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CAREER CONNECT

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE CAREERS

Here, we bring you Career Connect—linking you to professions in Malaysia and the region. This is where we highlight top-class companies that offer exceptional employment opportunities, starting with our very own, Leaderonomics.

Leaderonomics is consistently growing and on the lookout for eager and energetic people to join us in achieving our mission. You can learn more about Leaderonomics’ vision and mission at www.leaderonomics.org. Leaderonomics boasts a unique and progressive community of Leaderonomers that stands by five cultural beliefs (Be Accountable, Be Synergistic, Be Courageous, Be Excellent and Be Agile). We practise what we call a BI culture—Beyond Expectations.

Leaderonomics is looking for great people to assume the following positions:

• CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO) Based in Malaysia

Recently, Leaderonomics has expanded to other countries like Thailand and Cambodia. Furthermore, business in Malaysia continues to grow by leaps and bounds. However, we are looking for a leader to manage and grow the Malaysian business. This is a senior general management role that requires an individual to work closely with our customers (including CEOs, human resources heads, chief marketing officers and senior leaders in our customers’ organisations), our employees (to inspire, motivate and grow) and our key stakeholders and partners, to drive results and growth.

• GENERAL MANAGER, ASSESSMENTS Leaderonomics was recently chosen as the #1 Psychometric Testing Provider at the 2015 HR Vendors Award. We want to continue to build on our great assessments business and are looking for a leader who will take this business forward.

This person should have deep industry expertise in conducting talent assessments and the ability to work with our customers to design and develop customised assessments based on their needs.

• LEARNING AND TALENT MANAGEMENT MANAGERS

We are looking for experienced individuals out there who are passionate about developing people, building deep relationships with their participants, have an eye for designing out-of-this-world development programmes, and are able to guide people through challenging development activities. These individuals must love execution and be able to manage the expectations of multiple stakeholders. An ideal candidate would be a business leader who wants to be part of an action learning and experiential learning execution team for real.

• ENTERPRISE PROJECT TEAM

We are looking for passionate, smart, young and agile individuals who will form part of a special project team to support the CEO and chief operating officer as they scale the organisation both in Malaysia and abroad. If you are looking for a challenge—want to learn how to grow a business and learn directly from the founders—then this is the role for you.

As Leaderonomics continues to grow, we will continually look for great individuals like you who want to put a dent in the universe and make a difference in our country and the communities around us. If you have what it takes to be a Leaderonomer and want to be a part of the Leaderonomics family, send in your CV or resume to people@leaderonomics.com.

P.S. Don’t want to work for companies but want to be your own boss? Feel not! At Leaderonomics, we offer business opportunities for passionate and energetic self-timers who want to own their own business. We also provide an opportunity to partner with your business to drive growth of both your business and ours.

E-mail us at training@leaderonomics.com to find out about the great Leaderonomics Dealers’ Network. For the full list of positions available, go to www.leaderonomics.com/functionalsocial-enterprise-careers

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www.leaderonomics.com | Saturday 12 March 2016

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Editor & General Manager: PREThiba EsvaRY

ART & DESIGN: Layout, Art & Design

WEB DESIGN: Iyin Yen

PHOTOGRAPHY: Images 3x138 to 165x286, supplied from 9x685 and images from the web

REMARKS: The opinions expressed in this leadership guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.
9 MISTAKES THAT MAKE GOOD EMPLOYEES QUIT

BY DR TRAVIS BRADBERRY
editor@leaderonomics.com

It’s pretty incredible how often you hear managers complaining about their best employees leaving, and they really do have something to fret about—few things are as costly and disruptive as good people walking out the door.

Managers tend to blame their turnover problems on everything under the sun while ignoring the crux of the matter: people don’t leave jobs; they leave managers. The sad thing is that this can easily be avoided. All that’s required is a new perspective and some extra effort on the manager’s part.

First, we need to understand the nine worst things that managers do that send good people packing.

1 THEY OVERWORK PEOPLE
Nothing burns good employees out quite like overworking them. It’s so tempting to work your best people hard that managers frequently fall into this trap. Overworking good employees is perplexing; it makes them feel as if they’re being punished for great performance.

