There are more than 12 great leadership articles in this week’s pullout. However, we have some 50 new articles each month, plus a library of 4,000 great videos, podcasts and articles at www.leaderonomics.com. Don’t miss out on greatness. Surf the site and grow as a leader today!

4 UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF TEAM DYNAMICS

6 HOW TO BUILD A COMMUNITY OF LOVE

10 WHY GOOD COACHING NEEDS CONTEXT
THE LEGACY OF COMPASSION IN LEADERSHIP

LOVE is not for the faint-hearted. And, it’s certainly not the route to choose for an easy way out of anything, whichever way you choose to look at it. Anyone who has embraced this cycle of emotions, would understand that for a small word, it packs a real punch. We respond to feelings of love by stepping away from ourselves, and choosing to give for the happiness or comfort of others.

And this is why, for centuries, some of the world’s greatest minds have tried to make sense of love from all perspectives. Poet and activist Maya Angelou had said: “Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.”

William Faulkner described the choice to love as: “You don’t love because: you love despite; not for the virtues, but despite the faults.”

And let’s dive into this insight by a personal favourite, the famed Vietnamese Buddhist monk and peace activist Thich Nhat Hanh: “Understanding someone’s suffering is the best gift you can give another person. Understanding is love’s other name. If you don’t understand, you can’t love.”

All these profound lines of wisdom are bound to evoke powerful memories of people, places and events that have carved themselves into our deepest memories. And, these may not always be the best, or most feel-good memories. A commitment to doing something out of love and genuine concern also means that we have to accept any outcome that could potentially disappoint us, or completely break our hearts. Or, that of others.

Yet, this is precisely what makes it special – that people choose to act out of compassion, mindfulness, selflessness and generosity for a reward that may or may not come back to them, that people choose to return to, and learn from, a place of genuine care, despite having been hurt by it.

The true reward in great acts of love and compassion, lies in its legacy which may live on within another individual or, better still, in a community. This is why Leaderonomics, as a social enterprise, has long valued the need to work towards building communities of love. From the point of inception in 2008, we have not just built and enabled leaders, but also infused our work with elements that have the potential to build communities that grow on a foundation of love. A virtue as powerful as this is bound to permeate across communities, and even through the generations.

In this week’s special Leaderonomics issue, we focus on our journey towards this end.

Chief executive officer Roshan Thiran kicks this issue off, with a chronicle of his recent road trip to Johor Bahru with two colleagues, and how this trip – despite being a work assignment – had become a chance for each of them to get to know one another better, and discover a few of their hidden talents!

Over on Page 4, read about how the work we do in learning and development has nurtured the development of dynamic teams, and how simulations can help mitigate and bridge gaps through the power of active collaboration.

Sashe Kanapathi shares how team-based simulations may just be answer to greater team dynamics that would ultimately equip us to “build communities of love” in organisations, not communities of fear, resentment, self-glorification or even communities of hate.

So, who builds these communities within organisations? Caroline Ong talks about how the folks in human resources (HR) are key players who are ultimately responsible for all employee issues, including performance and motivational issues. And as drivers of recruitment, development and other crucial people-development programmes, HR executives are essentially the architects behind “communities” in an organisation. Read her take on this on Page 5.

While the idea of building a community of love in an organisation may sound grand and ideal, leaders struggle to understand how to merge heart and mind when leading their teams. Understand what it takes to get “compassionate love” out in the workplace, and how leaders can create a highly engaged organisation when co-workers truly care for each other, show affection amongst each other and demonstrate compassion, grace and tenderness even in times of distress. Read more about this on Pages 6 and 7.

Also in this issue: what you can do to control your temper in situations of high stress; how you can coach effectively by drawing on context and how research and development can serve as the heartbeat of your organisation’s purpose.

Our team had a fruitful experience reflecting upon the work that we do each day. We hope you enjoy our offering this week, and if you have a story, tell us all about it by e-mailing editor@leaderonomics.com.

Lydia Gomez
Editor

For other great leadership insights, including those by John Maxwell, visit www.leaderonomics.com. If you missed any of our past issues, go to www.leaderonomics.com/publications and download for FREE!
MAKING THE MOST OUT OF A ROAD TRIP

LEARNING HAPPENS WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT

By ROSHAN THIRAN
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A few weekends ago, I got the chance to break away from the confines of the office to head down to Johor with fellow Leaderonomics Matthews Naylor and Mohd Hafiz Hori. I drove all the way down to a retreat where we worked with Citibank Malaysia leaders to encourage them in their creativity and to expand their thinking outside the box.

It was a great few days away, a trip that reminded me of the importance of building cohesion within a team and just as important, taking time during the drive there to relax a little and let the creative juices flow.

Sometimes, we’re so focused on the job that we don’t realise just how tense we are, and then we wonder why there are so few ideas and innovations coming to mind. As leaders, we seriously underestimate the power of easing the foot off the gas every once in a while.

