SCALE UP: THE CLIMB TO MASTERY

4: YOUR APPROACH IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR AGE

5: WHAT’S WRONG WITH BEING A JACK OF ALL TRADES?

6: OVERCOMING THE ODDS WITH PRINCIPLED LEADERSHIP
Mastersing a lifelong journey of leadership

Philosophical

Mastering a lifelong journey of leadership

Pursuing mastery in any field is perhaps more complicated today than at any time in the past. While access to learning resources has increased in some ways, e.g. online courses and YouTube how-to channels, the pace of technological advancement can render knowledge and skills obsolete before textbooks on the subject even hit the shelves.

In an increasingly globalised human resource market, it is difficult even to predict which specialisation or area of expertise will remain marketable long enough to pay for the cost of its acquisition. Thousands of workers could lose their jobs to automation overnight, and what seemed the best specialisation in university could suddenly be a qualification for unemployment.

That said, not all forms of mastery are susceptible to technological or geopolitical trends. In this issue of the Leaderonomics pullout, we feature articles on four areas of mastery that affect us in our everyday lives: personal mastery, functional mastery, business mastery and leadership mastery.

While mastery in functional and business matters is highly interdependent upon environmental factors, personal and leadership mastery involve the development of timeless qualities that ultimately outlast economic and cultural trends. Minda Zetlin gets the ball rolling on leadership mastery by sharing 10 personal skills that set the very best leaders apart. She’s quick to highlight, however, that as one moves up the ladder into positions of greater responsibility and challenge, leadership skills that were previously sufficient prove inadequate. Furthermore, profitability may have been the leading criteria in the past, but employees today want leaders whose values align with their own. In more advanced societies, ethical and environmentally conscious leadership consistently enjoy first dibs on the best talents.

Dinesh Dorai Raj exhorts younger members of the workforce not to be cowed by their own youthfulness nor by the relative seniority of their co-workers. He shares what working with more experienced colleagues has shown him about how to build personal mastery and professional credibility regardless of how long one has been in a role or workforce.

It can be tough deciding how to develop one’s functional mastery when faced with fast-evolving technological norms and geopolitical movements. Will the job you’re training for pullout, we feature useful tips on how we may develop ourselves to be principled leaders. Practically every one of us can relate to feeling overworked in today’s hectic environment. Jeff Haden offers ten tips on how to avoid being overwhelmed by our responsibilities and to prime ourselves for more effective performance. On the same page, you’ll also find a handy infographic to help you plan a productive day.

If you don’t have peace, it isn’t because someone took it from you; you gave it away. You cannot always control what happens to you, but you can control what happens in you. — John C. Maxwell

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By MINDA ZETLIN
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10 PERSONAL SKILLS THAT SET THE VERY BEST LEADERS APART

QUALITIES THAT WORKED IN THE PAST WON’T CARRY YOU INTO THE FUTURE

D o you have the personal qualities you need to be an effective leader in the coming decades? Even if you’ve been successful so far, the answer may be no. The aggressive personality and hard-driving skill set that got so many leaders to the top in past years won’t keep working in the future. In her inspiring TED Talk, researcher Brené Brown describes the social, psychological, and materialistic forces for a very long time, to the point that we have lost touch with our true nature as human beings.”

She says that you can be your true self by moving away from rational-only decision making. “Moving into a state where we experience the world through our senses not only allow for healthy emotional connectedness, but it also means better decisions will be made.”

RADICAL RESPONSIBILITY
“Stop the blame game,” Brügmann advises. “Sound easy? Commit to a week without complaining, and you’ll realise how difficult this is. We are surrounded by complaining and blaming mindsets,” she says.

You can change that dynamic for yourself and your company. “Taking radical responsibility in every situation, and taking action towards the world you envision, will drive a proactive mindset of conscious business.”

3 HEALTHY ANGER
“Anger has a bad reputation in our society and culture. The truth is, anger holds an incredible amount of power when it comes to accessing passion and creating and manifesting a vision,” says Brügmann.

In today’s world of growing discontent with greed-driven businesses, Brügmann expects a lot more expressions of healthy anger in the coming years. For leaders, “learning to stay present with anger – which denotes something is not okay with you – and then creating an action plan to remedy the problem and establish better working efforts will be a key future skill,” she says.

“Healthy anger is needed for you to know what works and doesn’t work in the present moment, and that’s a skill visionary leaders need to possess.”

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
“Leaders of tomorrow, and preferably already today, need deep emotional awareness and radical empathy skills to behave in a manner that goes beyond self-interests,” Brügmann says.

Emotional intelligence reportedly accounts for 58% of performance in all types of jobs, and 83% of those with high self-awareness are top performers. “It’s hard to deny that this is a key skill for success,” she says.