Overworking employees is also counterproductive. New research from Stanford shows that productivity per hour declines sharply when the workweek exceeds fifty hours, and productivity drops off so much after fifty-five hours that you don’t get anything out of working more.

If you must increase how much work your talented employees are doing, you’d better increase their status as well. Talented employees will take on a bigger workload, but they won’t stay if their job suffocates them in the process.

2 THEY DON’T RECOGNISE CONTRIBUTIONS AND REWARD GOOD WORK
It’s easy to underestimate the power of a pat on the back, especially with top performers who are intrinsically motivated. Everyone likes kudos, none more so than those who work hard and give their all.

Managers need to communicate with their people to find out what makes them feel good (for some, it’s a raise; for others, it’s public recognition) and then to reward them for a job well done. With top performers, this will happen often if you’re doing it right.

3 THEY DON’T CARE ABOUT THEIR EMPLOYEES
More than half of those who leave their jobs do so because of their relationship with their boss. Smart companies make certain their managers know how to balance being professional with being human.

These are the bosses who celebrate an employee’s success, empathise with those going through hard times, and challenge people, even when it hurts. Bosses who fail to really care will always have high turnover rates. It’s impossible to work for someone eight-plus hours a day when they aren’t personally involved and don’t care about anything other than your production yield.

4 THEY DON’T HONOUR THEIR COMMITMENTS
Making promises to people places you on the fine line that lies between making them feel very happy and watching them walk out the door.

When you uphold a commitment, you grow in the eyes of your employees because you prove yourself to be trustworthy and honourable (two very important qualities in a boss). But when you disregard your commitment, you come across as slimy, uncaring and disrespectful.

After all, if the boss doesn’t honour his or her commitments, why should everyone else?

5 THEY HIRE AND PROMOTE THE WRONG PEOPLE
Good, hard-working employees want to work with like-minded professionals. When managers don’t do the hard work of hiring good people, it’s a major de-motivator for those stuck working alongside them.

Promoting the wrong people is even worse. When you work your tail off only to get passed over for a promotion that’s given to someone who glad-handed their way to the top, it’s a massive insult.

No wonder it makes good people leave.

6 THEY DON’T LET PEOPLE PURSUE THEIR PASSIONS
Talented employees are passionate. Providing opportunities for them to pursue their passions improves their productivity and job satisfaction. But many managers want people to work within a little box.

These managers fear that productivity will decline if they let people expand their focus and pursue their passions. This fear is unfounded.

Studies show that people who are able to pursue their passions at work experience flow, a euphoric state of mind that is five times more productive than the norm.

7 THEY FAIL TO DEVELOP PEOPLE SKILLS
When managers are asked about their maltreatment of employees, they try to excuse themselves, using words such as “trust,” “autonomy,” and “empowerment.” This is complete nonsense.

Good managers manage, no matter how talented the employee. They pay attention and are constantly listening and giving feedback.

Management may have a beginning, but it certainly has no end. When you have a talented employee, it’s up to you to keep finding areas in which they can improve, to expand their skill set. The most talented employees want feedback—more so than the less talented ones—and it’s your job to keep it coming. If you don’t, your best people will grow bored and complacent.

8 THEY FAIL TO ENCOURAGE THEIR CREATIVITY
The most talented employees seek to improve everything they touch. If you take away their ability to change and improve things because you’re only comfortable with the status quo, this makes them hate their jobs. Caging up this innate desire to create not only limits them, it limits you.

9 THEY FAIL TO CHALLENGE PEOPLE INTELLECTUALLY
Great bosses challenge their employees to accomplish things that seem inconceivable at first. Instead of setting mundane, incremental goals, they set lofty goals that push people out of their comfort zones.

Then, good managers do everything in their power to help them succeed. When talented and intelligent people find themselves doing things that are too easy or boring, they seek other jobs that will challenge their intellects.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER
If you want your best people to stay, you need to think carefully about how you treat them. While good employees are as tough as nails, their talent gives them an abundance of options.

You need to make them want to work for you.