Since we had a few hours to spare on the road, Matt – our new general manager of media strategy at Leaderonomics – shifted effortlessly into broadcasting mode as we decided to host a Q&A on Facebook where people were invited to ask me anything.

It struck me what a daunting prospect it would be to make such an invitation. However, we leaders are constantly advising people to think outside the box and put themselves on the spot, so it’s only fair that we set a good example ourselves.

REAL-TIME CONNECTION

As the questions came in and Matt put me on the spot to fire back some leadership insights, I began to get a sense of the value of connecting in real time to an online audience.

Of course, having read countless articles on the importance of a good social media strategy, I knew on an intellectual level how desirous it is for customers and online followers to have direct access to the people and brands they follow. But being able to reach out and address specific questions as they came through gave me a thought about the importance of maximising online engagement.

Social media platforms have long provided business leaders and public figures with a wonderful opportunity to allow audience to get closer to their brand and to engage more directly with customers and fans. These days, people connect with companies that show authenticity and sincerity in all they do and what they’re about.

To that end, there’s no fresher, more immediate way to achieve than by connecting online to those we want to engage, inspire, and empower.

WRAPPING IT UP

It was a privilege to spend time with the leaders of Citibank Malaysia, and I can testify to the fact that they are a creative, innovative bunch with a bright future ahead. Great work everyone, and thank you for all your efforts in making it a fun, entertaining and informative weekend.

I’m looking forward to the next live interaction on Facebook – and I hope you’ll join in then!

The author (left) on a road trip from Johor to KL with Matt (right) and Hafiz.

MAKING THE MOST OUT OF A ROAD TRIP

LEARNING HAPPENS WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT

The first 10 CEOs to register interest for this year’s programme at bit.ly/DojoInterest will be invited to an exclusive networking dinner with Leaderonomics CEO Roshan Thiran on 13 June 2017.

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Customer habits change, new competitors appear, market gets saturated and strategies fail. These and more can stagnate your business growth. Formal risk analysis can help you assess the risk factors and suggest solutions to minimise disruptions to your business plans. Let us know what your business needs are by emailing training@Leaderonomics.com

Leadership Dojo 2017

The CEO Accelerator Programme

www.leaderonomics.com | Saturday 10 June 2017

Roshan Thiran is the CEO of Leaderonomics—a social enterprise working to transform lives through leadership development and nurturing potential. Connect with Roshan on Facebook for more insights into business, personal development, and leadership.
The definition of symbiosis is the interaction between different organisms living in close physical association, typically to the advantage of both. Though this is often a term used to describe various organisms in nature, I couldn’t help thinking how nice it would be if we could achieve symbiosis in our place of work.

We often have a sense that our work teams are not performing as well as we could. We may feel that there is more untapped potential to be leveraged. Perhaps too much friction and conflict in our team are derailing that potential. But deep down, we know that the whole should be greater than the sum of the parts. Helen Keller’s words ring true within us, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” Yet, it’s hard to figure out the solution to many team dynamics issues.

Only because it involves complexities, both in individuals as well as in the work situations, and there may be numerous causes to this conundrum. So, what can we do to maximise the potential in our teams and create the right symbiosis in our organisations?

More and more we are seeing that Learning & Development (L&D) initiatives are moving towards team development. Leadership development is still as important for individuals, as they take on bigger roles.

However, team development has taken on a far more important place, as it immediately impacts productivity. It helps by creating a shared vision and better alignment, while removing obstacles. Collaboration is the key.

- 33% of employees say the ability to collaborate makes them more loyal—The Economist research
- 36% of employees and executives cite lack of collaboration as ineffective communication for workplace failures—Fierce Inc research
- 38% of workers felt there was not enough collaboration—Cornerstone OnDemand research

So, the problem is clear. What is the solution? Enter simulations. We know simulations help us understand content and can immediately be taken back to a safe way.

These “a-ha” moments serve as impetus for them to begin a journey of self-reflection, which leads to corrections. Ultimately, as individuals see how their “natural tendencies” tend to favour self over team, they start to realise there needs to be conscious effort to drive collaborative behaviour and community building.

Psychologists have been researching this for a long time. That’s why there are different types of occupational psychometric tests; those that measure aptitude, behaviour in situations, attitudes, and preferences to name a few.

The distinction is quite important, as our inherent traits may not necessarily reflect how we behave in certain situations. Simulations, on the other hand are perfectly suited to let you play out exactly how one will handle a certain situation. The realisations and consequent learnings then become more practical and can immediately be taken back to the workplace.

As mentioned earlier, simulations can be a powerful assessment tool as well. By understanding how teams behave in simulated situations, we get better insight into the real causes of the problems.