SENSUOUSNESS
No, they do not teach this in MBA programmes. But Brügmann argues, “We have been driven by cultural, capitalistic, and materialistic forces for a very long time, to the point that we have lost touch with our true nature as human beings.”

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SELF-CARE
Many of us neglect the care of our physical selves, especially when leading a business or a team. That’s a big mistake. “Taking good care of your health is a foundational skill in building sustainable leadership,” Brügmann says.

She recommends eating a life-enriching diet, and prioritising regular exercise, “no matter how crazy your schedule may seem. Think you just don’t have time? Take inspiration from some of the world’s most successful leaders.”

Richard Branson stays in shape with kitesurfing,” she notes. Stella McCartney (daughter of a former Beatle and a well-known fashion designer) says thinking about her four kids inspires her to exercise – and she runs, dances, bikes, and goes to the gym. “India’s fourth-richest billionaire, Anil Ambani, is a marathon runner,” she adds. And don’t neglect sleep – another mistake. “Sleep is another foundational physical health skill,” Brügmann says.

DETERMINATION
Being committed to a larger vision helps you handle the hard times and avoid being blown off by temporary ups and downs, Brügmann says. “Be a goal digger! Recommit to your goal often – daily is preferred – and consistently consider how committed you are to reaching this vision.” The more committed you are, the likelier your vision will come true.

8 VULNERABILITY
In her inspiring TED Talk, researcher Brené Brown describes how people who fully embrace vulnerability believe that quality is what makes themselves and others beautiful. “Allowing your team to see you as a whole and imperfect person, as well as a role model, will inspire the kind of atmosphere where teams thrive, and creativity and innovation flourish,” Brügmann says.

9 RISK TOLERANCE
Failure is an opportunity to learn and grow, Brügmann says. “Allowing for room to fail is the same as allowing for room to succeed. This seedling space requires creativity, play, trial and error, and thus imperfections.”

Ironically, while accepting failure and risk-taking are in vogue throughout the business world and especially, the startup world, younger entrepreneurs are more financially fragile and risk-averse than ever, Brügmann notes. Perhaps this is because so many are now saddled with huge college debt.

Whatever the case, she says, “leaders who not only understand how to work with the strengths of the millennial cohort, but also support strengthening their weaknesses, will be in demand.”

PLAYFUL CURiosity
“Seek out potential opportunities and get curious,” Brügmann advises. When conflict arises, approach it from a place of curiosity rather than feeling victimised.

“First, look inward – how did you cause this situation to happen?” she says. “Then look outward and get curious about the other person’s reaction and think about how that person might see the world from a playful attitude.” If you can do this, creative solutions will appear in a playful space that is otherwise not available.”

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Minda Zetlin is a business writer and speaker, co-author of The Geek Gap, and former president of the American Society of Journalists and Authors. This article first appeared on Inc.com.

To learn more about programmes on developing personal and leadership mastery write info@leaderonomics.com
Every leader is expected to evolve and grow. This journey of becoming a better leader is no different. It is an ongoing process and a journey of self-discovery and re-discovery. You will gear up at a young age. Aspiring leaders need to be ready to embrace this journey at any age. Leadership is not a vocation of the right but a vocation of the brave. It is a vocation that demands a certain level of courage and a willingness to face challenges head-on.

Having said this, the mindset of aspiring leaders is often influenced by the belief that they are younger than most of us, left all the basic essentials mentioned above. What you initially lack in years of experience can be mitigated through deep passion for your work, backed by preparation and accountability. By DINESH DORAI RAJ

YOUR APPROACH MATTERS MORE THAN YOUR AGE

YOUR YOUTH DOES NOT LIMIT YOUR CREDIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

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E live in an era of information explosion surrounded by many intelligent, self-driven, talented and determined young people who are hungry for the opportunity to make a difference in the workplace today. Despite this, most of us have encountered a situation where we had amazing perspectives to challenge a discussion but shied away in the presence of senior colleagues, thinking to ourselves, “Well, they have over 20 years of experience than I have and they might rubbish my thoughts.”

I can imagine two scenarios here. First, you have been shut down when you voiced an opinion just because you were a “newbie” and second, you suffer from a sense of inferiority because you never believed in yourself in these moments. Fret not – you are not the only one; most of us have been there too. Last year, I took up a role in Leaderonomics to lead an internal incubation process as part of our strategic initiatives to scale the organisation’s performance capability. This means, if something has no strategic pathway carved ahead, I need to address it with the support of my team members. This required daily conversations with multiple stakeholders, especially those with strong professional backgrounds and experience, and on several occasions, I was caught in the second situation mentioned above before it struck me that I need to overcome my self-doubt and fear.

I went through several conversations and made deep observations – especially among the senior folks with vast experience – and as I tried emulating some key behaviours, I received reaffirmation that being young is not really a shortcoming in the workplace. I picked up several lessons from three key influencers in my career last year and these lessons certainly made a huge difference in my life.