Dr Travis Bradberry is the award-winning co-author of the No. 1 bestselling book, Emotional Intelligence 2.0, and co-founder of the world’s leading provider of emotional intelligence tests and training. His bestselling books have been translated into 25 languages and are available in more than 150 countries. To learn more on how to manage people, write in to training@leaderonomics.com.
GROW, BUILD, TRANSFORM.

AT LEADERONOMICS, we believe leaders can profoundly affect the social, economic and spiritual health of communities they belong to. And we believe that all human beings have the potential for leadership. No matter who you are, what you do and whatever challenges are hampering your progress, Leaderonomics can help you and your organisation achieve maximum potential.

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A woman who lost her job because she fell pregnant was dealt a huge blow recently when the Shah Alam High Court decided to dramatically reduce the amount of damages awarded to her case five years ago.

In what observers are calling a landmark case, Noorfadilla Ahmad Saikin’s awarded amount of RM300,000 in damages (in 2011) was slashed to a paltry RM30,000 on February 15th.

Despite all our concerted efforts to bring more women back into the workplace—through the implementation of diversity and inclusion initiatives nationwide—this latest twist in a hotly debated legal saga is a reminder that equality in the workplace is still elusive, and that women can expect to dramatically reduce the amount of damages awarded to their case five years ago.

In Noorfadilla’s case, the government retracted her placement as a temporary teacher in 2009 when education officers discovered that she was expecting after two weeks of starting work.

To add insult to injury, the judicial commissioner remarked that Noorfadilla had not been completely honest because she did not disclose her pregnancy during the job interview.

Why was her position (as a victim of pregnancy discrimination) removed? Why deny her the right to be employed because she is an expecting mother?

**OUR THOUGHTS**

Job nature and company culture play a role in determining how organisations work toward treating their pregnant employees. It’s definitely going to be different from one organisation to another.

Where people lack knowledge in handling this issue fairly at their workplace, employers need to be better equipped and adequately trained on gender sensitisation.

In our opinion, the one thing that business and human resources leaders need to remember is this: Don’t force a pregnant employee to choose between career and family.

*Put yourselves in her shoes. Then, commit yourselves to work something out so she can still have the best of both worlds and achieve a balance between the two.*

**YOUR TURN**

For all business decision-makers out there, what would you do?

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**WHEN TO BRING IT UP—WHEN TO LET IT GO**

By DAN ROCKWELL

You aren’t worthy to lead until you know what matters now.

3. Lean toward silence with a smile.
   Most extroverted leaders talk too much. The only thing worse than an excited extrovert is a cloistered introvert.
   At least you know what the extrovert thinks. Both create anxiety.

4. Establish reporting only where issues matter.

5. Protect your headspace.
   On a scale of one to ten, how much does this issue matter? Let others worry about six or seven.

**BRING IT UP IF:**

1. The failure is about character. Being on time doesn’t take a high IQ (intelligence quotient).
2. You expect others to take action. Stop expressing opinions.
3. You hear excuses, rather than responsibility.
4. It’s a pattern. Once is fine—three times, it’s time to talk.
5. Others fall below their capabilities.

**Bonus:** Bring it up, if they’re working to improve, but persistently frustrated.

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**WOMEN & CAREERS**

**HOW WOULD YOU TREAT PREGNANT EMPLOYEES?**

By NINA TI and LIM LAY HSUAN

editor@leaderonomics.com

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**YOUR TURN**

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5 PRACTICAL STEPS TO SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP

SUPPORTIVE leadership is about cultivating an environment that enables individuals to be their best. This requires a level of understanding and awareness that goes beyond traditional management styles. Here are five practical steps to cultivate a more supportive leadership style:

1. **Ensure Everyone Knows What Their Role is**
   - Make sure every team member understands their responsibilities and how their work contributes to the team's goals.

2. **Clarify Tasks**
   - When assigning tasks, clearly communicate what needs to be done, the expected outcomes, and the time frame. This helps team members feel more confident and capable.

3. **Set the Standard**
   - Establish clear expectations and criteria for performance to ensure everyone is aware of what is expected of them.

4. **Provide Guidance**
   - Offer constructive feedback and support when team members face challenges or obstacles. This helps build their skills and confidence.