In the “Coldwar” simulation which focuses on alignment and collaboration, we may find various root causes for the lack of collaboration. It might be due to a lack of communication skills, or perhaps a lack of trust, or perhaps high power-distance index in the organisation, or perhaps even wrong KPIs or culture. If we don’t go through this process of diagnosis, we may wind up addressing the wrong issues.

You are not going to get better at collaboration and building “communities of love” by listening to trainers preach about the company vision, mission and values. Or by urging people to collaborate.

When people experience and visually see how uncollaborative they can be in the simulation, they can then see why they may exhibit the same behaviour in the workplace.

These realisations then lead to real conversations about how to collaborate better. These learnings will persist because they came from self-realisation, not through instruction. The learnings are also sticky, as they are learnt together, as a team.

As Henry Ford aptly put it, “Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.”

I fully believe that team-based simulations give us the key to open the door to the secrets of team dynamics and enabling us to build “communities of love” in organisations, not communities of fear, resentment, self-identification or even communities of hate.

Simulations are the key as they help us create synergies that are advantageous to the individual, the team and the organisation, in perfect symbiosis.
By CAROLINE ONG

www.leaderonomics.com

E

VERY 31st of the month, some of my friends would be tossing out a challenge – whether we should be heading to Baskin Robbins to take advantage of its different flavours as it usually has promotions on the 31st of the month.

This is because Baskin Robbins is known for its “31 Flavours” slogan, even today, it has more than 1,000 ice-cream flavours. This is the same as a well-known slogan for ice-cream loving children (and adults too), which may serve as a great value-creating challenge.

How is that branding brought to life, internally so that the employees would be just as motivated to focus on delivering the “magical moments” that the company promises to its customers? And who (or which department) would be responsible to ensure that each employee would be geared up to work on this same organisation goal, fully utilising their knowledge, skills, abilities?

Some would say it is the responsibility of the immediate supervisor or manager. Others would claim that it is the employees themselves. In most organisations, human resources (HR) are usually the folks ultimately responsible for all employee issues, including performance and motivational issues.

After all, HR is usually driving recruitment, development, deployment, performance management and motivation of the employees. It is usually entrusted as a custodian of embedding key behaviours and in building a “community” in an organisation.

In execution processes, there are discussions and attempts to “devolve HR”, which is to enable the line managers to take on more HR responsibilities. Let us take a quick look at some visible advantages and disadvantages.

Some immediate advantages of this devolution is an increase in the speed of decision-making regarding people matters and ownership of employees by the line. Additionally, it is always true that it is the immediate manager who has the largest influence on employee engagement, thus enhancing communication and relevance to individuals.

On the other hand, there needs to be considerations of line managers’ investment of time in people matters, including recruiting, year-end activities such as meeting, interviewing, hiring and training employees. Therefore, some legalities, especially related to performance management and compensation which line managers may find difficult to understand and execute. The bigger problem lies in the consistency, abilities and willingness of different department line managers to take a step back, to understand and drive organisational, strategic goals through its handling of people matters.

For strategic matters, there cannot be different approaches which are dependent on specific department or line managers. Research shows that humans usually perform more effectively when there is some amount of stability and certainty. Clearly, there is actual implementation challenges to devolve HR although the intent may noble.

Bottom Line: HR and the business need to be more integrated. HR needs to provide guidance from the strategic people management matters while the line managers operationalise people matters. HR leaders make a huge business impact when they are able to drive people strategy by collaborating with the line managers on organisational blueprints, plans, policies and processes that guide leadership development, succession planning, strategic human capital workforce planning, performance management and compensation. HR’s role is critical in reframing beliefs and guiding organisational goals. HR is also accountable to drive intentional rituals to engineer certain key behaviours and culture change.

On the other extreme, HR will need to support, train and enable the line managers on operational HR matters including interviewing, diagnosing and increasing employee morale, having constructive performance conversations and developing their people.

By enabling the line managers while managing the strategic pieces, an analog that comes to mind is that HR is like an architect for a house, while the individual functional managers are the interior designers for each space and room.

To be able to build and furnish a home that fits the owner’s current and future needs, both the architect and the interior designers need to collaborate and be inter-dependent to create the home.

Similarly, this symbiotic relationship between HR and business leaders is what creates “communities of love” in an organisation that collaborate, share and work together as a high performance team.

The synergy created propels the organisation forward internally and externally. Joint collaborative HR and line managers’ support of talent management and development programmes is powerful as it strengthens the talent messaging, bench strength and pipeline creating both internal and employee brand congruence and value towards achieving the organisation’s purpose.

Let me leave you with one of the quotes from Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook during the recent 2017 Harvard graduating speech: “The struggle of whether we connect more, whether we achieve our biggest opportunities come down to this – your ability to build communities and create a world where every single person has a sense of purpose”. In organisations – this means a single sense of the organisation’s purposes, goals and values.

