THE FUTURE OF TRAINING

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9 SILEGA: SERIOUS LEARNING POWERED BY PLAY
Training is becoming both more flexible and more contextualised at the same time. Malaysians: Joseph Tan of Leaderonomics GoodMonday, who has developed new ways to intentionally design, develop and deploy organisation culture, is featured on page 4. In an article by Ashvaani, the answer to alter behaviour lies not in classroom training but rather through intention ritual creation. For years, the training departments in organisations have been obsessed with teaching new behaviours and breaking entrenched mindsets that stall progress in organisations. The answer, according to Ashvaani, is not in classroom training but in addressing these beliefs. We didn’t stop there in our quest to unearth innovations in organisation. On page 5, Alain Souzy, Technip’s VP for HR and communications in Asia-Pacific, shares how despite an industry downturn, Technip is driving continuous employee development programmes. I had the opportunity to meet up personally with Souzy and he spoke of numerous programmes for ensuring every employee is fully developed to their potential.

For our centrepiece piece, I explore the changing dynamics of the learning industry. I believe there will be a few key new trends in training including micro-learning, technology-based learning and “just-in-time” learning, where learning will be consumed on an as-needed basis and not when the classroom training is scheduled. The later part of the pullout explores training companies that are pushing the envelope on reinventing training. Knolskape is one of the pioneers in game-based learning – among the top 10 global organisations in this space, and the only one in Asia. Sash Kanapathi writes about the lessons he learnt from them, while Jayson Chik discusses another award-winning training organisation, Silega. Silega has totally revolutionised “experiential learning” through their amazing simulations. They are featured on page 9 whilst on page 10, we feature Ali Jafari and the incredible new social LMS he developed, which I spoke of in the first paragraph. Finally, a few months ago, I met two amazing gentlemen from the UK – Andrew Chua and Jeremy Matheson. As I had lunch with them, I was totally blown away by their sincere desire to bring authentic leadership back into the corporate space. As such, we have dedicated page 11 to their new, innovative training programme. They will be rolling out this new Authentic Leaders programme to Malaysia in early January and I have signed up myself. Leaderonomics, to be the first to go through this new insightful programme.

Lastly, I do hope you enjoy this week’s pullout. Do e-mail me at roshan.thiran@leaderonomics.com if you have any feedback, comments or special features you would like to see in our future pullouts. Also, remember you can download this pullout for FREE, along with other free e-books, including our best-selling What’s After SPM and Leadership Nuggets, at leaderonomics.com/publications. And if your organisation is looking to be featured in this pullout, do connect with Mei Li at mail.li@leaderonomics.com to explore. Have a blessed weekend and may you continue to grow as a leader.

Blessings
Roshan Thiran
Editor
Mohammad Rizan Hassan’s drive to make a difference comes from his own experience. Born into an impoverished family, he grew up in a rural kampung without access to clean water or electricity. With few opportunities to pursue an education, he was arrested at the age of 12 before being sentenced to three years in juvenile detention for robbing a bank at the age of 15. At the Henry Gurney School for Rehabilitation and Reformation, Rizan had access to electricity and the security of three meals a day for the first time. There, he was also exposed to something he had not experienced before: hope for the future, and determination to make a difference despite his circumstances. A kindly warden at the school counselled the young man to be patient; alone and friendless, the road ahead would be difficult. “The warden told me that Allah was the only one who could help me,” Rizan recalls.

PAYING BACK BY PAYING FORWARD

He was right. Upon his release, Rizan was rejected for 39 jobs before finally securing a role at a high-profile Japanese company. The factory manager took a chance on the young man, who thrived in his new position and was eventually transferred to Osaka, Japan, to work at the company headquarters. Yet Rizan wanted to do more. Determined to repay the support of his Japanese mentor, he asked what he could do to make up for his generosity. Shortly before he died, the man told Rizan: “The warden told me that Allah was the only one who could help me,” Rizan recalls.

MATCHING PEOPLE AND INDUSTRIAL NEEDS

Financed with his own savings, some money raised on social media, and later, a small grant from the Malaysian Youth Council, Rizan approached automotive manufacturing companies around Malaysia to discover where their skill shortages lay. Partnering with these organisations, he started training youths with the skills they would need to fill those roles, before they went on to obtain on-the-job experience as interns and apprentices. Once fully-trained, students could join the companies as full-time employees. But even this wasn’t enough. Rizan was determined to reach a wider range of young Malaysians and put them on the road to a better future. He established 1B1K to “close the gap” for students who left school without the opportunity (financial or otherwise) to pursue higher education or training. In particular, he wanted to reach out to people just like himself, who felt that the world had given up on them.

A PLACE OF NEW BEGINNINGS

1B1K now offers a range of mostly free vocational courses in partnership with 35 strategic partners across Malaysia, including draughtsmanship, hospitality, beauty therapy, welding and furniture production. Prospective students are only required to pass the “3H” (read, write and count) minimum requirement to qualify for a programme. In additional, 1B1K offers courses to inculcate “soft skills”, including volunteerism, leadership, careers and sports, to develop students’ own sense of purpose.

The organisation is now completely self-funded, and 1B1K’s strategic partners contribute financially to ensure it remains sustainable. Most importantly, since its inception, more than 5,000 students have passed through 1B1K’s doors with success and contributed to the organisation’s unprecedented 100% student employment rate. 1B1K also has a thriving alumni community, made up of empowered former students who want to give back to the programme that has given them so much. And as for Rizan? Like any true leader, he’s already set his sights on his next goal, reaching out to young people struggling with drug addiction. His purpose remains unchanged and inspiring: to give young Malaysians a second chance, just as he was once given the opportunity to turn his life around. It is an inclusive, forward-thinking vision that will have a lasting impact. In 2016, he was the winner of the Iclif Leadership Energy Awards (ILEA). ILEA is set to recognise individuals who have demonstrated authentic leadership energy in the quest to create a better future for community or organisations. With his leadership, Rizan is changing today’s Malaysian society for the better, but also discovering, inspiring and empowering our young leaders of tomorrow. For Rizan, there is no time to waste. “The future is now!” he says.