LESSON FROM KEY INFLUENCER 1: DEVELOP REAL PASSION

Develop real passion for your job and the organisation, and constantly build a deeper interest in it. Passion leads you to be selfless yet have a compelling enthusiasm and desire to succeed that echoes a saying, “A desire fuelled by passion will bring out the greatest results in life.”

You will always be willing to go beyond the set threshold to achieve something you are passionate about and these are the qualities that leaders and successful organisations seek in their people.

You’ll always be willing to go the extra mile to accomplish something, seek answers and challenge the incumbents, and these qualities will help you gain a competitive edge despite your limited professional experience. As psychologist and author Angela Duckworth puts it, “A passion is more developed than it is discovered.” I decided to put this belief statement to the test when, together with my colleagues, I started exploring areas that weren’t my forte in order to develop organisational and people development solutions for clients.

I took the initiative to get involved in brainstorming solutions along with my colleagues, and I unexpectedly became a lot more passionate about what I did. This passion led to greater credibility which turned me into a sounding board for others.

LESSON FROM KEY INFLUENCER 2: BE ACCOUNTABLE

Do your homework, gather your facts, be biased towards data-driven conversations and offer a look out beyond what you can see.

Ever been intimidated by “high-level” conversations among senior leaders in your organisation and found yourself thinking, “This is too much to digest or too much experience for me to match”? Take a closer look at these conversations and you will realise that they are backed by valuable information that may have been gathered through various levels of interaction and experiences in dealing with organisational issues. Among the generations in the current workforce, we are especially privileged by the unlimited knowledge around us. We need to make an effort to leverage on this content.

This was reinforced when a colleague, who is younger than most of us, left all of us – including the senior ones – in awe after her presentation. When I asked her the key to her impactful and inspiring few minutes, she simply said, “Preparation is key to success.”

LESSON FROM KEY INFLUENCER 3: ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is one of the most desired traits in any organisation and it is often overlooked at the workplace. Being accountable starts with basic things like notifying your colleagues that you will be late for a meeting – even if you are delayed by just five minutes. Accountability fuels a gradual increment of respect and confidence among your colleagues before you are given the freedom to decide and challenge others to a better performance as part of your journey of becoming a better leader, even at a young age.

I remember missing an important deadline that I promised one of my directors and during a weekly meeting, he brought it up just to reinforce the importance of accountability. That led to an important personal development within me in terms of accountability and before long, I was given more room to lead and provide opinions and gained a sense of respect among the senior folks. We all need this to be instilled from the beginning of one’s career.

FINAL THOUGHTS

You are observed on how you do things at work. It’s your approach that matters, not your age, and as you rise through the hierarchy, you will realise that despite having bigger digits for your age, you will never be seen as a credible leader to be heard from if you do not learn and apply the basic essentials mentioned above. Start the practice of making an impact as a young leader now!
By LOUISA DEVALDAGAN

The phrase “jack of all trades, master of none” has taken on several forms—with both negative and positive connotations. In fact, in its initial appearances during the early 1600s the phrase was just “Jack of all Trades” and flip-flopped between being a form of praise and a dissip. This term was popularly used by Robert Greene in 1592 to dismiss William Shakespeare—an actor turned playwright. However, by the 17th century, the phrase was generally taken as a term of praise—at least until the phrase “master of none” was tacked on, making its meaning less clear.

An alternate version of the phrase now goes: “Jack of all trades, master of none is oftentimes better than master of one.” Yes, this phrase goes in circles. And so does the debate. Which is superior at work, being a jack-of-all-trades or a master of one? Generalisation or specialisation?

THE PROS OF BEING JACK

There are a few obvious benefits to having developed skills in several fields; you are adaptable and have significantly more transferable skills than the average Joe. Maybe you can do a little bit of programming, a little bit of social media management, and you know copywriting and how to make lattes well enough to get a job in any of these areas.

You can definitely use your other skills in whichever job you go for to be more effective at your role or you could use them just to bond and network with peers (a good cup of coffee is always welcome!).

Furthermore, a common driver of the jack-of-all-trades is the thirst to expand one’s skills, and learn, and an insatiable curiosity for the things in one’s surroundings. Whether you realise it or not, these qualities have made you a skilled learner.

You are adept at learning and have developed shortcuts to consume as much knowledge in that area as possible. This passion for knowledge and curiosity was undoubtedly what drove the genius that was Leonardo da Vinci to invent, paint, and write, as well as explore science, medicine and music.

Entrepreneur and author of the popular “4-hour” themed self-help books, Timothy Ferriss, had this to say about the generalist approach: “In a world of dogmatic specialists, it’s the generalist who ends up running the show. I believe the time to change and be greater is now. To reach your full potential, it requires having multiple interests and abilities to just pick a job.”

