DRIVING CHANGE WITH HEAD AND HEART

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When you neglect emotions

What happens when we do not pay attention to the employees’ feelings

By Joseph Tan
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Feelings are facts. The fact is that human beings are emotional creatures. Yes, we do have our rational sides, but when looking at what influences our behaviours the most, research shows that we base 70% of our decisions on emotional factors and 30% on rational factors (Driving Employee Engagement, Gallup 2014).

The employees of today are no longer turning up to work for work sake – there are now multiple emotional elements at play which cannot be addressed by just having clearer job descriptions or even specific key performance indicators.

I am not saying that a focus on performance is not important, rather a focus on performance only is necessary but not sufficient to create sustainable performance. The likelihood of sustainable performance is higher when there is emotional stability.

From an engagement standpoint, emotional stability is defined as the personal state of well-being preceding the demonstration of motivated, sustainable performance. In other words, the right internal state of the employee becomes the seed bed for contribution and performance at a deeper level.

Here’s the good news – you don’t need to be a trained psychologist in order to create this sense of emotional stability in your organization. It begins with the habit of not routinely ignoring the efforts of your employees.

Employees who do not feel adequately recognized are twice as likely to say they will leave their company in the next year (Gallup workplace poll, 2005). According to Gallup’s well-known Q12 employee engagement survey, variation in the area of recognition or praise for doing a good work is responsible for 10 to 20% differences in productivity, revenue and customer loyalty. This is a significant contributor!

Have we become so focused on the bottom-line that we no longer check-in on the emotional state of the team members? There are three emotional disciplines, when practised, will ensure that we put the horse (emotional stability) before the cart (high performance).

That means, as a leader, you need to first of all, address the emotions, then you will be able to influence the performance.

1. Ask questions in order to find out what others need – Just giving out instructions alone may not be sufficient, especially if the other person is new to the role. Just the act of asking questions already demonstrates your sincerity of wanting to connect with the other person.

2. Resist the temptation to guard your “turf” – This may sound paradoxical but take the counter-intuitive step of helping others to succeed and in so doing, create deep team engagement and loyalty.

Being Humble

Humility is acknowledging that achievement does not come about by your hands alone, rather it is the result of the contribution from others. Despite the popular image of the super-confident leader who has all the answers, the reality is this – there is no such thing as a self-made leader. Everyone of us are where we are today due to the investment made by others in our lives.

As you understand the benefits you have received, you can develop an attitude of gratitude for others’ contributions. Humility acknowledges those who provided opportunities, improved your talents, helped you recover from mistakes, made your life more enjoyable, or criticise you.

Let others know what you appreciate about working with them – True appreciation communicates respect because there is a willingness to work with people who are different from yourself for a cause greater than your own personal agenda.

Accept criticism, and consider others’ ideas – Humility allows you to receive criticism and benefit from experience. Correct a humble person, and he or she will learn something. This type of attitude greatly contributes to the emotional stability of the team.

Being Sensitive

How well are you in monitoring the feeling and desires of others so that you can respond appropriately? Seeing from another’s perspective is like using binoculars. You will see additional details, but they will not mean much unless you know what you are looking at.

Similarly, sensitivity can help you only when you relate to others from a desire to do the right thing. Individuals often struggle with sensitivity, not because they cannot understand others but because they see themselves as right instead of looking to find what is right.

1. Pay attention to mannerisms and other small indicators that someone is worried or concerned – When a person is depressed or sad, he or she would seldom broadcast his or her feelings openly. It requires sensitivity to perceive the true attitudes and emotions of those around us.

2. Do not presume to know why a person reacts a particular way – Put yourself in the shoes of those you need to understand. Mistrusts do the most damage when individuals do not honestly confront others, do not recognise real issues, or do not know how to approach conflicts. Even when you do not immediately understand, ask non-threatening questions and help others sort out and explain their thoughts.

Emotions Need Engagement

Needful as it is, emotions cannot exist in a vacuum else it will be self-directed. What is required is an engaged culture where emotions are accepted and processed in such a way that it is directed towards the long-term benefit of the individual which eventually will raise the performance of the team.

If you are managing a team, remember – you are not just managing performance, you are also managing the emotional state of the team as well. You might be surprised – a small act of emotional connection, a sincere gesture of praise and recognition or a listening ear can go a long way. This is the secret to sustainable high performance, why not start by reaching out to someone’s emotion today?