M OHAMMAD RIZAN HASAN BRINGS TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES TO DISADVANTAGED YOUNG MALAYSIANS

True leadership is the art of creating a better future not only for yourself, but also for your community, your organisation, and your country. True leadership is the ability to push past obstacles to achieve your vision and realise your goals. Most importantly, true leadership is having the strength of mind, heart and spirit to live your values and purpose, and to inspire others to follow your lead. We call this leadership energy. Malaysian Mohammad Rizan Hassan, founder of 1B1K (1 Belia 1 Kemahiran) is a true leader working towards a better future for his community and his country. His organisation not only gives at-risk and marginalised Malaysian youth access to educational and employment opportunities, but also helps train the young, dynamic and inspiring Malaysian leaders of tomorrow.
They desire to become “culturally.” Although her LGM team is able to successfully transform organisations should invest deeply in it if they desire to become healthy as expected. It is more of a pain than a surprise to you. You feel stressed that your boss is stressed as his boss is stressed. Your boss’s boss says it’s the people while your boss believes it is the strategy and bad execution. You are just confused. In the end, all blamed it on the economy. But what is the real reason for our failure to hit results and achieve goals?

According to Joseph Tan, chief executive officer (CEO) of Leaderonomics Good Monday (LGM), the issue is culture. Companies that fail to intentionally create, design and deploy culture, fail to achieve their desired results. Tan’s statement is based on research by the Leaderonomics research division, where findings indicated that various cultural elements, namely belief and mindset of employees, have a direct correlation with actions and results.

WHAT IS CULTURE?

In 2014, the Merriam-Webster dictionary announced “culture” as the word of the year. In 2015 and 2016, we witnessed a powerful shift of focus from business strategy to organisational culture with the latter heavily endorsed by the likes of giants such as Google, Apple and Facebook. Interestingly, in digging deeper through the list of LinkedIn’s “Top Attractors Where The World Wants To Work Now”, culture and engagement were key indicators for organisations that made it to the list.

Unfortunately, culture remains, at best, grey and, at worst, completely overlooked as companies remain oblivious to its power to transform. Consider this piece of research:

In 2013, research from Gallup indicated an increase in performance-related business outcomes by 240% when an organisation deepened its culture and engagement efforts. But for us to truly understand what drives cultural transformation in a business, we need to understand what culture is not. Investing in better cubicles, free snacks, gym memberships and having cool offices does not translate to a culture transformation. These are all fine and dandy but there is actually a science to cultural transformation. According to Roshan Thiran, CEO of Leaderonomics, “culture starts with a clear purpose”. Organisations that are purposeful and have clarity of purpose and vision have a higher possibility of building an effective culture that enables them to achieve the vision that has been set out.

Being a millennial, I care about being associated with a purposeful vision. Culture starts with your narrative of the WHY of the company – its values, belief systems, ambitions, personalities and rituals. It is this narrative that translates to a worldview of what the company stands for. After all, what we know of AirAsia’s culture today is simply shared stories of our experiences, from the moment we stood at the check-in counter right until we arrived at our destination. From the outside looking in, the rest of the world may not understand the business model nor the strategies of AirAsia but what they can relate very strongly to is the culture practised by its employees on the ground and up in the air. Our decision to continue using the carrier is most likely influenced by these very experiences that we have gone through.

FROM BELIEF TO ACTION

So, the first step in designing an effective culture is to have clarity of purpose. Secondly, Roshan adds that “culture is defined by behaviours.” Our behaviours are a result of beliefs and the mind-sets that we have. If you believe that your boss will yell at you if you speak up at meetings, your belief will translate to an action – in this case, you will not speak up in meetings. These beliefs are reinforced through experiences. When we experience something repeatedly or continuously, we formulate beliefs that lead to a pattern and ultimately to results. So, if we want to change behaviours, we must change the experiences our employees are going through. When we successfully change these experiences through creation of new rituals, we have begun the process of culture transformation.

Many organisational culture changes begin with covering the office walls with banners broadcasting the new company. Some try to engage their workforce through fancy team-building sessions. You can huddle through meetings after meetings with your leadership team, preparing action roadmaps. And then you organise a town hall meeting to cascade these plans, believing that the faster they are disseminated, the better. Unfortunately, these efforts seldom get to the hearts and minds of the people – the very core of what makes them want to change habits and experiences that they are already comfortable with.

At LGM, we believe in starting small. In our experience, some great examples of successful corporate culture turnarounds have been those who have captured the hearts and minds of their people through the formulation of new rituals and experiences. But it must start with clarity of purpose and desired results.

ELIMINATING LIMITING BELIEFS

One of the key things that we do with organisations is to engage with leaders to identify a number of key “limiting” patterns of beliefs that shape these behaviours. Once we successfully identify the fundamental limiting beliefs that people have of their company, we deep dive towards converting these beliefs into winning outcomes that create positive experiences and achieve the business results. Our observations of successful transformation are that it happens when leaders are willing to accept the current undesirable reality, roll up their sleeves and work through the muddle. For leaders, the key to victory is to listen attentively, speak for clarity and act in unity.

A final element of cultural transformation often overlooked is empowering your managers to become great managers. Change can be bottlenecked at the middle manager level if effort to educate and develop these managers into effective leaders does not take place.