Thankfully, we are in an era where many jobs come with diversified roles or have two or more roles rolled into one. While tough, these areas are dynamic and engaging and allow you to marry your various skills in new and exciting ways.

However, it is important to mindfully and purposefully put time and effort into becoming a master of one or more areas, as specialisation is still prized and generally valued, especially in large firms. This attitude will take you far. The upside of mastery in several trades is that it opens you up to divergent thinking, innovative problem-solving and new ideas—capabilities that are increasingly in demand in the current economy.

So, expand your horizons but explore them thoroughly.

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Why Mastering One Area While Knowing A Bit Of Everything Will Carry You Far

JACK OF ALL TRADES VS MASTER OF ONE

Mastery of one trade can be converted into a catalyst for learning from other fields. By intersectional, the need for people who can bring together skills from multiple areas to address these complex issues, is on the rise.

The best of both worlds

If you identify with being a jack-of-all-trades, chances are you get bored once you’ve satisfied your curiosity in an area or if you feel like you have too many interests and abilities to just pick a job. Thankfully, we are in an era where many jobs come with diversified roles or have two or more roles rolled into one. While tough, these areas are dynamic and engaging and allow you to marry your various skills in new and exciting ways.

However, it is important to mindfully and purposefully put time and effort into becoming a master of one or more areas, as specialisation is still prized and greatly valued, especially in large firms. This attitude will take you far. The upside of mastery in several trades is that it opens you up to divergent thinking, innovative problem-solving and new ideas—capabilities that are increasingly in demand in the current economy.

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Steps to Mastery

1. Be curious and keep wanting to learn. Every field is always expanding and evolving. It’s important to be mindful of that and always be hungry to know more. Staying on top of the latest in your areas of interest will keep you a cut above the rest.

2. Translate this knowledge into action. While it’s great to know stuff, it’s better to do something with all that knowledge. Be prepared to try a little at first, though, because it’s all about learning from mistakes and real-world scenarios. Stay resilient and you will press on to master whatever you have thrown yourself into.

3. Be willing to commit. To master something, one must be willing to put in the time needed. You do not necessarily have to block out everything and only focus on one thing, but you do have to commit to time and energy regularly to master something.

4. Evaluate yourself. Someone can be considered a master where they’re successful about 80% of the time, so pay attention to the feedback you’re receiving and keep a journal of your progress. This way, you know how long you take to resolve similar issues or even the outcome of various strategies which you can then further evaluate.

5. Ponder, objectively, and seek an accurate awareness of self. It’s important to know and be clear about how much you know and how well you can perform in a certain area. It’s important to assess what you know and what you need to know before you can call yourself a master.
WE are asked to write about great political leaders who—driven by their principles—have initially felt awkward, stuck, principles and policies are words that aren’t used well together in the same sentence. Yet, while it can be easy to focus on the flaws and faults of those tasked with governing, and the impact that the loss of millions, or even larger scale, power had on politics, it is important to remember that many of these leaders, often with the support of the public and the established system of government, a path by my own standards.

While human nature continues to thieve, politics will always exist—both some world leaders have been able, for example, to build a career out of their principles to guide the world to a better place. Nelson Mandela was a man who embodied this path, and his story is a testament to the values of hope, unity, and peace and progress to the world.

On May 10, 1962, just before he was made a prisoner, I was struck by the furnishing of Nelson Mandela’s cell. He lived in prison for approximately 27 years in the harshness of circumstances, we retain the freedom to always choose a better way forward. Political leaders—as we all know—are not immune to their faults and mistakes, therefore, most unfortunately, misconduct is found, the people have a duty to call it out. But the world we have been blessed to have the kind of leaders who can rise above political pressure or influence, and be inspired by the principles that make the right choices. Remaining true to our principles can be tough, especially when it is so easy to lose what we value very highly and so we compromise. Those who lead their team, Mandela initially wasn’t keen on hunger strike until they relented. Mandela was a leader who could see a world where all the supernatural powers and the laws of nature were at his disposal. He continued to fight for freedom, to persist, and to rise above politics and persecution, the conflict, struggles, persecution, and repression, the conflict, struggles, persecution, and repression.

LEADERSHIP MASTERY

Mandela was a visionary. He could make decisions that would be in the interest of the nation, and he knew that the value of that decision in the long run was outweighed by the good he could do in the short term. He knew that the value of the lives of his people. He knew that the value of the lives of his people.

PERSONAL MASTERY

Mandela’s patience and ability to hang, which was something that people valued very highly and so he remained compassionate, and he knew that the value of the lives of his people. He knew that the value of the lives of his people.