5. **Confront Difficulties**
   - Address conflicts early and fairly, ensuring that everyone feels heard and valued.

SUPPORTIVE leadership is essential in today's fast-paced and dynamic work environments. By implementing these steps, leaders can create a more inclusive and productive team culture where everyone feels valued and supported.

A LEADERSHIP STYLE THAT BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN EMPLOYEES

...SUPPORTIVE LEADERS ARE THOSE WHO ARE ALWAYS LOOKING TO MAKE WHAT’S NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE WELL-BEING OF THEIR TEAM AND, IN TURN, DELIVER A HIGH STANDARD OF PERFORMANCE BY AVOIDING ANY UNNECESSARY OBSTACLES.

BY SARDF CLARK
editor@leaderonomics.com

A great leader, and with research from into making a truly great leader. When the bottom lines are bulging, there have been clock was bound to be a recipe for disaster, and, “Leave your problems and emotions at the door.”

T

CREDITS CENTER

A SUPPORTIVE LEADERS

1. The best leader recognises that everyone has their strengths, quirks and weaknesses just as they have. They also know that solid teams are built by nurturing and bringing out the best that people have to offer, rather than trying to turn individuals into one mould.

2. They show positive regard for others

Many of us have examples of unfeeling, cold, people who are quick to cut others off, and not very personable as a result. Supportive leaders are always polite and considerate towards others, and they enjoy working with them.

3. They get personal

They said that the secret was to hear in our own name. Effective leaders make a point to connect on a personal level with their team members. They use names and titles, and they even know about their personal lives.

4. They are sympathetic

They know that people who work under stress sometimes will feel like they are being judged. When they do, this is bound to make them feel more comfortable and supported.

5. They express belief in others when times get tough

When an employee is struggling with a task, or facing a big presentation, great leaders are on hand to offer encouragement. They are quick to reassure them, even if they say, “all too aware that an employee can sometimes feel a little alone.”

6. They are patient

They know that mistakes will happen. They are understanding of the value of patience and growth is never instantaneous but comes with steady progress through learning.

SUPPORTIVE LEADERS are those who

A LEADER IS BEST WHEN PEOPLE BARELY KNOW HE EXISTS, WHEN HIS WORK IS DONE, HIS AIM FULLFILLED, THEY WILL SAY: WE DID IT WITHOUT HIM.

Consider photos, like “Lao Tzu by Joost van Sant, Sandy, find him on Twitter @sant60。“To find out the various businesses and leadership capabilities offered by Leaderonomics, visit us at www.leaderonomics.com. Article first published on www.leaderonomics.com.
By CHLOE MOK
editor@leaderonomics.com

It feels like a decade has passed since you caught a break and no amount of vacations can satisfy your longing for an adventure of your own. It’s time to start something and finally be your own boss. But, are you ready for this new ball game?

To quote a signature line from the founder of Atari Corporation and Chuck E. Cheese’s Pizza Time Theatre, Nolan Bushnell said this: “The true entrepreneur is a doer, not a dreamer.”

Being an entrepreneur is not just about being a business owner or an investor. It is a lifelong occupation. It is about creating ideas and opportunities around what you have. It is about believing in your decisions and making these decisions despite the challenges. Sometimes, it involves taking unnecessary risks to bridge a gap towards your vision.

An entrepreneur does not quit. He does not stop creating despite the risks and always finds the determination to carry on. Now, that is a tough standard to keep up with, but you know it is the reality. Entrepreneurs are expected to “rise above the game” and know what to do at all times. If you are observant, you can easily spot one mutual trait—a rather high dose of leadership quality—amongst entrepreneurs.

IT CAN BE FOR EVERYONE
Entrepreneurial leadership is not exclusively for business owners. Whether you are a budding entrepreneur, a small business owner, or a team lead in a larger organisation, you make difficult decisions on a daily basis. The decision process can be swift but the stakes are high. So, while there are some good decisions made, there are also some bad ones.

It is more than just taking charge, it is about innovation and managing change with calculated risks.

Every business or organisation starts out small with a lead entrepreneur creating projects and ideas to spearhead the team. Unfortunately, more often than not, a “corporate mindset” takes over all processes and systems after a while to minimise risks and regulate employee behaviour.

