TEAMWORK WINS

LAST week was my maiden editor’s note – it felt a little jittery, and the nerves were creeping in. Second week in, and it does feel a whole lot better. It certainly goes a long way when there’s a super team working closely with me, ensuring that I’m holding up well, and knowing that they’ve got my back covered. Therein lies the aura of any employer who harbours any desire of becoming an employer of choice: a band of tight-knit individuals who make up teams, which then make up departments, and ultimately forms the organisation. It is no mere fluke that the likes of Google and Facebook are globally known as “an employer of choice”, and this week, we continue in the same vein as the last, where we continue to celebrate a number of organisations who are making an impact and changing lives wherever they are.

In this week’s pullout, we begin by looking at Jon Gordon’s five ways to think like a champion. To quote him, “I’ve learnt that to be a champion you must think like a champion”. That line of thought inspires, as it depicts the mindset of a winner. An important frame of mind would be that champions expect to win, and they don’t make excuses when they don’t win, being the other. Next, we move on to highlight a few organisations, who are recognised as employers of choice at the Malaysia HR Awards 2015. We stand and applaud them, as they have gone to great lengths to become champions.

Moving on, this week’s centrespread is by Jonathan Yabut, winner of The Apprentice Asia. I’m a huge fan of Jonathan, as his line of thought inspires, as it depicts the mindset of a winner. His words, “I’ve learnt that to be a champion you must think like a champion”. This doesn’t mean champions become complacent. Rather, with the right kind of mindset and the right kind of champions gain the confidence to go after big wins. Big wins and big success happen through the accumulation of many small victories. This doesn’t mean champions become complacent. Rather, with the right kind of celebration and reinforcement, champions work harder, practise more and believe they can do greater things.

For great leadership insights, including those by John Maxwell, visit www.leaderonomics.com. If you missed any of our past issues, go to www.leaderonomics.com/publications and download for FREE!

I meet and learn from champions every day. Not just in locker rooms but in classrooms, hospitals, homeless shelters, homes and office buildings. I’ve learnt that to be a champion you must think like a champion. Champions think differently than everyone else.

They approach their life and work with a different mindset and belief system that separates them from the pack.

1. **THEY EXPECT TO WIN**

When they walk on the court, on the field, into a meeting or in a classroom they expect to win. In fact they are surprised when they don’t win.

They expect success and their positive beliefs often lead to positive actions and outcomes. They win in their mind first and then they win in the hearts and minds of their customers, students or fans.

2. **THEY CELEBRATE SMALL WINS**

By celebrating the small wins, champions gain the confidence to go after big wins. Big wins and big success happen through the accumulation of many small victories.

This doesn’t mean champions become complacent. Rather, with the right kind of celebration and reinforcement, champions work harder, practice more and believe they can do greater things.

3. **THEY DON’T MAKE EXCUSES WHEN THEY DON’T WIN**

They don’t focus on the faults of others. They focus on what they can do better.

They see their mistakes and defeats as opportunities for growth. As a result, they become stronger, wiser and better.

4. **THEY FOCUS ON WHAT THEY GET TO DO, NOT WHAT THEY HAVE TO DO**

They see their work as a gift, not an obligation. They know that if they want to achieve a certain outcome they must commit to and appreciate the process. They may not love every minute of their journey but their attitude and will helps them develop their skill.

5. **THEY BELIEVE THEY WILL EXPERIENCE MORE WINS IN THE FUTURE**

Their faith is greater than their fear. Their positive energy is greater than the chorus of negativity. Their certainty is greater than all the doubt. Their passion and purpose are greater than their challenges. In spite of their situations, champions believe their best days are ahead of them, not behind them.

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

If you don’t think you have what it takes to be a champion, think again. Champions aren’t born. They are shaped and molded. And as iron sharpens iron you can develop your mindset and the mindset of your team with the right thinking, beliefs and expectations that lead to powerful actions.

A great example of this is John Wooden, the legendary UCLA basketball coach who passed away at the age of 99. He was one of my heroes and someone who not only thought like a champion, but lived like a champion, taught like a champion and developed champions.

Do you think champions are born or developed?

Jon Gordon is the author of numerous books including The Energy Bus, The Carpenter and The Seed, and blogs regularly at www.JonGordon.com. Read the following pages of this pullout to find out what makes an organisation a champion.

**VOLUNTEER AND GROW AS A LEADER**

Is there more to volunteerism and community involvement than just to feel good about yourself? Studies have proven that people who volunteer have better mental health, are less depressed and they live longer.

These are some soft skills you may gain through volunteerism, and they may be what organisations are looking for these days in their talent pool: communication, leadership, teamwork, problem-solving and public speaking.

Lily Cheah from Leaderonomics shares that volunteering is an excellent opportunity for anyone to upskill.

The opinions expressed in this leadership guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.
MORE than 500 human resource (HR) professionals and 40 organisations came together to celebrate the much anticipated 15th Malaysia HR Awards 2015 which took place on Oct 29, 2015 at Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa.

Organised yearly since 1999, this coveted national event was proudly organised by the Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management (MIHRM) in partnership with a leading online job portal.