Strenghts vs Weaknesses

Which should organisation leaders focus on to bridge the gap between employee engagement and a high-performance culture?

Join the conversation and discover how to increase productivity and grow your leaders in our upcoming complimentary webinar facilitated by Joseph Tan, CEO of Leaderonomics Good Monday.

11am  |  19 July, Wednesday
IT'S GOING TO BE A WOMAN'S WORLD

RANDI ZUCKERBERG ADVOCATES GREATER SUPPORT FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

By SANDY CLARKE
editor@leaderonomics.com

I n the early days of Facebook, Randi Zuckerberg (pic) was one among the first 20 employees who were brought on board by her younger brother, Facebook co-founder, Mark Zuckerberg. In 2011, she made a shrewd move by the famously introverted CEO, his likewise sister was able to take the media spotlight on his behalf. She would also go on to conceptualise the innovative Facebook Live platform, which has featured interviews with former US president Barack Obama and celebrity host Oprah Winfrey.

Randi, a graduate from Harvard, primarily brought her digital media expertise to the world’s most successful social network, adding to it an extra dimension that took Facebook to another level. In her appearance on The Leaderonomics Show with Roshan Thiran, she revealed herself to be a media-savy digital diva who has big plans to help make the world a happier and more connected place.

The former director of market development and spokesperson of Facebook left the company in 2011 and went on to establish Zuckerberg Media. She is the company’s current CEO.

“It was such a difficult decision to leave,” says Randi.

“I had been with Facebook for almost seven years, which is a long time to spend at a company that’s growing. After seven years I decided that it was time to start a family of my own, so I had two start-ups, because I had my son and I also started my own company.”

“One of Randi’s passions is to help more women into leadership roles within the tech industry – an effort he began driving through Zuckerberg Media. This addresses the issue of women empowerment in a number of ways, including bringing more women into pop culture through the company’s TV shows. Speaking about the difficulty for women to receive funding for start-ups she says, “Luckily, there’s been some improvement, but when you look at the total amount of venture capital that’s out there, only about 4% look at the total amount of venture capital that’s out there, only about 4% of it go to women.”

As someone who puts her money where her mouth is, Randi provides a lot of support for women entrepre-

The solutions for now and the future are going to be found in creativity and applied creativity which is innovation.

The incentive created a “pattern change” and the Gen-Y was on track. Cheryl has two more tips for you. To read the full article, go to http://bit.ly/2skCnQw or scan the QR code.

Thinkonomics launches with Randi Zuckerberg

Q: What are the key leadership characteristics needed to be a successful (global) entrepreneur?
A: You cannot be afraid of failure and you cannot let fear trap you.

Q: At what age would you allow your kids to make their own life decisions?
A: I would choose Ruth Bader Ginsburg (associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States) and I would ask her what secrets are to be an awesome boss lady.

Q: If you were given US$1mil to create something new, what would it be?
A: I would definitely be something around encouraging more women and girls to go into tech-

Q: If you could choose one person and ask them a question, who would it be and what would you ask them?
A: I would choose Ruth Bader Ginsburg (associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States) and I would ask her what secrets are to be an awesome boss lady.

Q: What future development do you look forward to with most anticipation?
A: As I think augmented and virtual reality becoming more mainstream. That’s going to let all of us travel all over the world, have tons of careers and do amazing things.

Q: If robots become as intelligent as human beings, what will happen to the human race?
A: There’s still a lot of places in the world I’d like to travel to, and I would do a lot more singing and music, because that’s my passion.

Q: When robots become as intelligent as human beings, what will happen to the human race?
A: I for one welcome our “robot pets”, because there’s a lot of things that I would love to outsource to robots, so I say bring it on!

Q: At what age would you allow your kids to make their own life decisions?
A: As Tech, maybe around the age of 13 or 14, but otherwise I think I’m always going to be involved with decisions in their lives – sorry, kids!

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TIPPING POINT FOR CHANGE

PREPARING FOR YOUR COMPANY’S TRANSITION

By MICHELLE GIBBINGS
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VERY organisational change has a tipping point, which can go one of two ways — up or down.
Many people will know about Malcolm Gladwell’s concept of tipping point. He talks about a tipping point as that moment when an idea, trend or social behaviour tips across a threshold, so it spreads exponentially.