Fixed structures and systems are not a bad thing, but they do restrain bold ideas and limit a team lead’s potential, resulting in a stagnant and complacent working environment.

Most of us will choose to fall in line and comply with the system, but a selected few will cross that line—whether to start their own venture or rise against the system. This is where entrepreneurial leadership takes place. This is how entrepreneurs are made.

The project, without a great leader, may know by now that stakeholders invest resources at hand—money, minutes and manpower—while at the same time carefully progressing towards achieving the end goal. There will never be a perfect solution or a definitive answer to any question. Fully understanding the vision, also, mapping out the smaller achievement milestones, one can become both an effective leader and an accountable manager.

Remember, the ultimate aim should be to create a win-win situation for everyone, including yourself.

Being an entrepreneurial leader, be it a business owner or a team lead, is unlike any other role in the corporate world. No one can define your end goal or vision other than yourself. At times, it can be extremely challenging and frustrating. Yet, in the end, it can be a rewarding experience.

If this article speaks to you personally, you have a choice to deep-freeze that entrepreneurial spirit and hide an idea from the world, or live to your fullest potential and start impacting lives. Never try, never know!

Chloe Mok is an advocate of digital marketing and is passionate about the latest marketing trends in town. She is a certified marketer from the Chartered Institute of Marketing, a self-made entrepreneur, and co-founder of BaikBike.com—SEA’s No.1 cycling news site.

“...NEVER, EVER DOUBT WHAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE.”

MAKE YOURSELF AN ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADER

No one is born a great leader. Leaders are made. Great leaders are forged in fire and shaped over time. An entrepreneurial leader takes a step further with strong vision and dedicated passion towards his/her work. Besides superior technical and professional expertise, what does it take to be an entrepreneurial leader?

1. A Source of Inspiration and Motivation

The success of a venture or an independent project is highly dependent on the leader. Nobody wants to feel uninspired or lethargic at work.

As an entrepreneurial leader, it is vital to keep team members’ morale up by sharing your vision and communicating with them how their work could have an impact on the customers, and the world. This applies not only to employees, but to stakeholders such as affiliates, consultants, and vendors.

As an independent project, where everyone is working on one man’s vision, it takes a lot more than just convincing. It takes an unspoken yet visible power and strength emitting from the leader to build trust and attract investment.

An entrepreneurial leader leads by example. His holistic outlook ultimately influences the entire project team. You may know by now that stakeholders invest in the leader himself and not the project. The project, without a great leader, amounts to nothing.

2. A Stronghold

There are many mentor wannabes who will come your way to talk you out of your decision and create doubt. One of the biggest challenges throughout the career of a leader is sticking by a decision and never faltering. There will be some good advice along the way too, so learn to discern. Being an entrepreneurial leader means you do not have a Plan B, no safety net to fall back on if you fail, so every decision is crucial.

Trust in yourself and remember your decisions have gotten you this far. My advice would be to take two steps back and look at the bigger picture—the resources at hand and the calculable risks—but never, ever doubt what you can achieve.

3. A Manager

A good manager does not equal a good leader, and vice versa. In order to make accurate and well-thought-out decisions, a leader needs to know, at the back of his head, the resources at hand—money, minutes and manpower—while at the same time carefully progressing towards achieving the end goal.

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When you think about your life’s purpose, is the focus mainly on what you can supply? Does your purpose stem from what you desire to give, such as sharing music if you like music or coaching people if you like coaching?

Alternatively, do you focus on the demand side, but from a broad perspective? Do you pay attention to what the world needs in general? Do you feel you should be a peacemaker because the world needs peace? Do you feel you should wake people up because the world needs people to wake up? Do you want to be a teacher because the world needs education?

Consider that the world doesn’t need you to change it. Perhaps the world is fine the way it is.

When you have all your needs satisfied and you’re ready to begin living without neediness, what will the world respond with? "Here you go!" instead of "Okay, we’ll wait till you’re ready."