The awards ceremony was endorsed by the HR community, with the Minister of Human Resources as patron.

According to MIHRM president Aresandiran Jaganatha Naidu, the awards saw a 25% increase in its turnout and more than a 50% increase in the number of participating organisations, compared to last year.

He said, “Only MIHRM award winners can have the glory to be recognised in 95 countries (sister HR institutes worldwide) because of our world affiliations and mutual recognitions.”

He also highlighted the grand award win by KPJ Healthcare Bhd, as it exemplified that home grown organisations have what it takes to achieve success while competing with larger enterprises or multinational corporations.

By PRETHIBA ESVARY and LIM LAY HSUAN

MIHRM president Aresandiran Jaganatha Naidu (2nd from left) and Jobstreet CEO Peter Everingham look on.

Hewlett Packard Multimedia Sdn Bhd

AIA Bhd

KPJ Healthcare

DHL Information Services (Asia Pacific) Sdn Bhd

CIMB Group

Successful event was proudly organised by the Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management (MIHRM), in partnership with a leading online job portal.

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I T’s not every day you come across a CEO whose literal clarity of vision has helped inspire a business vision that’s helping to make a huge difference to the lives of people at home and abroad. But VISTA CEO Lim Boon Siong is continuing to build upon his vision following corrective eye surgery he received in Melbourne in 1998. As friends stood amazed at the results of “laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis” (Lasik) surgery, they sought his help to introduce them to the transformative procedure in Melbourne and, from that point, Lim’s business had already begun to blossom.

As many great entrepreneurs before him, the VISTA CEO took a leap of faith after establishing connections in Melbourne and seeking the advice of seasoned entrepreneurs, leaving his position as a merchant banker in the 1990s to embark on a journey to bring Lasik technology to Malaysia.

Two key factors drove him to take on this new venture. First was the results of his own corrective surgery, which he vividly describes as like “being crippled and then being able to walk again”. Second, the VISTA boss wondered why Malaysians had to go abroad again”. Second, the VISTA boss wondered why Malaysians had to go abroad to receive top-quality corrective surgery when they could have a high standard of service with state-of-the-art procedures carried out at home. In the end, he answered his own question by making it happen.

DEVELOPING TALENT

It’s easy to see why team members at VISTA remain at the company for long periods of time. Lim puts a premium on developing his team, and counts his employees as the key to VISTA’s success. It’s little wonder, then, that when employees take a break from their career, they’re only too keen to return to a company described as being a “family-friendly place” and a “fun place to work, where there’s lots of opportunities to grow”.

Lim not only talks about being a transformational leader, he makes sure to let his staff grow and develop free from the constraints of micromanagement. “Being a leader is not about cultiv-ating followers, it’s about encouraging others to become leaders themselves,” he says. His refreshing approach to collaborative leadership is exemplified by one occasion where he treated staff members to a couple of nights at the Ritz-Carlton hotel to observe premium customer service. He then invited his team to think of ways in which they could offer a similar customer experience within their own industry.

CUSTOMER CARE

Since its inception in 1999, VISTA has completed tens of thousands of successful eye surgeries. Perhaps the only thing to come close to developing team members is the customer care that Lim strives to ensure is provided to anyone who walks through the doors. Regardless of who they are, every customer is treated with the highest quality of service and professional care, which explains why more than 70% of people to come through VISTA’s doors have been referred by satisfied customers. Such is the reputation of VISTA that over 25% of the company’s clients come from abroad from countries such as Australia and China.

In fact, such was the strength of desire to provide the best standard of service to customers that Lim and his team travelled the world in order to see what the best eye doctors were practising and what equipment they were using. It may have been the case years ago that people would travel to Singapore, Australia and Europe to get the best in corrective eye surgery. Now, doctors from these countries come to Malaysia to learn from VISTA. High praise, indeed – and testament to the fact that VISTA is leading by example in quality of service and customer care.

WHAT is the one trait you believe every leader should possess why?

Critical thinking and decision making. In moving from the industrial age to the information age, we have moved from scarce information (trade secrets) to information overload. A great leader needs the ability to compile all such readily available information, thoroughly analyse it in many different ways, and use their experience to make a decision that could potentially make or break the company.

What do you do to ensure that you continue to develop and grow as a leader?

I’m always learning not only from our own industry, but also other similar services industry such as hospitality, where you can learn a lot about customer service.

What advice would you give to someone who finds themselves taking on a leadership role for the first time?

Be humble and learn from great leaders. Find a mentor or coach with whom you can discuss success and challenges. New leaders should actively listen to, engage with, and solicit advice from all stakeholders including suppliers, staff, and bankers.

By SANDY CLARKE
editor@leaderonomics.com
THRIVING COFFEEHOUSE, AWARD-WINNING EMPLOYER

TOP REASONS FOR COFFEE GIANT’S CONTINUED SUCCESS

By LILY CHEAH

Lily.cheah@leaderonomics.com

STARBUCKS was awarded the Employer of Choice Silver Award at the recent Malaysia HR Awards organised by the Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management (MIHRM). This latest recognition marks yet another accolade to display in the specialty coffee company’s already burgeoning awards cabinet.