KNOW YOUR TIPPING POINT
In organisations, there are tipping points for change too. These tipping points occur at two ends of the scale. Firstly, there are tipping points in which organisational change reaches a critical mass, where it has achieved buy-in and acceptance from stakeholders and end users thereby, helping to ensure the success of the change programme.
Secondly, and unfortunately, on the other end of the scale, there is change where people are so over-whelmed by the scale, frequency and pace or it is so poorly managed, that there is no buy-in or acceptance.

Consequently, not only does the change initiative fail, but the organisation can become paralysed with indecision and inertia, and experience a spike in employee and customer dissatisfaction.

There are many reasons for a lack of buy-in, as securing change acceptance is often challenging. It’s made even harder when an organisation’s ambitious change agenda does not take into account the capacity or capability of the organisation to adopt the change.

SET REALISTIC GOALS
Over estimation of what can get delivered in a certain timeframe and at a certain cost is a regular occurrence in large scale change projects. Ambitious agendas are pitched with tight timeframes and costs. Unfortunately, it’s rare that a programme delivers on time, within budget and to the required level of scope and quality.

We are all told that it’s good to have “big hairy audacious goals” (BHAG) that push us to achieve, but it’s not good when those goals aren’t realistic or achievable. Improving outcomes starts at the time that the decision is made to invest.

What often happens is that the project or investment committee, which is charged with determining the projects to approve, will examine the programme in terms of delivery costs, return on investment and other benefits.

What they don’t consider is whether the organisation is ready, willing and able to cope with that amount of change.

As a result, the organisation ends up committing to a long list of projects without understanding whether it is equipped to pull off that amount of change at the same time.

To ensure impacts are well managed and stakeholders are aligned, it’s critical to know the totality of change occurring across the organisation, what capability gaps exist in delivery and end user adoption, and how to best sequence the change.

GET READY, WILLING AND ABLE
This is about getting your organisation change-ready, willing and able.

- Ready – the organisation knows where it wants to get to, and has a well-conceived plan for execution, with a logically and thoughtfully sequenced change roadmap
- Willing – the organisation has effective leadership support and the roles and responsibilities of the change sponsor, project team and leaders are clear, and they are willing to step up and lead the change

The organisation has the capacity and capability to execute the change and is able to invest in the resources to ensure that impacted stakeholders are well prepared for the change.

PROJECTS NEED TO WORK-OUT
While focused set up and planning during project initiation is critical, so too is regularly assessing the organisation’s portfolio of infill change initiatives by putting it through a workout.

This can help to ensure progress is made and the organisation’s change tipping point is heading in the right direction.

In this work-out, you assess:

THE SIZE, SCALE AND NATURE OF YOUR CHANGE INITIATIVES
Gather details on how many initiatives are infill or about to be started. At a minimum, the project portfolio list should detail the initiatives, their cost, stage gates, who the sponsor is, key milestones, and the intended benefits.

HOW THE PROPOSED CHANGES WILL IMPACT THE BUSINESS
To identify what areas of the business are being impacted, when, to what extent and in what way. From there you can determine whether those areas have the capacity and capability to cope with the changes planned. This assessment should result in the construction of an integrated map of all change initiatives so that you can identify the hot spots (i.e. multiple change impacts at the same time).

3 THE GAP BETWEEN PLANNED AND ACTUAL BENEFIT DELIVERY
Detail the expected benefits, when they will start accruing and who is accountable for delivering them.

Through this assessment, examine infill projects and how they are progressing with delivering benefits against the original estimate. Note where there are gaps between planned benefit delivery and actual benefit delivery.

4 THE SEQUENCE AND DELIVERY SCHEDULE OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES
To determine the optimal approach consider whether the programme of work is sequenced in a way that is logical and accounts for the organisation’s capacity to absorb and adapt the change.

The delivery schedule may need to be altered so one initiative comes before or after another.

5 POTENTIAL ROADBLOCKS THAT MAY ARISE
Identify where there may be gaps in resources, key risks or stakeholder concerns which may impact delivery timeframes. These details will provide an accurate picture about each initiative and their likelihood to deliver to time, budget and quality.