So, let us ask ourselves this question – how do we as HR practitioners enable employees to experience this single sense of our organisation’s purpose, goals and values? And if you are part of the senior leadership team or a line manager – ask this question: What steps are you taking to collaborate with HR?

HR leaders can only succeed when they work together with the line to “build this community” as Zuckerberg described.

A final question to HR leaders: Are you working diligently with your line leaders to build this community? If you are not, now is the time.

By DAN ROCKWELL

editor@leaderonomics.com

5 WAYS TO CREATE THE INVISIBLE ADVANTAGE

1. Don’t assume innovation means creating the next big disruptor like the iPhone. Define “innovation” in a way that makes sense to your team, and your organisation – (new products, services, processes, customer experiences, anything else that just improves something.)

2. Share success stories. Highlight the early wins to reinforce the value and importance of innovation.

3. Give “worthless” rewards. Don’t reward people with money. Give them symbolic awards like trophies, plaques, lunch with the CEO, and even wooden nickels!

4. Choose specific metrics to track the number of ideas generated, number of prototypes tested, or revenue from new products introduced in the past two years. You get what you measure!

5. Measure what you want to get. By Caroline Ong

www.leaderonomics.com

HR AND LINE MANAGERS: COLLABORATION IS KEY

HELPING EMPLOYEES CHANGE BELIEFS AND CONNECT WITH ORGANISATIONAL GOALS

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ing practice in a global consulting organisation. To engage with her or connect with her on how she and her team can support your HR function, e-mail Caroline.ong@leaderom-
ec.com.
ARE YOUR EMPLOYEES DISENGAGED?
A CULTURE OF LOVE AND CARE MAY BE YOUR BEST SOLUTION

By ROSHAN THIRAN
Roshan Thiran, better known as the "Love Doctor," has been named one of the top 10 influencers in the Asia-Pacific region by the Global Leadership Institute and recently launched Leaders Lab to help leaders transform their workplaces.

Are you ready to transform your workplace culture? Do you want to create a workplace where employees are highly engaged and motivated? Then you need to focus on creating a culture of love and care. This may sound counterintuitive, but research has shown that organizations with a culture of love and care have higher levels of employee engagement, lower turnover rates, and increased productivity.

In this article, we will explore the concept of a culture of love and care, why it matters, and how organizations can implement it to create a highly engaged workplace.

The Importance of a Culture of Love and Care

A culture of love and care is built on the foundation of mutual respect, understanding, and empathy. It is a place where employees feel valued, heard, and appreciated. In such an environment, employees are more likely to feel fulfilled, motivated, and engaged in their work.

The Benefits of a Culture of Love and Care

A culture of love and care brings numerous benefits to organizations. Here are some of the key advantages:

1. Higher Employee Engagement
   A culture of love and care leads to highly engaged employees who are more motivated, productive, and fulfilled in their work.

2. Lower Turnover Rates
   A culture of love and care reduces turnover rates by creating a sense of belonging and loyalty among employees.

3. Increased Productivity
   Engaged employees are more productive, as they feel valued and motivated to do their best work.

4. Improved Work-Life Balance
   A culture of love and care supports employees in achieving a better work-life balance, leading to reduced stress and burnout.

5. Improved Customer Satisfaction
   Engaged employees are more likely to provide excellent customer service, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Implementing a Culture of Love and Care

Creating a culture of love and care requires a commitment from leaders and managers at all levels. Here are some steps organizations can take to implement a culture of love and care:

1. Lead by Example
   Leaders must model the behavior they want to see in the organization. They must practice kindness, empathy, and transparency in their interactions with employees.

2. Foster Open Communication
   Encourage employees to share their thoughts and feelings openly, and create a safe space for feedback and dialogue.

3. Recognize and Reward
   Acknowledge and celebrate employees' contributions, and provide meaningful rewards for exceptional performance.

4. Invest in Employee Development
   Provide opportunities for professional development and growth, as this shows a commitment to the employees' well-being.

5. Support Employee Well-being
   Offer programs and initiatives that support employees' physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Conclusion

A culture of love and care is essential for creating a highly engaged and productive workplace. By focusing on building a culture of love and care, organizations can significantly improve employee engagement, reduce turnover rates, and increase overall performance.

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PAY ATTENTION TO R&D
WHY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IS THE PULSE OF AN ORGANISATION

By EVA CHRISTODOULOU
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WEN we talk about research and development (R&D), people tend to get a picture of a scientist wearing a white lab coat, doing crazy experiments. R&D is usually associated with technology, science and engineering. Few would consider the need for R&D in services companies, however.

And the services sector in particular, does not generally prioritise R&D. After all, anyone who talks to a client can be creative and come up with new solutions, almost on the spot.

Making it even more of an “unnecessary pain”, Brown and Svensen report that it is really hard to measure the productivity of the R&D team, because it is a time-consuming task and the team was chasing something that may be unknown at that stage.