Just earlier this year, Starbucks was conferred the Best of the Best Employer Award at Aon Hewitt Best Employer Malaysia 2015. Last year, it was the recipient of the HR Best Practices Gold Award at the MIHRM Malaysia HR Awards.

The coffee giant accounts for almost half of the total coffee market share in the country. While business strategies are in place to ensure Starbucks retains its market leading position, it recognises the significance of its people in making this happen. Hence the commitment to being a great employer.

Prefering the term “partners” to employees, Sydney Quays, managing director of Starbucks Malaysia and Brunei, highlights that “the commitment of our partners is a major reason why we are recognised as the leading specialty coffee company and the industry benchmark in Malaysia.”

To what does Starbucks credit this steady recognition of their reputation as an employer? It seems to boil down to four points, which the company adheres to as its key principles in its undertaking to remain an employer of choice.

EMPLOYER BRANDING

In exchange for the productivity and performance of its people, Starbucks pledges to provide partners with personal and career development opportunities in the effort to retain, engage and motivate staff.

Of the numerous initiatives in place, a comprehensive talent management framework ensures Starbucks can plan for, select, hire, develop and retain the best talent.

Its compensation and benefits programme is customised according to the needs of partners, and boasts elements such as a monthly reloadable Starbucks card for friends and family, incentive trips and sponsorship on gym membership.

Furthermore, the company commits to equal pay range for the whole country and extends equal benefits to part-time partners.

PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

Your growth and development are important

Starbucks partners are provided with a structured career pathway. Expectations are set from the beginning so that partners can forge their own path and manage their success.

With a heavy emphasis on inter-penetrating experiences, there are given opportunities for career progression. Impressively, 100% of the company’s current operations leaders were internally promoted and 52% of department heads in Starbucks’ headquarters were promoted from retail.

Talent development comes in the form of initiatives such as the Starbucks Coffee International Retail Learning Certification Programmes and conferences to connect with local and overseas networks.

Exemplary partners are recognised through formal and informal means, which include service awards, performance awards, recognition cards and “WOW” pins.

COFFEE AND CULTURE

It values the coffee connection

Fueling the company’s rich coffee culture is a priority. One of the ways it achieves this is by equipping partners with knowledge and skills to be strong ambassadors of coffee.

Spot a Starbucks coffee master by their black aprons (as opposed to the usual green). These are graduates of the company’s Coffee Masters Programme. Other initiatives include the Latte Art Programme and Origin Experience, where partners are taken on coffee education trips to farms where beans are sourced.

The way Starbucks sees it, both partners and customers benefit; it feeds the passion and expertise of partners, and at the same time, partners are better equipped to provide customers with the best levels of service on the front line.

HUMANITY AND LOVE

It gives opportunities for values to be translated into action

With a strong emphasis on the human connection, Starbucks has a suite of initiatives to provide an avenue for partners to express humanitarian instincts. Its numerous corporate social responsibility programmes especially focus on two main areas: the community and the environment.

Recent examples include partnering with non-governmental organisations to provide free medical aid to children in low cost neighbourhoods, and a recycling project in Cameron Highlands.

For partners in need, a CUP (Caring United Partners) Fund is in place to provide help in times of significant and immediate needs such as illness or injury, death, natural disaster or other catastrophic circumstances. All partners are eligible to apply for assistance, with a 90% application approval rate.

EXEMPLARY PEOPLE LEADERSHIP RECOGNISED

At the helm of Starbucks’ people initiatives is June Beh, director of partner resources and compliance. At the recent Malaysia HR Awards 2015, Beh, who joined Starbucks in 2005 when there were only 60 stores, was recognised with the prestigious HR Leader Gold Award.

We ask her a few questions about the win:

1. Congratulations on the award. How do you feel about this win?

I think the win is not just about me but rather the company as a whole. We are all so proud of this recognition and to be a part of this company. We are constantly looking into ways where we can improve/enrich our partners’ lives.

2. What are Starbucks’ future plans on the people front?

We hope to be able to continue to strengthen the brand in terms of attraction and retention, and to upgrade our HR system. Technology now plays an important role in the industry and we will be investing in our systems to further enhance our business experience.

3. Words of wisdom on leading human capital today?

HR is beyond administrative work; we are the pulse of the business. In today’s market we can no longer rely on transactional methods (pay slips, approving leave, etc.) to run the business, but we have to evolve towards having an emotional connection. We carry the voice of our partners and we have to ensure that this integral part of the company is taken care of.

Fellow partners in Starbucks have these words of commendation for Beh:

“June has a unique mix of HR skills and business experience which allows her to ensure that HR decisions are considered in the context of achieving Starbucks’s strategic goals, while maintaining the morale of the partners.”

– Cheyanne Koh, head of operations, Starbucks Malaysia & Brunei

“June leads with authenticity and humility, and ensures the teams are heard and are involved.”

– Sydney Quays, managing director, Starbucks Malaysia & Brunei

Interested to embark on an exciting career with Starbucks Malaysia? To know more, check out www.starbucks.com.my
THINGS TO PREPARE FOR YOUR NEXT JOB INTERVIEW

HANDY TIPS FROM OTHERS

I ask some folks to share their tips on how to prepare for an interview. Here’s what they have to say.