RELATIONSHIP MATTERS

Although change happens from the top, nothing is more uninspiring than knowing that your manager does not care to hold a better relationship with you. After all, Gallup knows this best as their analysis points to “relationships with direct supervisor” as the number one reason why employees leave the company.

A great manager helps you grow your strengths while teaching you to manage your weaknesses. In an environment that is heavily undergoing culture change, it is important for people managers to step in and keep the workforce engaged and excited to see the big picture. At LGM, we have developed an approach that enables culture transformation to happen in a simple and effective way. Our two-pronged approach of intertwining culture transformation and employee engagement is a potent formula that drives profits but also enables employees to feel purposeful, creating a unique culture that can be a competitive edge for you.
DIGGING DEEP FOR RESILIENCE

TECHNIP ASIA PACIFIC INVESTS BEYOND THE DOWNTURN

By SIAW MEI LI
meili.sia@leaderonomics.com

The past couple of years have been turbulent for the oil and gas industry. Amid lowered crude prices and revenue, most businesses, especially in the upstream segment, have cut their costs massively to ride out what many hope is a passing storm.

This challenging economic backdrop is what makes one company’s unrelenting investment in its people stand out, even among global consum- er brands that are less affected by energy price volatility. In February this year, Technip – a leading global project management, engineering and construction company for oil and gas companies – was certified as Top Employer Global 2016 for the second year in a row. Out of the eight global organisations recognised this year, Technip was the only one from the energy sector.

“In spite of the challenging business environment, Technip’s employee attrition rate has remained stable and for the fourth year running, we were named Top Employer in Malaysia and in the Asia-Pacific region,” says Alain Souny, Technip’s vice president for human resource and communications in the Asia Pacific.

More recently, the company was also named one of 2017’s Top Employers in Asia Pacific by Top Employers Institute. Souny and his team at Technip attributes these accolades to its efforts in ensuring quality and consistency in its human resources (HR) policies and practices, and to the continuous push for improvement in its global employment practices.

As the current industry conditions may not be ideal for new hydrocarbon projects, for Technip, the present is always a good time to build up the team – providing them professional development and international opportunities, regardless of their gender, origin or cultural background.

REGIONAL TALENT EXPLORATION

A key thrust of Technip’s human resource strategy in this part of the world is the company’s proactive initiative to raise up future leaders among the ranks of local teams.

“We have a specific programme in Asia Pacific to identify young talent because we believe some of the new leaders of Technip are in this region,” says Souny, a key figure leading the charge on these initiatives.

Technip’s Asia Pacific Manager Academy develops managers from this region in targeted leadership competencies required to achieve the company’s Asia Pacific strategy. According to Souny, there is still an underrepresentation of Asian talent in the company’s top 200 positions, hence there is no time to lose when it comes to finding the right candidates for the pipeline.

“We need to identify them while they are young – by that, we mean between the ages of 28 and 35 – to be able to give them enough time to develop and reach the top levels of the company,” he says.

EQUIPPING HR TO DEVELOP HR

As Technip puts its long-range talent pipeline in place, it is taking steps to ensure the sustainability of these initiatives. One important measure is upskilling the HR function itself.

The company’s Human Resources Business Partner Academy delivers a competency and knowledge step-by-step development plan for HR employees, so that they are in turn, better equipped to develop the company’s talent pool by acquiring the technical skills to lead an interview or challenge a manager productively, for example. What’s more, the programme confers an external professional certification to successful participants, further boosting their employability.

“These people will be able to attract HR manager positions at the entity and country levels after this exposure,” says Souny.

ENGAGING NOW TO EMBRACE THE FUTURE

While Technip is planning for the long haul as a company, its leaders also recognise that the little things matter in helping employees get through the here and now in this stressful, uncertain business climate. A recent initiative, executed at the start of this quarter on Oct 5, is Wellness Wednesday.

Designed by employees for employees, the aim of this event is to improve workplace wellness through a variety of social activities and learning opportunities. Planned as a recurring feature to be carried out on the first Wednesday of every month, the inaugural event was launched at the Kuala Lumpur Operating Centre, where employees were welcomed in the morning with apples for breakfast. This was followed by a breathing exercise workshop titled “Breathe Right” and a positive-thinking talk titled “The Half Full Cup.”

After a healthy Eat Clean Lunch with their colleagues, employees had the option of relaxing with foot massages given by members of the Malaysian Blind Association. Later, there were Body Combat and pilates activities to end the evening on an active note.

Throughout most of the day, Souny and his team as well as the Executive Management gamely played their part by donning aprons and handing out healthy treats to colleagues.

“This is our team that stays fully committed – ready to seize markets, retain and recruit the best talents and create long-term value for our stakeholders,” says Souny. “Although faced with unprecedented industry downturn, we never lose sight of the importance of our people – they contribute to our overall performance.

TECHNIP AT A GLANCE

- Technip’s Kuala Lumpur office, also the Asia Pacific headquarters, was established in 1982.
- The company offers a comprehensive portfolio of innovative solutions and technologies in three key activities – Subsea, Offshore and Onshore.
- Today in the region, Technip is represented in most Asian countries, and in China and Oceania. It is an engineering hub with more than 13 offices and a workforce of more than 4,500 people in the Asia Pacific region.

Technip employees being handed a healthy breakfast on Wellness Wednesday

Technip was named one of 2016’s Top Employers in Asia Pacific by Top Employers Institute

THREE QUESTIONS FOR ALAIN SOUNY

What’s your role in the Asia Pacific?

Alain Souny is currently the vice president for HR and Communications at Technip Asia Pacific.