Having these details enables the organisation to make informed decisions about the readiness and capability of the organisation to deliver.

So, next time you’re planning a change, ask yourself: what effort does my organisation put in to assessing it’s tipping point, and is it ready, willing and able to deliver?

If the answer is little or none, perhaps it’s time to do things differently.

THERE IS STILL ROOM TO GROW.

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Michelle Gibbings is a change leadership and career expert and founder of Change Meridian.
Michelle works with global leaders and teams to help them accelerate progress. She is the author of “Step Up: How to Build Your Influence at Work”. To connect with Michelle, e-mail editor@leaderonomics.com
Almost everything we do today in business involves some sort of change whether it involves one role or another. So, new competitors, new technology, new trends, acquisitions, mergers, subsidiaries, geographically scattered locations and so on. And the notion of being able to ignore or get used to change has become nothing but a myth. Even employees who have been to Melaka lately would have heard and seen cases of transformation efforts going down the drain. At times, you can anticipate that third-party services aren’t performing as expected. You're the top executive in charge of all this chaos. Let me share an example, a few years ago. My friend, a senior manager (in a very nice ship), came to tying knots (“If you don’t know knots, you can’t do it”). He started teaching the crew how to do it, and they literally tore down the entire floor and put up a new observation deck in its stead. Don’t get me wrong, it leaves a very nice view, but the work done covers the whole of the city. No wonder, you need a few essential ingredients to come together at the right time to be successful. One expert to another. Basically, you need to:

1. **Increasing your stake in the result of change**
   - The concept of ‘stake’ is not new. It means your interest is at stake. For example, one of the most powerful stakeholders in your organization is your leadership. If you are asked to implement a change, you need to align your objectives and investment to execute it in the best possible way. As a leader, you must first set up a guiding team (a team of peers) to keep the city clean. Leaders must be cognizant of what to focus on. Let’s do it differently. Changing this mindset requires a deep understanding of your cultural patterns (i.e. employees’ preferences and needs).

2. **Lack of contextual information**
   - Change needs to be initiated in situations that arise with a serious lack of understanding of the terrain (“if you don’t know the terrain, you can’t do it”). It’s important to learn as much as possible about the situation or problem you are trying to solve. **You need to be informed.**

3. **Making change stick**
   - The nature of change itself should be more predictable and you could plan for changes as long as you’re aware of them. It’s a tough feat. It takes hard work, perseverance, passion, and dedication. **It is an easy feat. It takes hard work, perseverance, passion, and dedication.**

4. **Decision skills**
   - The process of IT experts who have designed and implemented change management systems is not entirely. However, when you really understand the process of IT experts who have designed and implemented change management systems, it’s transactional, equip your teams to deliver change management results. The nature of change itself should be more predictable and you could plan for changes as long as you’re aware of them.

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MANAGING A YOUNGER WORKFORCE
WAYS TO COLLABORATE WITH GEN-Y AT THE WORKPLACE

By ASEEM PURI
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For over 30 years, Joanne Love’s coaching methods have influenced Australia’s leading athletes, coaches and teams. Joanne represented Australia in the 2008 Beijing Paralympics as swim coach; she has also coached a number of Olympic medalists and world record holders. Joanne is a trained psychologist and Leadership Coach. To get in touch with Joanne, e-mail editor@leaderonomics.com

GANDHI’S TRANSFORMATIVE HABITS

Mahatma Gandhi, one of my heroes was a man who helped liberate nearly 350 million people from the yoke of slavery and the colonial occupation by throwing the British out of India. Unlike the carnage and bloodshed of World War 2, he did this with a shot being fired. What’s even more remarkable is that he did this in roughly 20 years after landing in India. The biggest secret of his success were his incredible habits that helped him achieve this. Some of these may well be impossible for us to implement but if we can do one, it will transform our life.

1. Solemn vows to avoid vice
   - Before leaving for England he took the vows on his mother’s cloth for himself. He served others all his life in a spirit of giving.
   - He carried human soil on his head, serving the poorest of the poor.
   - He had many flaws but had many great qualities too. What quality can we embrace from him? Perhaps, one of the above?

2. Reading – Gandhi read everything. He read the Gita, the Quran, the Bible, books by famous authors, newspapers and magazines. He expanded his mental horizon beyond the obvious by doing so. Can you begin by spending 10 minutes reading something new every day?