How can a team’s efforts be successful—measured in a way that is realistic and at the same time, does not impede their originality? They write that ultimately, a good way of looking at whether R&D teams are productive is by considering them as “a system that works within the macro-system of the entire organisation”.

In other words, look at how they contribute to the rest of the organisation, not only in terms of behaviour, but also output.

Here in Leaderonomics, we set up an R&D team to support the entire organisation. We believe that if you have a team of people looking into the future, conducting experiments and looking at the current situation in order to improve it, we would be able to provide even higher quality solutions and more innovative ways of developing people into leaders.

For us, it’s all about leadership: how do we develop good leaders at different stages of their lives? What are the paths that successful leaders have taken in the past, and how can we replicate this appropriately so that others can be successful? Everyone is unique, so how do you take into account the unique circumstances of each person and build upon them?

This is exactly what our major experiment is at the moment, but in addition, we look at a variety of supporting elements. For example, how do we work to transform organisations so that they have the right structure in place to develop their people and see them— as well as the company—flourish? How do we work with teams to make them efficient and successful units that support growth in individuals and the organisation? How do we develop people in an organisation so that the individual grows, and how can we enable an organisation to transform into an ecosystem for the development of good leaders? How do we help an organisation unshackle from the chains of the past?

Making it even more of an “unnecessary pain”, we believe that a dedicated team in the organisation is the answer. It is true that R&D is a team that thinks and acts long-term— their eyes are set on the future and they need time, hard work and often multiple resources to turn an idea into something that makes sense and is useful to launch or share, in one form or another.

Having an R&D team is investing in the future—in the sustainability of the company and in ensuring that the company is far sighted enough to withstand the constant changes that are coming its way.

Having said that, it is crucial that R&D shortens the time it takes to bring something new to the market as much as possible, especially with the amount of network and information out there. At the end of the day, it would not make sense to have a team that works so slowly that other people end up overtaking. But this, together with difficulties measuring the achievements of R&D, as well as investment in resources that will not make profit in the short term, should not be allowed to cause myopia.

Companies should not forget about the definite advantage that R&D can bring to an organisation. After all, companies care about their sustainability as much as their survival, so investment to ensure they remain sustainable for many years to come needs to take place early.

Rachel Griffith, of the Institute for Fiscal Studies in the US points to the fact that the private rate of return for business R&D is significantly lower than the social rate of return. Which means, the public has more to gain from business R&D efforts than the company that initiates it.

That is true, because knowledge spills over to other companies, who then use this knowledge and build on it, creating something different, or more advanced, which ideally serves an even better purpose.

According to her, the government should perhaps find a way to encourage business R&D efforts through various ways, including giving subsidies.

That aside, Rachel’s argument rings a truth—a yes, the general public may have more to gain from the innovations and advances made. But the same time, though, I truly believe that companies, too, have a lot to gain—from being seen as a pioneer, to putting out ground-breaking solutions that really help humanity in one way or another, even if it means that another company may take it further in the future.

At the end of the day, it all depends on what you want to achieve, in terms of your company’s profits and also in your company’s impact and contribution in the world. Benjamin Franklin once said, “Lost time is never found again”. And it’s true for companies that do not make use of today, for the interested of tomorrow, as much as it is for everything else in this world.
**ANGER ME NOT!**

**YOU MAY WANT TO THINK TWICE BEFORE PULLING THAT TRIGGER**

By PREMA JAYABALAN
prema.jayabalan@leaderonomics.com

HAVING felt like exploding in fury simply because you were too stressed by too many things being shot at you from front, back – left, and right? Or worst still, actually lost your cool and had an emotional outburst in the office?

Well, if you have had any one of those or witnessed anyone at work displaying them, then this is some serious anger that needs managing.

Don’t get me wrong. Anger is not a bad feeling. It is completely normal to feel this way but if this emotion takes the upper hand and you end up hurting others or yourself then it is dangerous. Did you know that anger can lead to a positive change if it’s expressed in a useful and constructive way? Anger can be the pushing factor that enables you to solve problems and bring positive changes in your life. It can also help you defend yourself against those who push you around.

I have always thought about this emotion, and I must admit that I am guilty of losing my cool every occasionally, and then regretting it. So, I researched and turned this into a course which is now available in our Leaderonomics Digital Learning platform. Here are some key points to take note when it comes to anger management.

**HOW TO KNOW IF ANGER IS A PROBLEM**

You know your temper is getting out of control when:

- Your anger lasts too long. For some, it can even go on the whole day and this is certainly detrimental to your physical and mental well-being.
- It leads to aggression. Now this is dangerous, as uncontrolled anger can cause one to unleash verbally or physically.
- It happens frequently. Coping with anger daily can decrease the quality of your overall health as well as personal and professional relationships.
- It becomes too intense. This is when your emotions consume you, and you act on impulse which you will likely regret when you have calmed down.