FUNCTIONAL MASTERY

As a leader, Mandela was well versed in methods to bring change through policies and regulations, namely in areas concerning peace, justice and racial harmony. For instance, he advocated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to enable South Africans to surf very human rights violations that occurred during apartheid.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD LEADER GREAT

Functional mastery is about having the know-how and wisdom to create something which can only be developed with time and effort.

Leadership mastery is about having certain traits and skills that are developed over time, but it is the ability to connect with others in a deeper way, the ability to share knowledge and to make the right decisions.

Some of the greatest leaders in the world are effective leaders because of their mastery of the four areas—personal, business, leadership, and functional, which were all built around the ideal of the individual.

FUNCTIONAL MASTERY

Mandela was a visionary. He could make decisions that may not initially be happy with because he could see the value of that decision in the long run. An example was when South Africa was in a fight against apartheid, he knew that the value of the lives of his people. He knew that the value of the lives of his people.

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Some of the greatest leaders in the world are effective leaders because of their mastery of the four areas—personal, business, leadership, and functional, which were all built around the ideal of the individual.
We know that almost all rules and policies have bad outcomes so we need to find ways to replace rules with other means to influence employee behaviour. I have talked about how accountability can be used instead of rules. But is it possible to have no company rules at all? What needs to happen in order to put the trust on employees to do the right thing? Any talk about leaving without rules would be incomplete without mentioning the Brazilian business visionary, Ricardo Semler.

Semler is the former chief executive officer and president of Semco, which under his leadership, grew from US$4 million in revenue to over US$160 million in about 20 years. All of this without a mission statement, an organisational chart, or any written policies at all. And, definitely without a rulebook. So, what was the key to Semco’s success? One could point to various features of the radical industrial democracy that Semler ushered in during his tenure. But Semler himself epitomised it in his 2014 presentation at TED Global:

“We looked at it and we said, let’s devolve this to these people. Let’s give these people a company where we take away all the boarding school aspects of; this is how you dress, this is how you go to meetings, this is what you say, this is what you don’t say, and let’s see what’s left. And so, the question we were asking was, how can we be taking care of people? People are the only thing we have.”

Semler distributed that power in some unorthodox ways. For example, he let employees set their own salaries. That’s right, over 25 years ago, Semler put a computer in the company cafeteria that revealed how much revenue the company was taking in, the profit margins from that revenue, how many employees inside the company made, and how much employees in similar positions made. Armed with that information, the employee was then allowed to set his or her own salary. Did people pay themselves ridiculous amounts? No, it turned out that information and peer pressure kept pay at industry norms. This is just one example of many – like Semco’s refusal to track the number of hours that employees worked; Or the fact that most meetings are voluntary, and that two seats at board meetings are open to the first employees to arrive. Semler admitted that cleaning ladies are open to the first employees to arrive. Semler distributed that power in some unorthodox ways. For example, he let employees set their own salaries. That’s right, over 25 years ago, Semler put a computer in the company cafeteria that revealed how much revenue the company was taking in, the profit margins from that revenue, how many employees inside the company made, and how much employees in similar positions made. Armed with that information, the employee was then allowed to set his or her own salary. Did people pay themselves ridiculous amounts? No, it turned out that information and peer pressure kept pay at industry norms. This is just one example of many – like Semco’s refusal to track the number of hours that employees worked; Or the fact that most meetings are voluntary, and that two seats at board meetings are open to the first employees to arrive. Semler admitted that cleaning ladies are open to the first employees to arrive.

“Rules say, ‘You can’t be trusted, so we need to have a boss to tell you what to do.’ Transparency is an effective way to establish guidelines for behaviour. Whether it’s data from within your own company or industry data, it establishes a range for normal or acceptable behaviour. Bob Barry is a personal success coach who clearly delineates the difference between rules and guidelines. He says: ‘Rules say, “You can’t be trusted,” so we have rules to create structure and we expect you to follow them or face the consequences.’ Guidelines say: “We’ve got an idea that we need a sense of structure, or organisation, otherwise things might get really crazy around here. We trust that you can do what’s right, but to help you, we offer these guidelines: “One creates resistance and the other invites cooperation.”

While you might be unwilling or unable to eliminate rules to the extent of Semco, how much more would your employees give you if you defaulted to trust? (Yes, an occasional bad apple (i.e., bad hire) will cause a problem that needs to be solved.) You need to ask yourself like:

- What decisions am I willing to delegate to my people?
- What decisions do they wish I would delegate to them?
- What information do they need to have in order to do the right thing?

As Semler wrote in a 1994 article for the Harvard Business Review, “Participation gives people control of their work, profit sharing gives them a reason to do it better, information tells them what’s working and what isn’t.”

What can you do to immediately increase transparency on your team?