What’s your background?

Souny’s background is in HR and talent management. He joined Technip in 2006 as the HR manager at Technip’s Malaysia office and has since held HR roles in Europe and Asia.

What’s your vision for Technip in the future?

Souny’s vision is to continue building a strong and diverse team of talented professionals who will help Technip to remain a leading player in the industry.

What did you learn from this experience?

Souny’s experience has taught him the importance of creating a positive and inclusive work environment that empowers employees to reach their full potential.
REINVENTING TRAINING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

TRAINING AS WE KNOW IT MAY BE OBSOLETE AND A WASTE OF TIME

I hear from CEOs and employees who are not entirely complimentary about the training profession. But I do believe to have the bold and the courage on how employ- ee education and development (which are very different) is very much alive and well.

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

A few hundred years ago, transportation was defined by horses and carriages. Then, bicycles. Fast forward to today and we have cars, planes and motorcycles. The very same way, technology will evolve. It will continue to evolve at an exponential rate.

As part of the communications space and again we see how videos carrying messages quickly moved into the Pony Express (horse age) and today we have the modern postal system. That evolved into the multi-communica- tions space with the invention of phones and we currently have wireless communication devices using email, Skype and a host of new means to stay connected. Almost every industry and space have evolved in some way or form. Yet, if you look at the education space, whether at schools, universities or even in corporate education, much is still the same. The same classrooms exist today as it did before. Of course you can argue that is now better equipped with LCD projectors, an conditioning and even cooler gadgets. And the same con- cept of teaching – where one “teaches” while the other “learns” or practice what is being taught.

However, the education space has become ineffective in driving the learning- required to drive organizational growth and scaling required in most companies today.

Schools and universities are struggling to prepare the future workforce for future roles. What is more worrying is that corporate edu- cation (which are performed by training departments in organisations) is replicating what is being offered in schools and universities. This creates a learning envi- ronment that fails to produce results desired by CEOs in this fast-paced age of innovation and change.

Steve Goldin, a famous author, recently tried to write about reinventing schools in his book, Re- thinking Learning. In this book, he sug- gests a few ways to re-visit school. Amongst its suggestions are: 

- Homework during the day, lectures at night or when any source, anywhere, in the world
- Process, focused instruction instead of mass, generalised instruction
- The end of multiple-choice exams
- Experience, instead of test scores, as a measure of achievement
- The end of compliance as an outcome
- Cooperation instead of isolation
- Amplification of existing teachers, teach- ers and aides.

Transformation of the role of the teacher

As schools and universities begin trans- forming education, so must corporate education and training – how do we transform that space? And what should we focus on? This is where corporate education space should evolve and incorporate a few more principles that will make corporate education and training systems work for the corporate education space and in our organisations.

THE GOLDILOCKS DILEMMA

According to past research, it is estimated that the learning rate of humans is at an all-time high of over 12 seconds. Recent research by Microsoft with Canadian researchers on human beings concluded that “people new generation are consuming the content at the rate of 13.9 seconds, highlighting the effects of an extreme-augmented environment on the brain.” This shows that human beings have a shorter attention span than a goldfish. What happens to us as a society?

We are all learning in new ways today. Many of us are now getting a small burst of news through WhatsApp messages or Instagram and even from emails we get from colleagues. We browse the internet briefly and get micro pieces of learning. This is the new form of learning of the future – micro-learning.

With our attention span moving to eight seconds, traditional classroom learning has to change. Our employees all want to learn. Yet, most struggle to attend and focus even for one day-classroom session. About 15% of the learners do not listen and tend to someone else or take their feet off the floor. Research shows that this is a fact.

When employees are not opposed to learning and they want to grow. However, they can’t do the right or wrong learning where they can engage and learn on their own time with autonomy. Micro-learning is much cheaper and more efficient, many organisations have yet to capitalise and build their learning strategies around it.

So, micro-learning is simply providing your employees with small chunks of content that is intense or on a topic that is personal to them (which are absorbed) and apply directly to their work. Micro-learning is the same process we use to teach toddlers. We use flash cards to allow toddlers to learn and usually cannot incorporate what we have learned into our daily activities. That is because there is a lack of human-to- human interaction and contact. Yet, we believe that in future, learning will be a daily habit. Not only will we learn and apply it immediately, but we will also start teach- ing our colleagues new “secrets” learnt from the learning that we are doing.

We are all learning more today than ever before. We are all learning in new ways too. Most of us are now getting a small burst of news through WhatsApp messages or Instagram and even from emails we get from colleagues. We browse the internet briefly and get micro pieces of learning. This is the new form of learning – micro-learning.

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The Leadernomics team has begun pioneering micro- learning in the programmes that they administer. We believe that believing to build micro-learning into curriculums will significantly enhance the learning return of investment (ROI) as it adds to driving learning costs significantly lower.

DRIVING PRODUCTIVITY

One of the key things that is happening in businesses all over the world is the drive for optimised productivity. This has created huge demands for employees to optimise their time to drive results and output for the organisa- tion. Many CEOs focus upon training sessions as it requires taking their foot soldiers away from their responsibilities and into a classroom setting that they become better at what they do.

This form of productivity should be repla- ced in the learning and training space. The answer must be technology-based learning.

At Leadernomics, we are now pioneering the future of learning by building customised Learning Management Systems (LMS) for organisations. It is slowly evolving that autonomy for learners to learn any time, any place, is becoming the norm. Yet, we are still a long way from this.

A big problem for technology-driven learning is usually the lack of human-to- human interaction and contact. Yet, we should differentiate content-based learning and context-based learning. Almost 50% of our classroom training today is context-based learning, which is much more effective than traditional training. We will see in the future that context- based learning is going to be much more effective. This will yield significant cost savings to businesses.