**HOW TO MANAGE YOUR ANGER AT WORK?**

It’s almost impossible to find someone who has never gotten angry at work. Amidst work-related conflicts with superiors and colleagues, it’s bound to manifest in one way or another. Here are five simple ways to keep your cool at work with no matter what situation you are put in.

1. **Breathe**
   Though you may feel like screaming or snapping back when you’re faced with a confrontation, the right thing to do is to breathe. Count to 10 and calm your nerves. This buys you time to step back, put things into perspective and come up with a logical solution.

2. **Write**
   At times, putting your feelings into words is the best type of emotional release. Pen down your emotions along with the solutions you have in mind. An important point to note here is to keep this to yourself. Once you’ve gained composure, shred the paper and discard it as only you should see what is in writing.

3. **Speak to a trusted colleague**
   You would usually have that one person at work whom you would open up and speak to. The next time you are put in a stressful work-related situation, try to speak to your colleague about it and come up with a solution together. It is best to do this out of the office and out of anyone’s earshot. Do ensure that this person is a trusted comrade who has your best interest at heart. When your colleague is in a similar situation, be sure to offer the same confidence to him or her.

4. **Find a happy source**
   If you’re in an intense situation, find a place for you to mentally escape. This can be your favourite website, a pleasant song you constantly play. Taking a short break to calm yourself and focusing on what lightens your mood can ease your stress and ensure higher productivity.

5. **Get some love**
   When you’re facing a challenging situation, it is always comforting to speak to a loved one. This can be your close friend, your siblings, your parents or your significant other. Hearing a familiar voice can soothe a situation and give you the personal boost as well as a moral support you need, and this can go a long way. Take a few minutes to talk to them and make plans to meet later once you’re done with work if you really need a shoulder to lean on.

The next time you feel like unleashing your fury, sit back and try the methods mentioned above. They may sound simple but they can help in bringing you to your senses. Moreover, they may help in steering your anger to the right path which will eventually bring a positive outcome for you and the people surrounding you. Stay cool everyone!

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**THREE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION MISTAKES TO AVOID**

By KARIN HURT
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“On didn’t copy me on purpose.” “He’s withholding information to make my life harder.” “Making us guess what he’s thinking is just a big power play.” “Why would she put something that important in an e-mail?” “What’s that supposed to mean anyway?” “Why did she copy my boss?”

SOME teams spend more time second-guessing the intent behind poor communication than working to improve it.

“The single biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”—George Bernard Shaw

1. **Assuming mal-intent**
   Sure people play games, but not most of us, most of the time. Don’t get caught up in a negative oversight, like being left out of an e-mail or meet-up, degrade trust.

2. **Hiding behind e-mail**
   E-mail is fast and easy, but rarely effective for important communication. Never assume “they got the memo,” and your work is done. Don’t use email to communicate bad news, or to escalate over a peer’s head by copying their boss.

3. **Failure to write down decisions**
   I’ve seen great teams with excellent communication skills break down because they miss this simple step. High-trust teams would often raise a lot of creative ideas, debate pros and cons, then challenge the decisions some more. All healthy. Once the debate has concluded, be sure to summarise the final decisions, along with next steps and timeline. After all that discussion, I often find that each team member would leave with their own memory of what was decided, which may or may not match the recall of other team members.

Writing down and re-reading key decisions and next steps are important ways to keep the team moving in the same direction. Communicating well builds the most important ingredient of any successful team: trust. Take the time to establish clear expectations on how your team should communicate, and to discuss what happens when it’s working best and how it’s breaking down.

Karin Hurt is a keynote speaker, leadership consultant, and MBA professor. She has decades of experience in sales, customer service, and HR which she uses to help clients turn around results through deeper engagement. She knows the silliness of a yoga, the reflection of a marathoner, and the joy of being a mum pushing wriggling toddlers, to engage with Karin, e-mail karin@leaderonomics.com.
**CONTEXT-BASED LEARNING THROUGH COACHING**

**IT’S ALL ABOUT BEING RELEVANT**

**By CHONG KEAT LIM**

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The learning process is often more fluid than we perceive it to be. It is content-based or context-based, both are vital approaches to learning.

The former is likened to classroom training today, which can be optimised via technology and micro-learning processes.

The latter, on the other hand, involves human interaction and experience-based development. This is where coaching is seen as being important part of the learning journey, where the coach serves as a learning partner and a confidant to the person under their guide.

**COACHING HELPS PUT THINGS IN CONTEXT**

Unlike content-based learning, coaching is driven by context. This means that it essentially starts from where you are currently, and moves to where you want to get to, while supporting you to achieve your personal goal and/or business outcome.

