask for agreement.

When a sales professional has the self-control to listen, she learns to speak the language of the customer and this enables her to use this language to outsmart the competition.

4 CHOOSE A ‘PARTNER’ APPROACH
In a negotiation, the seller needs to view a potential customer as a partner rather than an opponent. Psychologically this puts each party on the same team, bringing more confidence in the sales professional’s negotiation.

It changes the whole mindset and creates a communication space based more on agreement than desperate acts of getting.

If the potential customer is not willing to come to agreement, then the sales professional can shock the customer by removing the offer.

Often what happens then is the potential customer rethinks a stance and returns to negotiate with a higher level of respect for the salesperson’s offer. A lack of fear of rejection is respectable and compelling.

5 THINK EXISTENTIALLY
When the salesperson tries to put herself in the shoes of the customer and can see the big picture, a positive psychological environment for negotiation is reached.

She gains clarity about the potential customer’s demands, strengths and weaknesses and it’s easier to move through the negotiation.

The potential customer feels connected to the negotiations because his viewpoint has been considered, which goes a long way toward making a favourable impression and building trust.

6 PUT PEOPLE FIRST, NUMBERS SECOND
If a salesperson bullies her way into a deal, a customer will feel defensive, which blocks effective negotiation. Defensiveness means a lack of openness to new information.

A salesperson should refrain from criticising the needs, demands, motives or behaviours of the potential customer. She should listen and be smart, rational and calm.

Strategically the sales professional must keep the focus off the offer and create an arena of fairness in mediating discussions about the numbers in a mutually beneficial fashion—one where she does not settle for less than what is desired.

7 MIMIC THE EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT
Negotiation always involves manipulation. A useful strategy is to feign indifference once the negotiation has reached a sticking point.

If a potential customer senses desperation or neediness in a pitch, the salesperson becomes prey to being taken advantage of.

If the sales professional can limit her sense of urgency about closing a sale and reflect indifference to the customer by looking relaxed or asking for a delay in the negotiations, she creates psychological tension in the other party. This can result in an agreement.

PARTING THOUGHTS
Negotiation is purely a psychological strategy. Psychologically, a sales professional must be the master of her own mind and emotions.

She needs to enter the negotiation prepared, knowing the needs of the potential customer through research, listening, spending time and paying attention.

When a sales professional goes into a negotiation well-informed, she can keep her expectations under control.

The most effective working relationships, which can then evolve into long-standing partnerships, are always based in trust between partners.

In this way, negotiation is not about winning but rather about mediating for the best outcome for all involved.

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live their dreams. It was really about having a meaningful and authentic relationship with the buyer. Having great products though, were important to sustain continued sales. And I learnt that passion for your product and services were key ingredients to selling.

SO WHAT?
So, what does this all mean for me? If you have never sold anything, there is a high likelihood you will fail if you start your own business today.

If you dislike selling and assume it is for certain type of people, you will probably never be a great CEO of a business.

Selling is the most important part of any business. It took me many years to realise its foundational importance.

So, if you have had no selling experience or skills, start today. Sell something. It doesn’t have to be products or services your company makes. Sell your dream. Sell your vision for a better tomorrow.

If no one “buys” your dream or vision, keep working on it. The more you practise, the more likely you will succeed. My son keeps reminding me, “practice makes perfect”. So, the next time your colleagues in sales come into office with a closed deal, take time to “honour” them and congratulate them. It is a thankless task arrayed with countless rejections.

Ask them to teach you their secret. You may just learn a thing or two that will make you a better leader.

Leaders after all, are the greatest sellers – they sell you their vision and energise you with their dreams and plans. Learn to sell – be a leader!

Rashan Thiran optimistically believes that the social enterprise he leads, Leaderonomics, will one day transform the nation through leadership development. He looks forward to organisations in Malaysia supporting the Leaderonomics cause by leveraging them for their leadership development work. For more information on Leaderonomics programmes, email people@leaderonomics.com. To receive Rashan’s daily leadership nuggets, go to www.facebook.com/roshanthiran.leaderonomics
AFTER a long week at work, most of us want our weekends to be relaxing, enjoyable and interesting in order to make up for the stressful and demanding week.

Unfortunately, most of us end up sleeping in, watching movies or eating. Although it is good to rest our bodies and minds and have time to “burn around”, it can get pretty dull after a while.

Some of the excuses I hear from working adults are, “I don’t get to laze around the house and watch television during the week”, or “C’mon! I just want to relax and do nothing” and, finally, “Why do anything that’s going to make me feel tired on Monday?”