When you catch yourself layering neediness on top of exploration, what type of exploration are you delaying? When you have all your needs satisfied and you’re ready to begin exploring, what type of exploration are you delaying? When you have all your needs satisfied and you’re ready to begin exploring, what type of exploration are you delaying? "Yes" instead of a "Yeah, but..." And life will respond with a "Here you go!" instead of "Okay, we’ll wait till you’re ready."

Parting Thoughts
When we explore wholeheartedly and stop obsessing over our needs, we answer life’s calling with a simple "Yes" instead of "Okay, we’ll wait till you’re ready."

Steve Pavlina is a renowned American author and expert on personal development and leadership. He is a strong advocate of "paying it forward" and is delighted to be able to share his insights to help inspire and empower people to realise their own greatness. For more on Steve’s work, visit www.stevepavlina.com. For personal development training, e-mail us at training@leaderonomics.com.
It takes a village to address employability gaps

Initiative to prepare Malaysian fresh graduates for the real world

By Awatif Ghapar and Harry Chew

HANGE is never easy, and for undergraduates going into the working world for the first time, it is often a challenging transition. The hard truth about working life is that the assignment of tasks at the workplace is not the same as academic assignments, where you work in your own “world,” put forth your best effort and wait for it to be graded.

In working life, completion of tasks is not like a race to the finish line, but more like an episode of Crime Scene Investigation, where you are the lead investigator looking to solve a mystery. Where outcomes are unknown or yet to be defined, other skills—like talking to others, reading widely, being proactive and curious—matter in determining a good work output at the workplace.

While doing all these, frequent self-initiated updates and consultation with your supervisor matter just as much. Because the working world is so dynamic, in some industries, priorities can change overnight and of course, this will influence the outcome of the deliverables. The transition is to cultivate the ability to think in more fluid terms and to have the right mindset when you’re assigned work or targets.

Mind you, this is not an easy feat. Most people who are now a few years into the working world still see this as a challenge. So why does it take so long to fall into the rhythm of working life?

There are many factors and just as there are many reasons for this, it ultimately boils down to managing expectations on both sides of the fence and taking relevant steps to address the gaps.

REALITY OF EMPLOYABILITY AMONG MALAYSIAN FRESH GRADUATES

The scenario of a typical graduate hiring is not encouraging. In fact, the script is fairly standard and may sound something like this:

Interviewer: I see that you have a degree and were active in co-curricular activities?

Fresh Graduate: Yes, and I am eager to work in your organisation.

Interviewer: Tell me about your relevant experience(s).

Fresh Graduate: (Pauses and inflates past experience at university to sound impressive)

Interviewer: Thanks. We will get back to you.

According to The Coverage Bureau, the Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar said that out of the 400,000 unemployed individuals in the country, 163,000 are young graduates aged between 20 and 24 years old. This figure equates to 8.8% of the Malaysian youths.

In addition to this, 88% of young workers are earning less than RM1,500 per month, which is classified as living in poverty in Selangor.

The sad truth is that a university degree no longer guarantees you a job. Several news reports have highlighted what employers believed to be some of the main reasons for unemployment: poor attitude, poor command of English and poor communication skills (which include lack of courage to speak up and to voice out opinions).

A jobstreet survey revealed that employers also felt that graduates lacked soft skills like adaptability, multitasking, decision-making and problem-solving.

Several members of the Bursa Young Investors Club raised an issue during a recent Invest Malaysia 2015 conference. “Though Malaysian students are equipped with knowledge, they’re clueless when it comes to applying it in the real world.”

This goes to show that even though universities are top-class when it comes to knowledge transfer, this does not guarantee that their graduates are well-equipped with the relevant soft skills.

It’s clear that since the starting line for workplace readiness is not the same as the point where graduates leave universities, there needs to be an overriding mechanism to step in and help provide the right exposure and experience for those who have been side-lined.

So, the next question we should ask is: are we, as a nation, doing enough to address this readiness gap?

SILVER LINING IN SL1M

On June 1, 2011, a scheme called Skim Latihan 1Malaysia (SL1M) was launched with the purpose of providing fresh graduates, who are unable to secure employment upon graduation, with the chance to have industrial experience up to one year.

This scheme, which aims to enhance graduates’ employability, offers industrial and corporate experience and structured training with participating companies. For 2016, the scheme is targeted to help up to 35,000 unemployed graduates.