Here is an example: you have just been promoted and want to lead effectively in the new role, or you would be seen as not excelling external presence at the level you expected of yourself during board meetings. It could also be that you are feeling over-stretched or feel like an imposter in your business growth. The thing is this: while we can mine Google and other knowledge depositories for solutions to challenges in careers or business, it is another thing to excavate personal values and beliefs that you did not know existed, and link them to your desires and intentions.

Sometimes, it takes a new perspective to see an existing connection. This is the transformative aspect of the learning journey. And this is the kind of learning experience in coaching that we aim to create with our clients at Leaderonomics.

**TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING**

Adult education expert Jack Mezirow asserts that transformative learning is learning that essentially changes our foundational attitudes of existence. These are like sets of fixed assumptions and expectations that manifest themselves in the mind—meaning perspectives and mindsets—leading to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change.

Mezirow concludes that such frames of reference are better than others because they are more likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.

**FOCUS AREAS**

According to a 2015 survey by Korn Ferry, the top leadership development themes for C-suite executives and other management levels were not very different from each other, with “self-awareness”, “influence” and “communication skills” consistently identified as top focus areas. It is revealing that many of the themes are related to how we perceive and approach matters or situations at hand.

Indeed, many leaders are frustrated by self-limiting beliefs but it cannot be addressed solely by interventions like content training, which does not challenge “perspective transformation”. Building self-awareness—such as working to develop an understanding of the mental models we use, our beliefs and assumptions, and how these experience the world and how we interact with the organisation culture—fosters shifts in thinking that reveal fresh perspectives and in turn, informs business strategy and decisions.

At Leaderonomics, we believe that training programmes must correlate and be aligned to business strategy and outcomes.

Not every problem or issue can be resolved through coaching, though. Coaching is certainly not the magic bullet to every problem in the workplace. Some problems have deep psychological roots, and coaching might not be the best way to help. Like all developmental inputs, coaching too has a particular context in which it can be used, helpful, and others in which it must not be attempted. Essentially, the coach’s job is to challenge your thinking and stretch your willingness to grow.

**A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH**

Rather than operating prescription, the coach wants the trainee to take accountability for his or her own growth. Ultimately, the value of coaching resides in the mental tools the trainee learns that help him or her navigate towards success, both inside and outside of the business world.

So be prepared to put in the work and commit to the milestone goals, because what you put in is what you get out at the end of the day. Because in the coaching relationship, learning is very much a collaborative effort. It’s not set on consumption, but is really a social process of creation where it maximises your commitment to implement solutions. This is in line with the current business climate where organisations that embrace collaboration, innovation, adaptability and learning have the competitive edge. Running parallel to this, are organisations that need employees who are emotionally intelligent, agile, are fast learners and able to thrive on increased responsibility.

**ITS RELEVANCE**

Coaching has never been more relevant than it is today, providing a flexible and context-specific tool which matches the speed of change and complexity of today’s corporate environment.

We can all benefit from new engagement and fresh perspectives. It has been said that all learning is change, but not all change is transformative. Sometimes, change doesn’t come at all. This is because we are content with incremental development. Simply put, there is no compelling case for change. But if ever there is such a thing as the “right time” I think any time is a valid “right time”.

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

The entrepreneur and author James Altucher remarks: “Many reinventions make your life a book of stories instead of a textbook. The choice you make today will be in your biography tomorrow. Make interesting choices and you will have an interesting biography.”

Regardless of how old you are or at which career phase you belong to right now, we can all benefit from a coaching relationship. It’s all about growing together in this leadership journey.

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**MADE YOUR WORDS: IT’S YOUR SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT CURRENCY**

**By YEOH LIN LIN**

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Each day presents itself with opportunities for us to connect with people, to build up, to tear them down, to nurture our relationship with them or to hurt them, to lead them on to greater heights or to stifle their growth. And the list continues.

The single currency that we need to do that is with the words spoken that have been processed (hopefully) by our human consciousness.

The following scenario brings forth its own “leadership lesson in the life!”

Two colleagues bumped into each other in the lift. They barely knew each other as both of them had recently joined the organisation. During the ride, the exchanged pleasantries, which somehow, left a bad taste in the mouth of one of them.

The conversation went like this:

Mee Lian: “Going for lunch?”
Boon: “Yes. Are you off to a meeting?”
Mee Lian: “Yes. Going to meet my ex-employer. They “let the cat out of the bag” (with a cynical smile)

Boon was puzzled at the remark. Stunned, to say the least. It was a brief encounter, but one that is loaded with lessons on communication and interpersonal skills, both of which are key leadership competencies.

According to a recent JobStreet. com survey, 51% of employers chose great personality as the main criteria of a good employee; only 14% of them chose qualifications.

And when they were asked to rate the importance of certain skills, 75% chose interpersonal skills and communication rate among the top five skills employers want.

The survey was participated by more than 500 human resources professionals across various industries in Malaysia.