Context-based learning - however, must have human interaction, mentoring and coaching and experience-based development to become an expert across contexts and contextual learning (refer to Figure 2). This means, while technology-based learning could mean the “death” of classrooms for content- based learning, there will be many opportunities for coaching, assessment, work- experiences (including internships, apprenticeships or other work-based learning as well as a combination of both). This will yield significant cost savings to businesses.

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THE DAILY HABIT

Another big change I foresee for the training industry is the move from a one-off to a daily basis. Today, learning is fundamentally structured where learning is delivered into a class and at a specific time (according to a schedule). I believe that this is going to change. Many early childhood processes that will be thought about in the future. I believe that people will imagine a “time in the future, where learn- ing will be done more efficiently. At work, your mobile or office device, giving you a quick three-minute update is going to be normal. The problem is, as you have learned, offering you instant learning or information related to your job, will be important. The users will need to have access to it in a ‘just-in-time’ approach, like how the supply chain industry is now done. As world continues to become increasingly digital, it is going to be a daily habit. Not only will we learn and apply it immediately, but we will also start teach- ing our colleagues new “secrets” learnt from the learning that we are doing.

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THE FINAL THOUGHTS

The final piece of change I anticipate in the training industry is related to the alignment with business results and outcomes. Many times, learning programmes do not consider the business results and outcomes. This is something that we need to focus on. We have to make sure that our programmes align to the business and not the other way around. When the users are trained, they need to be able to do their job much better and not do the same thing. The users need to be able to do their job much better and not do the same thing. The users need to be able to do their job much better and not do the same thing. The users need to be able to do their job much better and not do the same thing. The users need to be able to do their job much better and not do the same thing.
EVE all heard of the “digital age” – it is after all one of many buzzwords. However, most people seem to use the word without a full comprehension of what it means. For mainstream society, the “digital age” pretty much started with the mass market availability of the personal computer in the late 70s and early 80s. It’s nothing particularly new anymore. What we need to turn our thoughts to is the “digital mindset”.

A digital mindset isn’t about the technologies that define our world today (e.g. the Internet of Things, Big Data, etc), but instead, is about attitudes that allow individuals and organisations to see the possibilities of the digital age we are in (and have been in).

One area that has needed innovation, especially in the digital age, is learning and development. Gone are the days of arguing about andragogy (adult learning) vs pedagogy (child learning). Now we look at teacher-centred vs student-centred learning. We are now comfortable with providing student-centred learning for adults (though this approach is still lacking in execution for public education) with the focus on motivation, outcomes and contextualisation. Today, we see a slow and steady decline in lectures and one-way downloads of content. Instead, we see more and more organisations embrace experiential learning. However, the key problem organisations face is in finding good quality digital experiential learning programmes.

One company, Knolskape, has taken the next step in bringing learning and development to the digital age. Named a global top 20 learning venture in 2015, and one of Asia’s most promising start-ups in 2016, Knolskape is a technology company that focuses on building digital simulations/experiential learning for the development of employees.

LEARNING IN VIRTUAL REALITY

Rajiv Jayaraman, founder and chief executive officer (CEO) of Knolskape, started the company while pursuing his MBA at INSEAD. That’s when he was hit by being a multi-faceted individual who has made waves in Big Data work with Oracle, with a keen interest in theatre and having done social work in teaching. Rajiv was driven to combine all his talents in this undertaking. As he explains it, he wanted to build a learning platform that is “Intensely Enjoyable, Immensely Effective, and Deeply Personal”.

Simulation-based learning is making inroads in the field today. Simulations are an effective way to “learn by doing” and to get feedback for decisions made. It enhances the learner’s experiential interest in learning and makes it contextual. Furthermore, it provides for a safe environment for learners to make mistakes. However, digital simulations is a whole new ball-game and there are not many training organisations that have the capability to combine digital expertise, gamification elements, instructional design skill and learning-knowledge to create digital simulations. I consider it simulations-on-steroids!

Knolskape provides simulations that are available anytime and anywhere for individuals in organisations to learn at their own pace. It up its intensity of the experience as the digital simulations is challenging the various variables in a fully simulated environment that is more complex and more engaging, all through a virtual world. What’s more, deep insights can be gleaned through analysis of the learner’s actions. Post-simulation reports provide feedback on the complex decision-making of the learner and provides a very personalised assessment. They have been able to unpack the power of computing and bring it to the forefront of learning and development.

Furthermore, digital simulations allow for gamification, which leverages the learner’s desire for socialising and learning through competition and achievement. Interestingly, most opponents of gamification criticise the simplification of rewards and a lack of storytelling and experiences. However, Knolskape’s digital simulations provide for that as well through engaging storylines, and prove to be a great example of contextualised gamification.

The true power of the simulation comes from how closely it mimics the real world. The closer we get to reality, the more the participants will be able to reap maximum benefits from their interactions with the virtual world by making decisions that correlate with the real world. As such, Knolskape provides many simulations with a variety of learning objectives across the fields of leadership, sales, technology, finance and many more.

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Practice makes perfect

Rajiv shared his understanding of simulations in a very simple way, and it sent home a powerful message that resonated with me. He asked, “How does a pilot become a good pilot?”

Obviously, it isn’t by reading piloting manuals. Those are pre-requisites. That is just content. A pilot becomes a good pilot by going through countless hours of flight simulations. The same applies to a surgeon, where they practise on cadavers.

So why should we not apply the same principle in other competencies with regards to running an organisation? I believe that question irrevocably ushers in the age of digital simulations for leadership and other competencies required for organisations to succeed and thrive in this new world.