JULIA HD
24, Government analyst
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

RESERVE TIME TO COMPOSE YOURSELF.

There was one case when I nervous late for an interview and this diminished my confidence all the way throughout. I felt so guilty because I knew I was late my lesson. I’m still waiting on quote 

RESERVE TIME TO COMPOSE YOURSELF.

This time is crucial because it allows you imagine yourself in the interview and doing everything right. Mental preparation is always the key!

NECA MARQUEZ
26, Brand manager
Manila, Philippines

SAY IT IN NUMBERS, NOT JUST WORDS.

When talking about achievements from your past company, don’t just say “I did so many things”. Say it in numbers.

What about achievements that increased the company’s annual sales by 20%?

When talking about experiences in the company: what he likes about it, and how he has grown throughout. I felt so guilty I couldn’t

PRACTICING WHAT YOU KNOW.

You may be the most skilled employee the world has ever seen, but if you can’t communicate well during an interview, you won’t make the cut. So, what are you doing from now on that job interview?

Could it be your lack of confidence? Your lack of knowledge about the company you’re applying for? The arrogant answer you made during the interview?

WHAT TO DO, HERE ARE FIVE INTERVIEW TIPS.

1. DO YOUR RESEARCH.

Most applicants underestimate their knowledge about the organization they’re aiming to join. If you’re applying for a job in a company, being a cog in its product or service is not good enough. It takes a deeper understanding of an organization’s vision, scope of operations, culture, and management style to truly appreciate it.

So, who are you interviewing?

2. MASTER THE FAQS.

There are interview questions that have stuck the test of time and you have no excuse not to prepare for them. Now, you should have selected good friends or mentors who are willing to conduct mock interviews for you.

Ask them to cover these most frequently asked questions (FAQs):

Why are you leaving your current job and seeking opportunities elsewhere?

Why were you promoted more quickly than your colleagues?

3. DRESS TO IMPRESS.

Clothes will always set the tone. Make sure you wear proper attire. The “Mandarin collar” shirt is a must. You can use your suits.

The company’s website is always a good first step. The “About Us” section will give you an overview of the company.

What online articles to look at? What have been the company’s success points and challenges? Is it performing well in the market?

Turn the tables around:

The best people to ask of the company has got their own experiences in the company and what they think about it. They have grown through the years. I check their language and facial gestures when he answers these questions. You’ll be armed to get some clues if the company is worth applying for.

4. CLEAN UP YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILE.

When you say “clean up”, we assume that everyone has their share of irresponsible posts on the internet. No one wants to hire a candidate who checks candidates’ profile online and judge you based on what they see. You find impressions can be lasting but, first impressions also last, so do your part to make a good one.

Does your social media profile say the right things about you? It might change your interviewer’s impres-

5. ASK AND TALK BACK.

A job interview should never be a one-way street. You’ve not just there to be assessed by the interviewer, you’re also there to find out if the job’s right for you.

You have one that’s incomplete with no pro-

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS.

It is never the end of the world! If you fail an interview like in failed relationships, there are many factors to consider why both of you were never meant to be.

As long as you’ve done your best to prepare, use the defeat as a means to fuel your hunger to ace in the next interview.

Beware that human resources recruit-

Jonathan Yabut is the winner of The Apprentice Asia, and is currently based in Kuala Lumpur with a leading airline. He has since become an inspirational speaker and leadership expert across Southeast Asia. His book, From Crut to Great, results his inspiring journeys winning the show. Follow him on Twitter @JonathanYabu.

Jonathan Yabut to engage with Jonathan, email jacob@leaderonomics.com. To know more about our services, training or speaking engagements, email info@leaderonomics.com.
R.E.A.L PASSION FOR EDUCATION: NURTURING TALENTS IN TEACHING

By JACK CHUA
editor@leaderonomics.com

For 30 years, R.E.A.L Education Group has earned a reputation for being one of the top providers of premium education programmes.

Starting off humbly in a rented bungalow with 40 students during the mid-80s, R.E.A.L has developed into Malaysia’s largest integrated education service provider that caters to children and young adults.

R.E.A.L currently runs the R.E.A.L Kids chain of preschools, R.E.A.L Schools that offer both international and national syllabi, as well as Cambridge English For Life — a leading provider of accredited English language programmes.

In addition to its commitment to providing top-notch education to various communities, R.E.A.L also prides itself for being one of the nation’s best companies to work for. R.E.A.L has garnered silver medals in two categories — namely, the Employer of Choice Award and the HR Leader of the Year Award — for the 2015 Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management (MIHRM) Awards.

SOUND LEADERSHIP AND R.E.A.L VALUES

R.E.A.L’s acronym — Results Oriented Active Learning — aptly summarises its philosophy of developing well-rounded individuals that exemplify its five core values — Character, Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking and Creativity.

Part of R.E.A.L’s secret to success as one of Malaysia’s most attractive employers is its HR leadership that cultivates leadership qualities such as having good character, being proactive and dedicated towards furthering the company’s vision, mission and goals.