3. Writing – Gandhi saw it as his moral purpose to share his views with the Indian people. Hence, he wrote almost 50,000 pages across his lifetime, hundreds of books, countless letters every day and edited many newspapers for many years. This was blogging before there was the internet. Can you write a diary or start a blog or write a weekly article in a magazine to share your thoughts and opinions?

4. Fasting – Gandhi used the ancient technique of fasting for many purposes. He used this to protest against the British government who often gave in to his moral superiority. He used it for penance when he thought he had made a mistake. It’s also a fantastic way to lose weight, develop more self-control and become healthier when done for one to three days.

5. Service – Gandhi spent his life serving the poorest of the poor. He carried human soil on his head, cleaned his ashram with his own hands, spun the wheel to make cotton cloth for himself. He served others all his life in a spirit of giving.

Don’t get me wrong, they do support long-term success, but they value jobs, skills, and quality over emphasis on short-term profit. Gen-Y also wants structure and measured objectives.

Don’t treat Gen-Y as being naive on this topic. Is your direction and conversations focused around purpose? Apple is a great example of a purposeful company which engages staff. Apple’s purpose is to produce well-designed products, which can be used for entertainment, or to allow engagement via tools which improve productivity. Purpose is a key driver for inspiration and innovation.

IN A NUTSHELL
Get these three skills right and Gen-Y and the generations that follow will provide a great return on your investment. You will unlock the doors to the untapped potential of Gen-Y and create a workplace culture that will be both creative and innovative, a workplace Gen-Y will want to call home.
A HERO’S LEGACY

6 LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF ABDUL SATTAR EDHI

1. NEVER JUDGE OTHERS
   Edhi was one of the least judgmental people. It was one of his most defining traits that allowed him to serve everyone equally regardless of where they came from. If we judge someone based on how they look or what they may have done, we unconsciously wire our brain to see just what we want to see. Every encounter we have with that person will be measured against that first judgment. This means that based on your first impression of someone, which is often deceptive, you will probably never get to discover the best part of their personality.

2. HUMANITY ABOVE RELIGION
   He was once asked, “Why must you pick up Christians and Hindus in your ambulance?” His reply was, “Because the ambulance is more Muslim than you.” All religions of this world emphasise on empathy, care, peace, co-existence and love. It is easy to be carried away by certain religious beliefs. But what is difficult – and truly exemplary – is the ability to transcend something so deep and personal like religion, to help another individual no matter the differences. Edhi was just that – a human being who believed in love and empathy irrespective of religion, cast, creed and gender. His strong emphasis on humanity above religion helped him grow his organisation beyond the borders.

3. ACCOLADES DON’T MATTER
   You cannot be a true humanitarian unless you have closely seen misery, hardship and suffering. Edhi had witnessed all these things and more. He had no interest in worldly prizes and accolades. To him, caring for people came naturally and he was more than happy to do it.

4. HEAD DOWN, FOCUS ON YOUR WORK
   When running an organisation, it is easy to be carried away with good things that come bundled along the way, especially money and fame, but Edhi wasn’t interested in any of these. Edhi Foundation had a very humble beginning. He personally requested people on the streets to donate funds to buy an ambulance. It was his sheer focus and passion that moved the organisation forward. With focus, Edhi and his volunteers continued to work relentlessly for the foundation.

Today, Edhi Foundation runs the world’s largest ambulance service that offers 24 hours of emergency services. The foundation also has shelter homes, hospitals with free medical care and drug rehabilitation centres. All of this would not have been possible without focus.

5. DON’T WAIT FOR OTHERS TO CHANGE THE WORLD
   Be the change you want to see in the world. The Edhi Foundation was founded in 1951 and Edhi was just 23 years old and his main aim was to become the caregiver for the poor and helpless. In the years that followed, he single-handedly transformed the face of welfare in Pakistan.

Edhi’s whole life is a case study that we should all learn from and apply in our lives. Here are some life-changing lessons from the man’s extraordinary life that we should all learn from and apply in our world.

6. JUST DO IT, DON’T BE AFRAID!
   When you want something, the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it. It is natural to have second thoughts and doubts on your abilities – everybody does. If you’re waiting for the right moment, stop waiting because it may never come. The right moment is now. There will be times when everything seems to go against you but learn how to brave the storm.