A couple of months ago, I began to interact closely with Knolskape and its leaders. I learnt some amazing insights on technology and learning. One key learning is that “nothing should remain stagnant.” For years, we assumed that the training industry was in great shape. And no one did anything about it. Yet, there is decay seeping into every industry and function. Whether it is on-boarding, capability development, assessments or engagement, energise your programmes and workshops through Knolskape’s award-winning immersive gamified learning simulations and platforms. What’s more, these products are cloud-based for a platform that’s accessible when and where you want it.

To find out more, email info@leaderonomics.com

LEADERSHIP SIMULATIONS

The true power of the simulation comes from how closely it mimics the real world. The closer we get to reality, the more the participants will be able to reap maximum benefits from their interactions with the virtual world by making decisions that correlate with the real world. As such, Knolskape provides many simulations with a variety of learning objectives across the fields of leadership, sales, technology, finance and many more.
At a few weeks ago, my school friends and I got together and ended up reminiscing about our school days. The bulk of our conversation was discussing how we would idle away during recess times playing war or Chinese chess. Sometimes, the girls would bring in those precious cloth "stones" to play batu seremban, or make up our own games to play in the courtyard. We remember and learnt so much from playing games with each other. Games have been and will always represent a big part of how we learn and grow. From young, we are constantly exposed to different games of various levels and difficulties that develop different cognitive and motor skills.

You don’t even have to be of talking age to play a game – Kim Wallace from BabyCenter suggests that playing games has been found to be integral in infant growth as they learn to build skills, problem solve and overcome mental challenges. Parents are highly encouraged to let their children indulge in pretend play (or imaginative play) as this spurs the child’s imagination.

This is even true for adults. Researchers are increasingly convinced that learning through “play” or “by doing” substantially elevates learning retention. In adult learning (also known as andragogy), the gamification of learning has been increasingly popular in recent times as it provides an enjoyable yet safe environment for learners to self-discover and apply their new insights. Such gamification approach is simulation-based learning.

Simulation-based learnings – or simulations in short – is a learning technique that replicates real-life situations and experiences in a safe, guided, and controlled environment. According to the definition provided by Bell, Kanar and Kozlowsky, simulations can be understood as “artificial environments that are carefully created to manage individuals’ experience of reality.”

There are a few types of simulations in the market – for example online simulations, business simulations, board game simulations, case study simulations and machine-based simulations. What’s available out there can range from Monopoly-like corporate games to immersive technology-driven platforms such as flight or F1 race simulations. For me, the best “sim” I have ever played has to be the Silega simulations.

SIMPLY EYE-OPENING

A few weeks ago, I watched senior leaders, including the chief executive officer (CEO) of an organisation, battle it out during Silega’s Cold War simulation. This sim replicates countries who are supposed to collaborate to fight a greater enemy, but instead end up turning against each other for personal greed and satisfaction. As each member of the leadership team of this company watched how they all tore each other apart, they all had numerous light-bulbs light up. They realised why their organisation had not succeeded before – they as leaders were territorial and worked in silos, preferring to fight for their team’s needs rather than the greater organisational goal.

The “aha” moment and insight was stunning. It could not be taught sitting in a classroom or even if they were lectured on the importance of breaking silos and teamwork.

Yet, in this sim, each leader immediately “saw” the errors of their ways and repented. They vowed never to act in silos and committed to ensuring the big organisational goal would be their guiding light and not departmental or personal goals.

I saw with my very eyes, the power of Silega’s simulations and game-based learning. Another simulation with incredible effect is the Silega Commander sim. Here people are allowed to learn and practice leadership under a stressful, business-like environment, yet even if they fail (which they almost surely do – hence the enhanced learning!), it is not real life.

LEARNING ABOUT EACH OTHER

The positive effects of simulations have long been studied in multiple articles and white papers which deals with different types of simulations. Listed below are a few of the interesting facts and benefits of simulations in a corporate training environment.

1. Simulation-based learning creates realistic yet safe situational experiences

Simulations can create real-life experiences for the learners. All Silega simulations were designed from the replication of events in real life and real industries based on different durations and scenarios. For example, Silega Expedition is based on the dangers of climbing Mount Everest. Each team goes through 30 days to pick a route (there are four possible routes up Everest with the easiest route being the longest), determine supplies, and many other decisions that must be made.

Each decision could have detrimental effects later in the game. Imagine making wrong decisions on the amount of oxygen to carry. It may seem trivial but as the participants approach the top, they realise they cannot go on to the peak as they lack oxygen. It is an amazing way to teach participants the importance of little decisions and the power of its compounding effect in life.

Each sim can teach meaningful lessons and insights and this is done in a safe environment where mistakes are great opportunities to learn and grow.

2. Simulation-based learning encourages more interaction and healthy competition

Simulation differs from the traditional classroom learning in terms of the observable interactions. Several articles on simulation-based learning mention that simulations can offer students a lot of opportunities to interact with each other. In traditional classrooms, interactions and energy levels are highly dependent on the instructor’s ability. With simulation, regardless of the trainer, the key lessons are learnt through interaction and competition with each other. Every Silega simulation that I have attended pitted participants against each other, creating deep motivation for us to “win.” Also, when there are elements of healthy competition in a simulation, it’s not surprising to see notable increase in participation, engagement and effort from the learners, increasing their learning uptake.

3. Simulations can be used as a tool of observation/assessment

Aside from driving home messages or learning objectives, simulations can also be used as a tool for participant observation or assessment. As Bryant Nelson from Capital Wave Inc. puts it, simulations can be used as a gelling tool for a new team the same way team building always does. Team members will get to know each other a lot more via the afforded interactions. Most importantly, they will get to know each other’s true personality when they are under duress or time pressure.