**Replace Rules With Transparency and Trust**

By KEVIN KRUSE

EFFECTIVE organisations enable us to harness each other’s strengths, but it isn’t easy working with others. Here are ways to thrive in an organisational life:

- **#1 DON’T ALWAYS RUN WITH THE PACK** You disappear if you always fall in line. Offer constructive dissent. The key term is “constructive.” Any fool can poke holes in an idea. It takes forward-facing insight to disagree in ways that move the agenda forward. Offer alternative perspectives as long as they support organisational objectives. A good idea that doesn’t move the agenda forward is a wasteful distraction. Avoid coming off as resistant. Focus energy on seizing opportunities, more than solving problems or pointing out fault. Make things better or sit down and be quiet.

- **#2 SWING YOUR HAMMER MINDFULLY** You aren’t worthy to lead if you don’t care about your impact on others. Give voice to your heart in ways that leave the intended impact. Toddlers don’t care how their behaviours affect others. Choose to focus on things you like about people at least 80% of the time. Explain your intentions. Tell people what you’re trying to achieve. Become more transparent with intentions when people use your transparency against you. Stay connected when you feel like pulling away. Evaluate your impact. Check to see if the message they made is the one you sent. Avoid game playing. Choose direct over subtle and honest over manipulative. Turn to the future when addressing issues and solving problems. You’re either oblivious or self-serving if others aren’t part of your operational equation.

- **#3 GRAB THE ROPE AND PULL WITH COLLEAGUES** Be helpful, as long as it doesn’t distract you from your core responsibilities.

- **#4 ALIGN WITH THE PRIORITIES OF LEADERSHIP** A great soccer player won’t help the swim team win. Ask leaders and managers what they’re trying to accomplish. Be sure you know why it matters. Help leaders achieve their objectives, just don’t always run with the pack.

How might leaders thrive in organisational life?

- Dan Rockwell is a coach, speaker and is freakishly interested in leadership. He is an author of a world-renowned most socially media leadership blog coaching2600.com.
A MATTER OF INTEGRITY

EVERYONE THRIVES IN A COMPANY WHERE ETHICS AND PROFIT CONVERGE

According to Fast Company, the leadership of Martin Winterkorn, now former CEO of Volkswagen, could have led employees to cheat.

A recent study on unethical businesses unveiled that dishonest practices in companies lead to a phenomenon known as “moral muteness,” where managers actually make an economic case to justify unethical business practices.

Businesses thrive when business is done the right way as represented by a concept termed by business researchers as “conscious capitalism.” When a business integrates ethics, morals and care for their customers and stakeholders, the company stands to multiply its monetary gains and profits.

Ethical businesses make profits

Many business leaders tend to believe that the only way they can increase market share, outbid competitors and get to the top, is by being brutal and ruthless when doing business. It is this dog-eat-dog mentality that landed Volkswagen in hot water.

When leaders act with integrity and implement processes and policies with good ethics and values in mind, it creates a company culture where organisational integrity becomes part of the company.

Regular compliance and an accountability awareness framework can help companies circumvent any untoward consequences of unethical practices. As the legal environment becomes increasingly competitive, there is a higher demand for a risk-averse and foolproof ethical framework.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

No doubt that businesses are major key players in economy today. But when businesses act unethically, its ripple effect can have a major impact on communities at the regional and global levels. As Benjamin Parker — Peter Parker’s uncle in the movie Spider-Man — puts it, “With great power comes great responsibility.”

Being anchors in the organisation, leaders need to ensure that practices, policies and people are all aligned to the organisation’s overall ethical framework. That said, everyone has due diligence to uphold organisational integrity to the best of their ability as well.

By PUVA NAESWARY BAJASEGAR

N 2015, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) started probing into alleged complaints surrounding a series of corruption in the Sabah State Water Department. As a result of their investigation, MACC found that almost 60% of the Fund for Sakeh Khidmat, a program to provide clean water treatment for locals in remote villages — had been embezzled by its officials.

Last year also saw Volkswagen come under fire when the car company allegedly installed software that defeated emissions testing. Now, Wells Fargo bank is facing fraud allegations for opening unauthorized accounts in customers’ knowledge.

Researchers believe that integrity and values-based leadership is the cornerstone of any organisation’s sustainable success.

One of the ways companies can ensure they “do the right thing” is through values-based leadership. When leaders act with integrity and implement processes and policies with good ethics and values in mind, it creates a company culture where organisational integrity is part of the company’s core DNA.

As the world becomes increasingly borderless and with greater access to technologies, there is an enormous responsibility for companies, big or small, to uphold a high standard of integrity and ethics.

Here are three reasons why integrity matters in companies:

1. ETHICAL BUSINESS MAKES PROFITS

Many business leaders tend to believe that the only way they can increase market share, outbid competitors and get to the top, is by being brutal and ruthless when doing business. It is this dog-eat-dog mentality that landed Volkswagen in hot water.
I had just read an early version of a new book and decided to do a quick survey during a speaking engagement. I asked the audience, “How many of you feel overworked and overwhelmed?”