I often have these thoughts myself. Although there is a certain amount of validity to the aforementioned comments, I have also wondered if that is all there is to life as a working adult? Is work the only “fun” part of your life?

I sincerely hope not! So what else is out there, with different types for families, groups of friends, and couples.

GET OUT AND HAVE FUN

There are many indoor and outdoor activities that you can do on your weekend, with different types for families, groups of friends, and couples.

1 FOR THE THINKER

If anyone has watched a lot of CSI or Law & Order, the Escape Room could be quite appealing to them. It is an indoor activity that is suitable for children and adults, and it encourages you to think like a detective in order to solve a puzzle in 45 minutes.

The best part is that there are different levels of difficulty to choose from and, win or lose, you get to take a creative picture at the end!

2 FOR THE FITNESS BUFF

Another indoor activity that could be tempting for those who like to keep fit is rock climbing. It is certainly different from going to the gym, but it works the same muscles and you get to feel a sense of accomplishment when you reach the top of the rock.

I always thought that this activity was very challenging but, if you go with the right person, you will definitely create a bond through trusting and understanding each other.

3 FOR THE ADRENALINE JUNKIE

There are loads of outdoors and adventurous activities for adults such as the ATV (all-terrain vehicle), waterfall adventure, paintball, and go-karting.

The ATV adventure is a lot of fun because you get to ride your own ATV. You even have the option of choosing how long you want the route to be, imagine riding along jungle trails with friends and finding a waterfall to take a dip!

Paintball and go-karting are definitely at the top of my list of exciting things to do with friends. The laughter and memories that one can create during these activities are priceless.

These activities are dynamic and may require a big group of people to go with you.

4 FOR THE NATURE-LOVER

For those who prefer a slightly more laidback weekend, there is the option of spending an evening reading, walking, or cycling in the park. There are a few parks that are very well maintained with good facilities, and can be extremely relaxing, especially during sunsets.

Good options around Kuala Lumpur are Desa Park City, Bukit Kiara, Templers Park and, of course, the parks in Putrajaya. The parks are often filled with families or couples going on their evening strolls and picnics.

I am sure there are more parks like this close to your home, but sometimes we don’t realise its existence because we are too busy with our daily routines.

5 FOR THE CHARITABLE

Volunteering may seem like extra work (or rather unpaid work) but it could also be meaningful and fulfilling to the point that it doesn’t feel like work at all!

This could be an option for those who have a specific passion or interest to help their community.

There are a variety of organisations and options for everyone, and one just needs to do a little research into the field that they are interested in, whether it is with animals, refugees, orphans, the homeless, or the environment.

The more excited you feel about volunteering, the less it will feel like work, and it is a fantastic way of helping you to reduce stress by giving your time in service to others.

IN CONCLUSION

The list of activities that you can do over a weekend is endless — there are more things to do and much more experiences to be gained. Most of the time, we can find out about different ideas for the weekend by going online or browsing through the newspaper.

There should be much more to our daily routine than just work, home, eating, and sleeping. At the end of the day, we all want to live life to the fullest, but how we go about achieving that aim is very much up to us to decide.

Let’s start with our weekends!

Jean has a background in marriage and family therapy, and is passionate about working with children and teens. She believes that everyone has their strengths and can be empowered to lead a life filled with positivity, strength and true happiness. If you would like to find out how you can volunteer yourself as facilitators and helpers with Leaderonomics Youth, please email her at jean.selvam@leaderonomics.com

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CALLING all parents! Ever wonder how you can improve your youth’s self-confidence and personal leadership? Join a free two-hour DIODE preview session to find out how the Leaderonomics Youth team does it through a series of proven and effective experiential activities from the DIODE Leadership Camp! To secure your free space at the workshop, please visit www.diodecamps.com
LESSONS FROM JOHN GREEN’S MOVIE ADAPTATION

By ARIELLE YEN
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THE film version of John Green’s popular young adult novel, Paper Towns, has many a teenager and adult alike fluttering in excitement over the story of love, friendship and adventure.

The film brings us from Orlando, Florida, to the paper town of Algoe, New York: a fictional town printed on maps as a copyright device, in order to fish out counterfeit copies.

Margo Roth Spiegelman has been the love of Quentin Jacobsen’s otherwise mundane life ever since she moved in to the house next to his. With Margo, life for Quentin (known as “Q” to his friends) becomes all about adventures... until they begin to drift apart in high school.

Unexpectedly, Margo enlists Q as her “getaway driver” the night before she leaves town, Q says he can feel her heart beating in his chest – he has never felt this sort of excitement before.