Equally crucial for HR leaders are soft skills such as being good listeners, maintaining harmonious relationships and becoming good role models who can “walk the talk”.

R.E.A.L OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In a recent interview, Kenny Sim, vice-president of group corporate resources at R.E.A.L, shares his insights on R.E.A.L’s success in the realm of human resources (HR) development.

With regards to the greatest challenge faced by employers in moulding a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, Sim stresses that it is vital to focus on the unique needs and gaps of each individual and to subsequently fill these needs, both on a personal and career level.

To accomplish this, R.E.A.L invests substantially on identifying and measuring individual gaps, designing staff development programmes to close these gaps, and encouraging employees to be deeply involved in their own career progression.

He says that R.E.A.L uses a two-pronged approach of improving rewards in order to stay competitive, while espousing a healthy work-life balance for all.

THE ‘4R’ AND R.E.A.L LEARNING HUB

Although R.E.A.L currently has some of the most passionate, experienced and dedicated local teachers, Sim believes that continuous training and development is essential to produce teachers who are able to meet the high expectations of the industry.

As testament to the company’s commitment to personal growth, R.E.A.L Education Group and in particular its Human Capital Centre (HCC), are steadfastly driven by the “4R” model — namely Recruit, Retrain, Reward and Retain.

Placing emphasis on Retrain, R.E.A.L offers a plethora of widely-recognised training programmes that develop pedagogical competencies, leadership skills and soft skills for staff at all levels — from novices to senior managers — to benefit from.

To better achieve this aim, the “R.E.A.L Learning Hub” has been established to be the heart of its research and development in terms of 21st century teaching and pedagogy — further affirming R.E.A.L’s unwavering commitment towards enhancing and advancing its human capital.

ELEVATING TEACHING AS A NOBLE PROFESSION

Sim laments that although the demand for better education has skyrocketed in recent years — as exemplified by the sprouting of private and international schools in Malaysia — too little effort has been put into encouraging the younger generation to choose teaching as a career pathway.

To tackle this issue, it is R.E.A.L’s top priority to attract and retain educators from the “Gen-Y” cohort by, among other things, providing practicum and internship openings that present graduates with rewarding opportunities to penetrate the industry.

This is in line with the Government’s effort to raise the standard of education in the country by making teaching a more professional, highly-regarded and appealing profession for current and future generations.

In his concluding remarks, Sim stresses the urgency of having a constant stream of competent and motivated talent to sustain the growth of the expanding organisation. It is the enthusiasm to nurture the talent pool that has given R.E.A.L the competitive edge in the industry for over a generation.

TALENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY R.E.A.L

Programme | Highlights
--- | ---
Character First Training | Emphasis on character building through an internationally-recognised programme
Pedagogy Programmes | In-house training of academic staff using proven methodologies such as the Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers and Trainers (CIDTT)
Continuous Personal & Career Development | Harnesses peer learning to improve communication skills and English competency
Practicum and Internship | Collaboration with tertiary institutions to offer job opportunities for graduates
Management Apprentice Programme | Nurture individuals who are eager to pursue leadership positions in Early Childhood Education
R.E.A.L Toastmasters Club | Enhances participants’ leadership, linguistic and communication skills

R.E.A.L Education Group

30 years of experience in delivering full-fledged education

First kindergarten in Malaysia to be ISO-certified (Malaysia Book of Records 2002)

3 campuses offering both international and national syllabi from preschool, primary to secondary levels (R.E.A.L Schools)

Employer of Choice Award winner at the Malaysia HR Awards 2015

Employee average age: 38 years

Employees comprising 87% female

Total enrolment of 14,000 students and 1,300 teachers and staff

Passionate and dedicated R.E.A.L teachers provide top-notch education to both children and young adults.
By CYNTHIA ZHAI
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As leaders, your voice plays a big role in making first impressions. From doing business calls to presenting a proposal in front of your stakeholders, you need to ensure that your voice is heard clearly. What are some of the misconceptions we have when it comes to our vocal power? Vocal coach Cynthia Zhai addresses these fallacies.

1. ‘MY VOICE CANNOT BE CHANGED.’
In a way, it is correct. Your voice is who you are and reflects you physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It is like your fingerprint and uniquely yours. Your voice can’t be changed; neither can you sound like others.

It sounds sad. However, your voice can be improved in your own way. Most people, maybe including you, are not producing their sound in a proper way. They have too much tension in them which is restricting their voice production; they may also have other concerns that are holding them back from producing a richer sound.

If you could release all those tension or concerns and learn the correct way to produce your voice, you will hear a better sound and you are going to love it.

The fact is: you have a richer, fuller and more confident voice inside. Are you willing to discover and develop it?

2. ‘A GOOD VOICE MEANS A DEEPER VOICE.’
A good voice is not necessarily a deeper voice. You might have seen much online information, like how to develop a deeper voice, or how to sound deeper. However, these are misleading.

To develop a good voice is not about going deeper. In fact, if you press your voice down to a lower end on purpose, you won’t feel comfortable and it won’t last long.