As far as I could tell, every hand was raised. No surprise there. We all feel overworked and overwhelmed, at least some of the time. Even if by other people’s standards, we seem to have it easy, to us it still feels like we’re overwhelmed.

Effectively balancing our professional and personal lives is a problem we all struggle with. Maybe that’s because we look outside ourselves for solutions: software, apps, devices, time management systems and such. All of those can help, but as Scott Eblin, author of Overworked and Overwhelmed: The Mindfulness Alternative, says, “The only person who is going to keep you from feeling overworked and overwhelmed is you.”

To Eblin, it all starts with one thing. You must commit to intentionally managing your time so you have a fighting chance of showing up at your best: your most inspired, your most productive, and your most “in the flow.” So, how do you do that? Here are Eblin’s tips.

1. Recognise and overcome the tyranny of the present

People who are always “in the moment” don’t look ahead and make plans to pursue their goals and dreams. Though there are things you need to do every day, much of what you think you need to do isn’t particularly important – especially your long-term goals are concerned. That’s why you should...

2. Ask, “Is this really necessary?”

Challenge your basic assumptions about your regular habits. Do you need to have that meeting? Do you need to create that report? Do you need to respond to that e-mail? In many cases, you don’t, but you do anyway simply because that’s what you’ve always done. Eliminate as many “nice to do” tasks as possible. Not only will you have more time, you’ll also have more time to be effective where it really matters.

3. Push reset on your calendar

Sometimes the answer to “Is this really necessary?” is, “Yes, but not right now.” What is the most important thing you need to do today? What tasks will keep you from getting that done? The same is true if something important pops up. Immediately reset your calendar and re-prioritise. Getting stuff done is fine, but getting the right stuff done is what really matters.

4. Determine (and follow) your unique operating rhythm

We all work differently. Some like to hit the ground running. Others like to start the day by reflecting, meditating, and thinking. Some like to work late into the night. The key is to understand not just how you like to work but also how you work best. You might like to work late at night, but if you’re tired and frazzled by a long day you won’t perform at your best. Isn’t performing at your best what matters most?

Do some experiments to figure out what works best for you. (Here’s a cool infographic on the impact of schedules on productivity.) While you won’t always be able to stick to your plan, you will always have a plan to return to. (See Figure 1)

5. Schedule the most important tasks first

What are your priorities for the month, week or the day? Determine what they are and do those things first. Why wouldn’t you work on less important tasks when the truly important items are where you create the most value – whether for your business or your life?

6. Give yourself time for unconscious thought

Giving yourself time for unconscious thought is key to making smart decisions when you face complex problems. Research shows people tend to make their best decisions when they have an opportunity to review the data and facts and then focus their thought on something else for a period of time.

How? Take a walk. Do a mindless chore. Exercise. Do something where your body takes over and your mind goes on autopilot. You’ll be surprised by the solutions you can dream up when you aren’t trying to be creative.

7. Set boundaries

No one can or should be on 24/7. Yet you probably feel you are – because you allow yourself to be. Set some boundaries: the time you’ll stop working, certain times you’ll do things with your family, certain times you won’t take calls and such. Then, let people know those boundaries. Other people won’t respect your time unless you respect it first.

8. Be strategic with ‘yes’ and ‘no’

You can’t say yes to everything. (Well, you can, but you won’t get everything you say yes to done – so in effect you’re still saying no.) Sometimes you simply need to say no. Other times you can say, “No, unless…” and add stipulations. The same is true with yes. Saying, “Yes, but only if…” creates guidelines. Always consider the effect of a request on your most important goals. An automatic yes also automatically takes time away from what you need to get done.

9. Tame your distractions

Most people are distracted over 30 times an hour: phone calls, emails, texts, office drop-ins… the list is endless. Schedule blocks of time when you’ll turn off alerts. The only way to stay on schedule is to work on your own schedule – not on that of other people.

10. Remember your impact on other people

If you’re a leader – and if you run a business, you naturally impact other people. You set a direction. You set a standard. You’re a role model. Be a great role model: a person who gets important tasks done, who stays on point, who focuses on achieving goals and dreams and who helps other people achieve their goals and dreams.

That’s reason enough to manage your time so you’re consistently at your best.
Young people are fearless in taking ownership of whatever cause they believe in. —Pic by Fariha Harith/LEADERONOMICS

BY SANDY CLARKE

can often come up with surprisingly good suggestions and ideas when tackling problems. Watching my five nephews growing up, it was interesting to see one common trait that adults can certainly embrace: whenever a problem presented itself, young people tend to dwell much less on the actual problem and instead set about looking for possible solutions.

Some of the major advances in technology and social progress were driven by young people, some of whom have greatly impacted the world with their ideas. When we focus on age as a determining factor of a person’s worth, we miss the point of the famous saying, “It’s not the years of experience, but the experience in the years that count.”