An increasing number of organisations have also started to use simulations as a valid tool of assessing their current employees and prospective new joiners. This is because simulations can be designed or modified to bring out quite a number of observable traits such as problem-solving and decision-making, which is crucial in identifying or confirming critical development areas of the students.

FINAL THOUGHTS

As a connoisseur of various Silega simulations, I am now a full believer in the impact of simulations. There is intense power in simulation and I can personally vouch for its impact and effectiveness. More importantly, there is power in play. If you are not playing, you may not be learning effectively. So, go out and play!

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Jayson Chik jokingly believes his extensive research on simulations entitles him to a Doctorate in Simulations. But he is most fond of his research uncovering the power of play. He encourages us all to play more.

If you have yet to experience the power of Silega Simulations and have fun play-

ing, he suggests you contact info@leadero-

mics.com to start your journey of play in

your organisation.
MALAYSIANS are pretty tech-savvy when it comes to connectivity and online usage. It is fairly common for youngsters to rely on online resources to understand the challenges they face and find answers to everyday problems. In fact, research shows that up to 68% of Malaysians are Internet users, when compared with the global average of 40%. This clearly indicates as digital natives make up an increasing proportion of our organisations, we will see a huge growing demand for online learning platforms. In fact, even today, we have numerous pieces of research indicating that the majority of young people find classroom training sessions boring and not in line with their expectations.

There are many learning platforms out there in the market that allow learners to watch, read learning materials and take assessments and quizzes. Many organisations frequently consider investing in their own Learning Management System (LMS). However, most find it is extremely costly (sometimes total costs can reach up to RM1mill) and requires huge infra-structure support. As such, most decide against building their own customised LMS.

Another important piece of research indicates a key element of learning is the social element where learners can connect, share and stay socially engaged while learning in an educational virtual environment. Many LMS'es developed do not allow social engagement and peer learning, hence rendering the systems ineffective. Professor Ali Jafari, a tenured professor in Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and a serial entrepreneur, wanted to build a great LMS, Jafari worked tirelessly and produced three inventions in the LMS space. Among his inventions were an open source LMS called Sakai, which was used by many American universities and was later renamed Angel Learning, and acquired by Blackboard. However, none of these LMS’es that he built was ideal either. He dreamt of building a system that not only had all the functionalities of an LMS, but would also enable social learning elements. And he wanted to take it one step further to allow all organisations to own and operate their own customised LMS at affordable costs.

MAKING A LEARNING SOCIETY

So, he kept working tirelessly for the perfect platform. He finally developed CourseNetworking, his own LMS output from his research paper – “From Course Management to Course Networking.” Also called tCN, the new LMS is based on the concept of a new learning environment housed upon a Social Networking platform. Over 150 different LMS products were part of Jafari’s research to determine the gaps in learning systems and why they do not create the stickiness and engagement levels that learners have on social media platforms such as Facebook. His notion was that if we could create the same interest and sharing level, learning can be spread across the world faster and with better learning outcomes.

As Jafari and his development team developed this amazing new LMS, they knew they had to ensure the content for this LMS was world-class. A great LMS had to include great content. And he still had the challenge of ensuring his LMS was cost-effective and that every single organisation in the world (regardless how big or small) could afford it. Enter Leaderonomics. In October 2015, CN signed a partnership with Leaderonomics to create a new product for all Asian organisations – Leaderonomics Digital Learning (LDL).

ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING MADE AFFORDABLE

While Leaderonomics focuses on developing great global content on leadership, management, personal development and functional expertise, and ensuring the product could be priced reasonably, tCN would focus on ensuring the technology and the design behind the LMS would always remain world-class. This new platform (LDL) is robust enough to enable individuals to learn privately and also enable organisational group learning. LDL aims to be affordable for every single company. Every company, with an investment of only US$360 (RM1,000) per month, can have a private channel branded with their company logo and loaded with specific, customised bite-sized content developed specifically for the organisation. Included in the package are built-in assessments and even a social engagement and measurement tool. Most LMS charge on a per user fee in addition to the implementation and software costs, but the new LDL LMS is available on a flat fee basis, with no additional fees for implementation or software costs.

LDL not only engages learners through its simple interface, but it also engages learners through a reward system called Aner Seeds, a leaderboard of badges that you can earn and a Social Portfolio that shows all your learning achievements in a visually attractive manner. No training is required to use this platform, and many organisations use the “LeaderBoard” to enable competitive comparisons amongst employees so that those who “learn more” are rewarded according to the learning they have done.

TRACKING TO SUPPORT AND INCENTIVE

In addition, this new LDL platform allows human resource leaders to have easy ways of tracking user engagement by offering on-the-spot reports on user activities on the platform, uptake and completion of courses, and engagement levels with other users. The gamification element of the platform also allows for an easy way to identify whom to reward and how to incentivise people in the organisation as well.

For companies looking for a systematic way of developing and tracking the development of all their employees, as well as a collaborative space where their employees can come together to learn and share information within the company, this new digital learning LMS could be a great way to get started on this easy, fun, engaging and rewarding journey. And the best part is that it’s practically free! (It is also 100% Human Resources Development Fund claimable.)