To develop your good voice is about finding a fuller and richer sound in you – a sound that is expressed freely and full of resonance and harmony.

3. ‘SPEAKING IS JUST USING MY MOUTH OR THROAT.’
Your voice is not just tripping down from your throat and coming through your mouth. Your voice connects with every part of you and reflects who you are. When you speak, all your vocal organs are engaged and vibrating. Make full use of them, activate your whole body and you will produce a powerful sound.

4. ‘TO INCREASE MY VOLUME, I HAVE TO SHOUT.’
Shouting is your pitch going up, which could potentially hurt your vocal folds and other people’s ears. Increasing your volume refers to the change in the amount of your sound. Volume and pitch are two different things. Most people cannot differentiate them clearly.

To better help you understand the difference, think about this: When you turn up the volume of your iPod while listening to a song, does the singer’s pitch also go up? Of course not.

To increase your volume in the correct way, you must utilise your diaphragm to support your breathing, and use your pelvic muscle. By increasing your volume correctly, you won’t harm anyone else’s ears, and you also will sound more serious.

5. ‘VOICE TRAINING MEANS TO SOUND GOOD.’
Voice training is more about opening up yourself, both mentally and physically. It’s about helping you speak with your whole body, not just with your mouth or your throat.

Those elements that will make you sound good, e.g. inflections and rhythm, are like the “decorations around the main dish”. What will happen to them if your main dish tastes terrible?

In conclusion, you have a better sound inside of you. Work with it, use it to its full capacity, and you will discover the power of your voice, be it to influence others or to transform yourself.

Cynthia is a voice and speech coach, trainer and speaker, based in Singapore. She helps you discover your full voice that is authentic, confident and authoritative. She also helps organisations on voice and presentation skills training. Email us at training@leaderonomics.com to learn how to speak in public effectively.
A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING THE EMPLOYEES’ WELL-BEING

By PREMA JAYABALAN
prema.jayabalans@leaderonomics.com

I recently had the opportunity to chat with an occupational safety, health and environmental consultant at a social gathering. What began as a casual conversation turned out to be an insightful discussion on industries and the environment.

Sure, I have heard the term “occupational safety and health” before, but until I spoke to Kaliswaran Palanisamy, founder of Safety & Environmental Engineering Services, I didn’t know the depth of its meaning.

SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

“In my field, what we do is we create awareness to industries on the importance of safety, health and the environment. Our clientele comprises companies from the manufacturing industry. We also have clients from the construction, oil and gas, healthcare and hotel industries.

“We here to assist industries in complying with the regulations set by The Occupational Safety and Health Act and the Environmental Quality Act. “We test the air quality, water quality, soil, chemical exposure and noise exposure level to see if the level adheres to the standard measures set.”

According to Kaliswaran, when it comes to the environment, test parametries are done to gauge the level of releases being made into the air. For example, isokinetic air emission testing is conducted at the chimneys of companies where air is being released. The emission has to be within the specification set by the Government. If it exceeds, then measures have to be taken to keep it at bay.

As for occupational safety and health, that comprises looking into the hazardous environment at work due to handling of chemicals, machineries and other workplace activities.

Kaliswaran monitors the employees of a company and tests them for noise and chemical exposure. If the results are not satisfactory, they are sent for medical checkups and recommended safety equipment is installed in the company to protect these workers.

“Trainings are also conducted for employees to create awareness on the measures that need to be taken prior to chemical handling and extreme noise or construction sites exposure.”

EARLY DAYS

Born in a small town called Changkat Kruiung at Ayer Tawar, Perak, Kaliswaran is the youngest of three children. Life was not always a bed of roses for him.

“Since childhood, I used to help my mother at the rubber estate before going to school. Once I’m back, I will help her tend to the chicken that she rears at home. Even during the school holidays, I would work at the chicken farm to earn pocket money. From rubber tapping, to rearing chickens to being a waiter at hotels, I have done it all,” he reminisces.

Though it got difficult at times, Kaliswaran will never trade his growing up years for anything in the world as it equipped him with valuable lessons and experiences that have shaped him to be the man he is today.

“Upon completing my STPM examinations, I was selected to pursue a degree in Environmental Science at Universiti Malaysia Sabah. At that point I didn’t know anything about this course as I had not applied for it.”

However, the curiosity in me told me to accept the course given. That took me all the way to Sabah where I spent three years learning about safety, health and the environment,” says Kaliswaran who also holds a masters of Engineering in Occupational, Safety & Health from Universiti Malaya.

HOW IT ALL STARTED

Kaliswaran’s interest in this field sparked when he was doing his internship with an environmental, health and safety consulting company in Peninsular Malaysia. Upon completing his internship, he joined the same company as a full-time staff. He was attached with this company for four years.

Throughout his tenure here, he visited many sites, collected samples and learnt to study the results and advise clients based on his findings.

TAKING THE LEAP

“After four years, I felt that I had to move on, having gained the knowledge and experience I needed. Moreover, I had always wanted to have my own business. Of course, at that time, when I decided to make the jump, it seemed pretty daunting.”