The programme is structured into three main components, namely soft-skills training, on-the-job training and job exposure.

More than 70,000 participants have benefited from the scheme which has been running for six years now. The scheme is expected to be completed by 2020.

This scheme is run by a small team of dedicated individuals headed by lawyer turned banker turned champion of working life Norashikin Ismail of the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister’s Department.

Norashikin says that she was inspired to champion this scheme as she could see the benefits. According to her, fresh graduates are immersed into organisations and at the end of it, there are improvements in terms of awareness level of business acumen, language proficiency and interpersonal skills.

She said it is not guaranteed that the participating companies will retain the participants, but the exposure and opportunity will serve as a platform for the participants to gain insights that was previously not possible.

Norashikin’s involvement in helping undergraduates as a Bank Negara corporate social responsibility initiative began in 2009.

Today, she has a much larger platform but her belief that all stakeholders must come together to help, has not wavered.

She advises fresh graduates to not be complacent as they have very challenging times ahead.

She suggested for fresh graduates take the opportunity to learn and grow, especially since they are preparing for their comfort zone.

THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

Norashikin added that due to the slow economic growth, it is best for companies to leverage on SL1M participants on the demands of the labour, besides giving back to the nation’s building by training the employees of tomorrow.

There are benefits for participating organisations, in terms of tax deductions and Human Resources Development Fund claims. As part of the larger business community, each of us play a part to help ensure the workplace readiness of the next generation.

While it’s clear there are many types of exposure required, the key to driving mindset shifts is by providing tangible learning experiences that offer “ah-ha” moments.

Corporations, big or small, should step up and contribute towards enhancing graduate employability to ensure sustainability in human capital quality in the future.
Why did you decide to bake?
I have been interested in baking for a long time, but only dabbled in it when I moved to Kuala Lumpur for college. I brought a small basic oven and started baking for friends and housemates. Over the next few years, I baked on and off for fun and whenever I receive small orders. During that period of time, I also worked part-time in a few cafes and found that I really enjoy being in the service industry. Eventually, I went on to work in a few different industries, but I somehow always gravitated back to food. I took a year off to travel and experience life abroad. Upon my return to Malaysia, I was not tied to any prior commitments, I decided to give baking a chance—to make customised cakes my full-time career—and I haven’t looked back since.

What were some of the major challenges you faced?
I’d say resources—not enough time, lack of manpower, and maintaining the quality of products. It is not easy to meet different people’s needs and expectations. Every cake order I have ever taken was a risk, including current orders. For each order, accepting too many orders to the point that it becomes difficult to juggle all the orders—which in turn, compromises the quality of products.

How do you handle difficult clients?
I have had some clients who commented that cake prices are a bit on the steep side, but I take it as an opportunity for a “cake education” i.e. how much time is spent on decorating the cake, the different elements or materials used, time and money spent on classes to improve on certain skills and many more.

What are the goals you have achieved so far?
I am able to make a living from my business! I have had the opportunity to bake for some influential people and had the chance to work for some big corporations.

What are the lessons you have learnt along the way?
I have learnt that it is acceptable to say “No” when my schedule is packed. I do make exceptions every now and then, especially when I have an interesting order. There is still room for improvement, but now I have more time for myself and I can get more rest.

What are some of your likes about this job?
From the point clients contact me right up to the time they pick up their cake, it is a journey that I really enjoy. To see the smiles on their faces, that makes all the long hours spent on a cake so much more worth it. It is so rewarding to know that I have played a part in making their day extra special. Another high point is when a client gives you “full creative freedom” to design the cake. Those three words are a bakers’ favourite words to hear. There really is no end to learning and experimenting in this field, so whenever a client utters those magic words, the possibilities are endless.

Furthermore, it is never dull. Every order is different. The theme may be the same, but the end results are never the same. This keeps working exciting all the time. I love meeting and getting to know my clients. Some clients have even gone on to become friends! I think that is pretty cool!

What are some of the mistakes you might have made and how did you learn from them?
Unfortunately, poor time management—not allocating sufficient time for each order, accepting too many orders to the point that it becomes difficult to juggle all the orders—which in turn, compromises the quality of products.