A few years ago, Noel Tichy and a number of other researchers argued on the importance of a learning organisation. A learning organisation is a company where every single employee is constantly learning and growing. As each individual learns, the organisation grows. If your employees are stagnant, the organisation decays. Is your organisation a learning organisation or a stagnant one? Do you provide tools and opportunities for your employees to consistently learn and grow? An organisation that is not growing is a decaying organisation. With the right technology, even small-to-medium sized enterprises today can become learning organisations. LDL is changing the way individuals and organisations learn, and you can set up your organisation to become a learning organisation too.
ID you know that there is a United Nations (UN) resolution on happiness? In 2012, all 193 member states unani-
mously adopted UN resolution 66/281 and declared March 20 henceforth to be International Happiness Day. Sadly, there is little indication that this gesture of goodwill has made any difference to global happiness. On the contrary, the world seems to be rapidly becoming more unhappy. At least a mil-
lion people will have committed suicide this year and 20 million more tried to end their lives. In the United States alone, more than 40 million people are on anti-
depressants and many more would take them if they could afford to.

I am not a psychiatrist nor am I a psychologist; in fact, for more than two decades I was an international banker. However, I became so interested in what makes people happy that I quit my well-
paying job and spent the past seven years developing, refining and running a workshop that helps people find lasting happiness in their lives. My workshop has now been run in more than 14 countries and four continents, starting in Hong Kong, the UK, the United States and Australia, and moving to more exotic places like Armenia and Kyrgyzstan.

Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of launching the workshop in Malaysia where the programme has been so impactful that a group of us have decided to set up a regional hub here to develop the concept further, for both individuals and businesses.

Most participants have found the workshop to be a life-transforming experience. It does not seem to mat-
ter what cultural background they are from or whether they are young or old, wealthy or poor, multiple PhD holders or high school dropouts; everyone has been helped to find happiness in life and many have gone on to realise the dreams within them.

What they all had in common was the discovery of many new insights about themselves during the workshop that has given them a new sense of identity and a new clarity about their life purpose and direction. Let me tell you a few stories.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH YOUR STRENGTHS**

Dan came on our workshop unsure whether to take on a global leader-
ship role for the professional group he belonged to. The person he was asked to take over from had a brilliant mind and belonged to. The person he was asked to ship role for the professional group he with your strengths

**FORGING AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP**

When the workshops are run for business leaders and for teams, not just the individual but the whole organisa-
tion benefits. I was working with four founding partners of one of the fastest-
growing private equity firms in Asia. During the workshop, Bruce (not his real name), the managing partner, confided to the other partners about an ethical mistake he had made as a stu-
dent, something he had never shared with anyone else before. As he told his story, I could feel the bond of trust and friendship strengthen among the four men in the room. Shortly after the workshop, Bruce made an announcement to the whole firm. He told them, “In the past, I have communicated with you what I thought about a deal; from now on, I am going to share with you how I feel as well.” This seemingly small gesture transformed the culture of the company and made it into a much more personable place than before.

The employees had no idea why Bruce decided to do things differently, but hav-

**BUILDING GENUINE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS**

When business teams experience the workshop together, the positive energy and new insights that are generated can be quite addictive with far-reaching con-
sequences. I was running a workshop for a cutting-edge architectural firm in Hong Kong. We were reviewing the VIA clas-
sification of character strengths, which is one of the frameworks we use in the workshop.

The discussion turned to the topic of "love", which is one of the VIA strengths but not a topic generally discussed in a work setting. All of sudden, the light came on almost simultaneously across the whole group. One of the architects blurted out, “I know what the problem is. There is clearly a lot of love among us as a team, but we don’t love our customers enough!”

It turns out that this proud group of architects resented their clients because, as architects, they wanted to design beautiful buildings but their clients seemed more interested in cutting back costs and frustrating their plans. This insight led to a passionate round of brainstorming and by the end of the day, the team had come up with a new way of working which allowed them to remain true to their design principles whilst “lov-
ing” their clients more.

As these stories illustrate, if you want a more fulfilled life, you need new insights about yourself. But there is a catch. You cannot study an insight, purchase it, think it into existence or absorb it into your bloodstream by osmosis. To develop an insight, you have to come at it obliquely. Under the right conditions, insights in fact happen naturally. My workshop is designed to create the opti-
mal environment for generating lots of ideas in a short space of time, and I hope I will have the pleasure of meeting you at

**ARE YOU READY TO UPGRADE YOUR LIFE?**

If you answer ‘No’ to any of the above questions, you deserve a life upgrade!

To start the journey of upgrading your life, please go to: leaderonomics.pro.viasurvey.org

Register at the above page to take the free survey that has been taken by mil-

**ABOUT THE AUTHENTIC LIVES WORKSHOP**

Authentic Business Solutions (ABS) encompasses a portfolio of personal development and business transformation tools and services. The ABS focus is to generate engagement for participants at various levels: engaging leaders, engaging employees, engaging youth, engaging organisations, and engaging communities.

The Authentic Lives Workshop is ABS’s flagship product, developed over seven years and tested in 14 countries. It is entirely insights-driven and enables participants to gain a deep understanding of their identity and to shape their intended future.
For organisations to thrive and lead, it takes a holistic ecosystem to identify, nurture and accelerate pipelines of leaders, for both present and future. In order to drive results, we first need to determine critical challenges that can drive or derail success. Our priority is to get to know you deeply, and identify your distinct needs. Our Organisational Diagnostic team is equipped with the heart and knowledge to hear you out and work with you to diagnose root causes.

Equipped with deep knowledge of workplace psychology and adult learning, our solutions are designed to bring you the best possible results.

DIAGNOSE organisational challenges

DESIGN the right solutions

DELIVER effective results

We can work with you to intentionally craft human capital solutions for business results:
• Employee development initiatives • Learning calendars • Experiential simulations • Digital learning • High potential talent acceleration • Talent assessment • Strategic reviews • Culture and employee engagement

Contact Dinesh at 012 985 6835 or info@leaderonomics.com to schedule a free consultation.