Here are some suggested ways to avoid such awkward exchange from happening:

1. **Filter your words**
   - Use words that you understand.
   - Remember the days in school when you were told not to use bombastic jargon. It’s all a matter of perspective to see an existing connection.
   - “Good prose should be transparent, like a window pane.” – George Orwell

2. **Watch your body language**
   - Tone of voice and facial expressions are key elements of non-verbal communication. They play an important role in conveying the message. Is it respectful, formal, glazed with sarcasm and cynicism, or humourous?
   - It was a double-whammy when Mee Lian said with a cynical smile, “...your ex-employer. They let the cat out of the bag.”

   Intentional or otherwise, her body language and tone of voice were patronising and cynical. It implied, “We have caught you!”

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Q: I am going to be controversial and state that companies which still operate by a “customer-first” mantra are likely to be also-rans in the near future. What’s easier to define, identify, locate, nurture and retain—a good customer or a great employee? More importantly, who can you truly leverage for sustained success? We live in a time of unprecedented and accelerating change. Organisations risk slipping into irrelevance if they do not embrace the key architecture of a digitalised economy and become themselves platforms for engagement, innovation and adaptability.

Organisational success is now, more than ever, dependent on employees bringing their passion, initiative and imagination to the table—their personal “gifts”, as management expert Gary Hamel puts it.

We need to make a structural shift in the way we nurture people from a young age and involve them in the development of a more creative economy.

But are we paying sufficient attention to the manner in which we are developing our children and graduates to engage effectively in a more open, flexible, collaborative and creative economy?

Our current worker-producing education systems are a result of the societal structure that was built around the economic engine of the last 150 years or so—one that is labour intensive. It isn’t natural for human beings to obediently conform to procedures, tend to machines or “brainless” tasks and pound away at it repeatedly—you have to train people to do that. And so we did.

I believe therefore that we need to make a structural shift in the way we nurture people from a young age and involve them in the development of a more creative economy.

As much as organisations will have to hack management systems and concepts, I would also like to suggest that sufficient attention be focused on a more holistic approach towards “people engagement”—in the broadest possible sense.

I draw lessons from Uber, Huffington Post, Gramene Bank, Kickstarter and GoFundMe as some examples of new people engagement models which have not only translated their engagement platforms into supernormal business results, but have enabled the “someone can—be anything, do anything” mindset through these platforms.

So, we need creativity and inspiration to remain relevant, and we have to adopt new organisational architecture, and social technologies, to leverage these capabilities. And the only meaningful source of these gifts lies in the unique generation of globally connected youth that are being nurtured and steered through a learning and development system that does not value these capabilities.

It is not sufficient for organisations to only get involved for the purpose of nurturing their own talent pipeline.

At Leaderonomics, we believe that it is no longer enough for organisations to simply keep building a case to be invested in the education sector through CSR or marketing initiatives. It is a business imperative, and it is urgent.

There is plenty of evidence to show that current education environments are not producing talent with the requisite capabilities, and that this capability gap is hindering growth, which has a vicious cyclical impact on job creations.

Also, it is not sufficient for organisations to only get involved for the purpose of nurturing their own talent pipeline. In a world where existing customer pools are hyper-commoditised, we would like to challenge organisations to expand their engagement networks to include this audience pool—our youth—who will eventually translate into connected networks of employees, partners, customers, and more importantly, influencers and advocates.

One immediate starting point I believe organisations can (and must) act on is engaging in the development of their employees’ children.

What are some steps which organisations could take to build greater engagement with our youth via active participation in the education sector? While there are a number of more conventional means of engagement (e.g. school boards, speaking engagements, joint projects, embedded learning labs, entrepreneurial competitions) we would also like to invite you to join us in building new networks:

- Empowering students (in schools and universities) to implement “Make A Difference” projects within their school or community to inculcate shared community values and the desire to serve the greater good;
- Introducing elements of character, personal and leadership development in co-curricular activity (e.g. sports, theatre, creative expression, etc);
- Supporting parent-teacher associations to foster the development of nurturing communities within schools;
- Working with student organisations and student bodies to assist students in seeking out “future-ready” credentials, not only relating to the soft-skills for workplace effectiveness, but the required self-starter and creative capabilities that are required for new job creation;
- Assisting and equipping management, faculty and student advisory teams at institutions of higher learning to create the appropriate experiences within their learning environments.

While the above highlight some of the areas in which we have attempted to make a difference, we are always on the lookout for partners and new opportunities to build deeper and more meaningful experiences on our journey towards building communities of love.

One immediate starting point I believe organisations can (and must) act on is engaging in the development of their employees’ children. There isn’t a better retention strategy than being able to be an ally in the development and the visible change your employees see in their children.

As Chase Jarvis aptly puts it, creativity may indeed be the new literacy. Passion, initiative, imagination—please stand up.

By DEVENDRAN SINNADURAI

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