“Nevertheless, with the support of my family and friends, I went ahead and started my own consulting firm,” reveals this proud father of a two-year-old son.

A TYPICAL DAY

Kaliswaran’s day is definitely not on a nine-to-five cycle. Usually the day starts with meeting clients or heading to the sites to supervise his executives who are at work.

“I am at the site supervising my staff who start off by monitoring the air, water and waste in companies. Samples are taken to my laboratory for testing, to confirm if the level is below, within or over a safe scale set by OSHA or EQA.”

He set up his own laboratory in 2014. Prior to that, he used the services of other laboratories.

“If the samples tested are over the safe limit, then action needs to be taken. For example, if the air is emitted by the chimneys of the factories that are in the danger zone, we install an air pollution control system or the CEMS (continuous emission monitoring system) that will help keep the air released, within a controlled level. “For water and liquid waste, if the level is within the safe zone, then it can be disposed as per other wastage. However, if the level is higher than usual or is toxic, then different methods need to be used to dispose them, as to not pollute the environment.”

“Once the problem for the client has been rectified, we prepare a full-fledged report and present it to the client. This is to create awareness on the issues faced by the company and the solution that needs to be taken to avoid mishaps or diseases that can cause a downfall to the business,” he further elaborates.

“Another copy of the report is sent to the relevant authority that keeps track on how well the environmental, safety and health regulations are being adhered to by companies in the country”.

With a staff of 10, comprising engineers, chemist, lab managers and site staff, Kaliswaran certainly has his hands full.

“It’s a challenging yet fulfilling career for me. The challenge is to keep myself constantly updated with the latest technology evolving around the safety and health field in all industries.”

MOVING FURTHER

“Occupational safety and health is of utmost importance, as a small accident can bring down not just the business but the reputation of a company. Knowledge on safety and precautions that need to be taken is something that everyone of us needs to know. This knowledge can also be applied at home.”

“My future plan is to write a book that will create the awareness for people on the importance of safety and health towards creating a healthy environment for us and our generations to come,” says this enterprising consultant who dreams of making a change in his own way.

Supervising his executives who are testing the air quality in a factory.
The pain and beauty of change

By Joyce Ang ChiaNN Vern
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“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”

– Nelson Mandela

As I started my internship at Leaderonomics, I was gripped with fear like never before. Being an intern was a whole new experience for me and I had no idea what was in store.

Coming to work one day, I had a huge shock when my supervisor entrusted me with a task that was absolutely terrifying – I was assigned to lead a focus group discussion.

Immediately, I began to struggle with the fear of inadequacy and being an introvert, this prospect soon turned into a nightmare.

The idea of leading a group of people that I hardly even knew took the breath out of me. As I led the discussion that day, I could literally hear my own heartbeat as I faced my colleagues. With every word that came out from my mouth, I could feel a new bead of sweat forming.

Fortunately, my baptism of fire didn’t last forever – the discussion soon came to an end and I was free from my crippling emotions.

With an encouraging smile, my supervisor told me: “Good effort. Are you OK?”

Ouch! What a blow that was. The fear in me had been so obvious.

SPRINGING INTO ACTION

Despite my apprehension, I knew this would be a good starting point for me. There were two pathways for my career at that point of time. I could either continue to allow my fear of feeling inadequate every time I was placed in an uncomfortable situation, or I could change.

The road to change is never easy. It is simpler and safer to stay in one’s comfort zone – a place where you are most confident in your strengths and where you feel the most ‘powerful’.

Yet, the outcome of change is growth. By leading a focus group discussion, I was tested in a situation where I had to prove myself, where my weaknesses were exposed and I had to quickly make a decision to ‘swim’ or ‘sink’.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE FEAR

As I reflected back on my leadership crisis during the group discussion, I was able to pinpoint my biggest hindrance: Fear.

It had such a tight grip on me that it affected my abilities as a leader. From then on, I decided that the ultimate weapon to conquer this foe is to take that step of courage and change.

I started out slow, but gradually progressed. With a renewed mindset, a new drive, and countless ‘checkpoints’ with my supervisor, I slowly guided myself to change.

SELF-TRANSFORMATION

Over the subsequent weeks, I was privileged to be given the opportunity to continuously grow in this area, by what else – leading more group discussions!

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www.leaderonomics.org

“Do the thing you fear, and continue to do so. This is the quickest and surest way of all victory over fear.”

– Dale Carnegie

Over time, I noticed a change in myself. I was starting to speak with more confidence, and I no longer broke out in cold sweat as I used to. I felt good about myself.

The slightest nod from the crowd assured me that what I spoke throughout the discussion was of relevance. Even my supervisor saw the progress in me.

That joy was beyond description. It took a tough situation to help me realise my fears, but it took an even tougher decision to change myself.

It was not an overnight thing, but it was a good journey of discovery.