Another impressive quality young people possess — from millennials onward — is the fearlessness in taking ownership of whatever cause they care about. Many young people have refused to wait around for “someone” to take a particular course of action, choosing instead to become that someone, themselves.

Traditionally, young people have been looked upon as having not much use for society until they reach a certain age and level of experience. In truth, generations are well placed to learn from each other, with every generation having something to offer.

Thankfully, this attitude is on the way out, thanks to increasing evidence that shows the value of young people and the significant, valuable contributions they continue to offer to the world.

As a pesky millennial, Sandy doesn’t believe in rigid structures. He also meditates and enjoys occasional lattes. For more info, follow him on Twitter @ RealSClarke.

LESSONS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

MILLENNIALS HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD IN AN INSTANT

3 LIFE LESSONS FROM MILLENNIALS

1. THEY’RE NOT AFRAID TO TAKE (CALCULATED) RISKS

For many baby boomers, their life path was linear: expectations were set and deviation from the path was seen as potentially ruinous. While careful planning can be important, taking risks now and then can open us up to new and exciting opportunities that we might have otherwise missed.

2. BEING VULNERABLE ISN’T JUST OK – IT CAN ACTUALLY IMPROVE EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Millennials are generally more comfortable with sharing their thoughts and feelings than previous generations. The ability to be expressive has several benefits, not least of all, when it comes to emotional health. Knowing and expressing what you feel is not a weakness — but suppressing feelings literally can be, both psychologically and physiologically.

3. THEY DON’T WAIT UNTIL RETIREMENT TO ENJOY LIFE

My nephew does quite a bit of travelling (he even pays for it himself!) and his experiences will likely teach him so much more than conventional learning. Millennials have learned that working-til-you-drop in the hope of having a few years to enjoy life is, at best, highly questionable. We live life now — surely this is when we should enjoy it? Being able to pay bills, being happy, and experiencing the world don’t need to be mutually exclusive.

3 INSPIRATIONAL AND INFLUENTIAL RISING STARS

1. OLIVIA HALLSEY

The Connecticut high school student invented a new way to test for the Ebola virus that doesn’t require refrigeration or electricity — a huge boon for the rural areas that have been most affected by the epidemic. Although it will require real-world trials before getting deployed, it won top honours at the Google Science Fair, a testament to its life-saving potential.

2. WILLIAM TURTON

While most high school students are struggling to write their college admission essays, Turton is breaking cyber-security news for The Daily Dot, a website that covers breaking cyber-security news for The Daily Dot, a website that covers news about Internet culture. Turton started his journalism career at 14, and was nabbed scoops about Uber and the first interview to school dances. His diligence has paid off — he’s time cultivating sources than going about Internet culture. Turton started writing video game reviews at 14, and has said he’d rather spend his free time cultivating sources than going to school dances. His diligence has paid off — he’s time cultivating sources than going to school dances. His diligence has paid off — he’s time cultivating sources than going.

3. AHMED MOHAMED

Not many people make national news by bringing a homemade clock to school. But the ninth grader’s arrest, after teachers and authorities mistook the said clock for a bomb, kicked off a national debate over racial profiling — and an outpouring of support for Mohamed, who was personally invited to the White House by former US president Barack Obama (who called his clock “cool”). In October, he accepted a full scholarship to a prestigious school in Qatar.

(Source: time.com, 2015; images from Youtube)
For an organisation, being able to identify and understand your people (even potential talent!) is valuable information. It allows the right people to be hired and utilised in the right way to achieve organisational goals.

Leaderonomics’ Talent Assessment team works with organisations to better select, assess, identify and develop people to their full potential. Using both traditional and innovative means, our Talent Assessment solutions deliver insight into the strengths, competencies and development gaps of your workforce.

We understand that demands for talent differ from one organisation to another. As such, our Talent Assessment solutions are crafted to best suit your company’s needs.

**KNOW WHO TO HIRE AND HOW TO DEVELOP:**

**THE LEADERONOMOMICS TALENT ASSESSMENT APPROACH**

**SELECT TALENT**
- Increase the probability of selecting the right candidate for hiring
- Assess the job and culture fit of an individual
- Go beyond an interview to evaluate behavioural capabilities and personality
- Determine internal talent readiness to be promoted to new roles
- Determine internal talent readiness for succession planning and talent pipelines

**DEVELOP TALENT**
- Better understand the strengths of individuals and groups, and leverage on them to maximise returns from the talent pool
- Identify gaps to direct targeted development plans
- Understand the bench strength of employees within the organisation
- Identify key talent and high potentials
- Provide objective feedback of performance to employees from a third-party perspective

Email us at info@leaderonomics.com to schedule a free consultation.

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