I have gone through days of sleeplessness due to an overbooked schedule. Those were tough moments where I almost burnt out. Now, I learn to allocate days for work and arrange my orders into slots per day.

I have been very blessed to have met some of the nicest clients. But I believe clients react in a certain way based on their past experiences. I have had some clients who commented that cake prices are a bit on the steep side, but I take it as an opportunity for a “cake education” i.e. how much time is spent on decorating the cake, the different elements or materials used, time and money spent on classes to improve on certain skills and many more.

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REASON TO BELIEVE

HOW WATCHING OLA BOLA LEFT ME WITH A HEART FULL OF HOPE

By JOHN TAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

To be honest, I initially thought watching Ola Bola was going to be a waste of my time and money, no thanks to my prejudice against Malaysian movies; although, something tells me I’m not the only one who thinks that way.

But, the movie proved me wrong. I thoroughly enjoyed it and took away four inspiring lessons. Warning, spoilers alert!

1. BE VISIONARY

Harry Mountain, the new coach, was portrayed as a visionary leader in the movie. He had a clear purpose, which was to lead the team to victory. He was eager to accomplish it, and he did whatever it took to achieve the end goal. He even came up with a new formation for the team. Despite doubts from the public and his team, he believed in his strategies.

The first step to accomplishing something is to have a vision, as it helps to set a direction. It is only after having a direction that we can work our way towards it.

As quoted by Paul Arden, the former creative director of Saatchi & Saatchi: “Your vision of where or who you want to be is the greatest asset you have. Without having a goal, it’s difficult to score.”

2. HOLD ON TO YOUR DREAMS

In the movie, both Chow Kwek Keong and Muthu Kumar were told to give up on their dreams to play in the national football team, and to get a proper job to support their families financially. Chow’s sister has always been unhappy with his brother’s burning passion for football. She kept insisting that he quit football and secure a full-time job. On the other hand, Muthu’s father was disappointed in him pursuing football instead of helping him in the estate.

Yet, both characters held on to their dreams tightly and successfully achieved them. Would you give up on your dreams? Whenever we quit on something, we lose possibilities and opportunities to see our dreams come true. Although the process of achieving our dreams is often long and tough, the worst regret in life is when we give up on our dreams too soon. Our failures may be painful for a season, but our regrets will probably haunt us for the rest of our lives.

If you intend to quit, remember why you started dreaming in the first place. Keep reminding yourself that good things in life will not come easy. You will often find that there is more meaning and value to your success when you realise your dreams the hard way.

3. KEEP TRYING

Failing is painful. It’s even more so if you fail in front of everyone.

In the movie, the national football team experienced a streak of embarrassing losses, but they persevered and kept trying. Mountain learnt from those failures and came up with new strategies until the team started winning matches again.

We don’t have to look at failures in a negative light. Rather, we should look to them as object lessons. Many of us are afraid of attempting new things because we are afraid of failure.

However, failure is often the key to great success. It is through failures that we learn the most and are aware of areas that we need to improve on continuously.

“I HAVE NOT FAILED. I’VE JUST FOUND 10,000 WAYS THAT WON’T WORK.” —THOMAS ALVA EDISON, INVENTOR

4. NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

I am no athlete but I am sure the only way to win football matches is by working together as a team. That wasn’t the case for Ahmad Ali in the film.

He initially refused to work with his teammate, Eric Yong, as he disliked him and was doubtful of Yong’s competency as a player. It was only after he started trusting his team members and working together as a team, that the team finally started winning matches.

All of us have someone we don’t quite get along with in life due to personal differences and personality clashes. It can be quite difficult when you have to work with such people. Like it or not, team dynamics can affect the outcome of your work. If you want to see great results, you just need to put aside personal differences, respect each other, and work together towards a common goal.

CONCLUSION

This movie is a brilliant film because it moves us to appreciate and celebrate the beauty of our rich diversity. It has some powerful lessons we can learn from, especially in such challenging times.

To those who have not seen it, I highly recommend that you do. Trust me, you will not regret it. You’ll leave the theatre believing again.

Also next week

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands!

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