A GREAT MAN OF HISTORY ONCE SAID:

“Normal fear protects us; abnormal fear paralyses us. Normal fear motivates us to improve our individual and collective welfare; abnormal fear constantly poisons and distorts our inner lives. Our problem is not to be rid of fear but rather to harness and master it.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr.
SCHWARZENEGGER: MAN OF MULTI-TALENTS

By STEPHANIE HO
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I am not a fan of Arnold Schwarzenegger: the politician, however I am certain that he lived through most of us with his more popular movie character, The Terminator, which he reprised recently in Terminator Genisys, which was released in the middle of this year. Schwarzenegger himself was in Kuala Lumpur last month, in conjunction with the Global Transformation Forum (GTF).

Schwarzenegger is an Austrian-born American actor, former professional bodybuilder, producer, director, model, activist, philanthropist, businessman, investor, writer and politician.

Beyond his acting skills, Schwarzenegger sets the pace as a leader in his own right, by constantly pushing boundaries, not just to have a dream, but to be a somebody.

Interesting facts that I discovered:

1. In the year 1967, Schwarzenegger won the Mr. Universe title for the first time. He became the youngest ever to claim the title at the age of 20, and went on to win the Mr. Olympia contest seven times.
2. Schwarzenegger was brought up in a strict household. His father was in the police force.
3. Schwarzenegger, who broke into stardom via bodybuilding competitions, was called “the most perfectly developed human in the history of the world” by the Guinness Book of World Records.
4. Childhood friends stated that he often said his goals in life were to move to America, become an actor, and marry a Kennedy. He accomplished all three.

During the GTF conference, in Schwarzenegger’s keynote speech on “Discipline of Action”, he enlightened the audience with his key six leadership messages:

1. VISION
You have to know where you are and where you want to go. Schwarzenegger was born after World War Two in Austria, and at 15 years old, he was groomed to enter into police force like his father. Yet, Schwarzenegger had different ideas, and he was intrigued by Reg Park, the bodybuilder well known as Mr. Universe in the 1950s to 1970s, and as the lead character Mr. Hercules. And from that, he knew exactly what he wanted to be, and thus followed the success blueprints of his idol in order to become rich and famous. He knew the journey ahead was tough. If you do not have a vision, then everything you do just becomes a job. You have to live, not just exist.

During his days of training and acting, he visualised his success while working to turn that vision into reality. He set his mind to training and perfecting his body endlessly, with the goal of lifting the trophy above his head. And he was successful. At age 20, he set the record on being the youngest Mr. Universe ever.

His single-minded dedication is displayed even during his acting years. He made sure that whether he was playing the role of Conan the Barbarian or The Terminator, he remained focused on seeing through the part. To him, movie results were permanent, while injuries and scratches sustained during the film shooting were temporary. Follow your vision and the rest would follow.

2. THINK BIG AND AIM FOR THE STARS
Schwarzenegger doesn’t limit his vision; not to being just a bodybuilder, an actor, or a politician. He wanted to be the greatest bodybuilder of all time. And he strove even harder to win the Mr. Olympia title. In showbiz, Schwarzenegger didn’t just want to be in movies. He aimed for the lead role and the goal was to have his name above the title, e.g. Arnold the Terminator.

Even in politics, he sought to be the governor; not just having a minor political role. And California is undisputedly one of the largest states in the United States. Mind you, Schwarzenegger was not even born in America.

3. ’NO’ TO NAYSAYERS
Get the negativity out; both in your mindset and in your vocabulary. Throw out the “Cannot”, “No”, “Impossible” and “Can’t be done”.

In the early stages of his acting career, Schwarzenegger was told that he had no chance. Casting agents said that his body was “too weird”, his accent was funny, and his name was too long, which they insisted on changing.

The negative remarks followed upon Schwarzenegger’s interest in politics. Like in sports, for example golfing, one cannot let your sight off the ball or you would miss it. It is a sign that you have doubts within yourself.

One of the most dangerous thing you can do is to devalue yourself from your dreams, goals and vision. Fail again, but fail better. One should never be afraid of failure. The difference between a winner and loser is how you pick yourself up after the fall.

4. FORGET PLAN B
You need to keep your sights 100% on your main plan. Like in sports, for example golfing, one cannot let your sight off the ball or you would miss it. It is a sign that you have doubts within yourself.

One of the most dangerous thing you can do is to devalue yourself from your dreams, goals and vision. Fail again, but fail better. One should never be afraid of failure. The difference between a winner and loser is how you pick yourself up after the fall.

5. WORK YOUR BUTT OFF
There is no success without hard work. Schwarzenegger shared a story on Muhammad Ali, the professional boxer.

At the height of his career, Ali was asked how many sit-ups he does. He simply answered that he does not count. No pain, no gain.

Simply enough, stop creating excuses. Use every ounce of your time to improve yourself and be better.

6. DON’T JUST TAKE, GIVE BACK
Give something back to your country or community. Get involved in causes greater than ourselves.

The most gratifying part in Schwarzenegger’s life is philanthropy. He widely supports causes related to children, health and environment.

During his years in politics, he stressed that he is a public servant, not a party servant.

As the governor of California, Schwarzenegger turned down his governor’s salary. Instead, he donated it to charity.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS
Each of us have the power to make the change. Work on ‘we’, not ‘me’. Make your mark and leave a legacy to be proud of.

If not us, who else? If not now, then when?

Also next week

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