All you need is determination and passion to see you through. This is exactly what Abdul Sattar Edhi did. Take the leap for what you believe in!

By MARYAM DODHY
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NC of the greatest humanitarians of the world, Abdul Sattar Edhi, passed away exactly a year ago (July 8, 2016). The void he left might never be filled, but his legacy will live forever in the hearts of his loved ones, in the actions of his followers and in the good deeds of those who want to serve humanity.

Edhi Foundation – founded and bootstrapped by the man himself – was started with a mere sum of 5,000 rupees. But with leadership, focus and a passion for serving humanity, Edhi turned this establishment into one of the most successful charitable foundations in the world.

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Maryam loves bringing to light stories of extraordinary people working in Pakistan’s technology and start-up industry. She is a geek who likes to immerse herself in codes and has a knack of solving real-world problems through software engineering. To connect with her, e-mail editor@leaderonomics.com

For details.
CAPPING THE ‘YES, BOSS’ CULTURE
BE CAREFUL OF THE MEANINGLESS ‘YES’ AND THE HIDDEN ‘NO’

By TAMARA JAYNE
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“Shes one of our best employees because she never says ‘No’ when we ask her to do things.”

“The boss likes it when we agree with him all the time.”

O

H, the number of times I have heard these lines ever since I entered the working world. According to Merriam-Webster, a yes-man is simply someone who agrees with everything that is said especially: one who endorses or supports without criticism every opinion or proposal of an associate or superior.

Saying “yes” to every task or agreeing with bosses while quietly seething with frustration encourages employee disengagement. While last minute projects, clients or workloads are unavoidable, what about the times when we can actually control the situation at hand?

As leaders, how can one manage time and planning to prevent employees from the malady of “Malaysian timing” or “last-minute syndrome”? Should we even have this “last-minute” mentality to start with or is it merely an excuse to laugh off poor time management or poor planning skills?

WHEN YOU SAY NOTHING AT ALL

In university, critical thinking was a subject and we had to actually learn how to think critically and make sound judgement. It is not that we don’t know how to think for ourselves but because the concept of speaking up, sharing your opinion with the class, or maybe even having an opinion was often shut down while we were in school. Why so?

According to the Asia Pacific global research group, the worst practises a low context environment, where focus is placed on the way of communication rather than the context. Clarity is key, which in turn, means brevity and direct communication. This means, messages are prompt, clear and concise.

But here in the east, we practice a high context environment, where focus is placed on the way we communicate as we pay more attention to relationships, emotions, gestures and other verbal and non-verbal cues. In simpler terms, our messages are more indirect and long-winded. Why is the way we communicate a problem? It’s just “culturally ingrained”.

Because being a yes-man can become an issue...

WHEN IT AFFECTS YOUR HEALTH

To be a yes-man means to be a people-pleaser. Loving the sense of approval and recognition at the expense of your health or personal life is sure to set alarm bells ringing. When this starts to happen, it’s important to take a step back and evaluate the situation.

Are you bringing off more than you can chew? If yes, why? Saying no occasionally does not make you a selfish person. Neither does it make you irresponsible. Saying no, sends the message that you are just another individual who’d like to be respected for your opinions and feelings, regardless of your position. It helps you draw the line between a gullible and a firm individual.

When tasks are continuously and unnecessarily handled at the last minute, it may signal that we are taking someone else’s time and effort lightly. It also leads to poorer decision making and more room for mistakes.

Research shows that the habit of completing your assignments at the very last minute drastically affects students’ grades. David Arnot and Scott Dacko, of Warwick Business School, looked at work submitted online and found marks dropping closer to the assignment deadline. The same can apply to your work environment.

While we feel that we work better under pressure, can we really say that we have produced our best work? Or merely the best work we could produce given the time we had?

A person who says yes all the time but bottleneck his or her frustration and lets it spill elsewhere, shouldn’t be praised or encouraged. Neither should congratulating someone for “never saying no”.

WE LIKE TO BE LIKED

It’s not a surprise. We would rather be surrounded by people who agree with or are nice to us instead of those who are brutally honest. It’s comforting to stay in a Yes-man culture. It feels safe.

However, it’s also completely dangerous to live in this zone. If we find that our team follows every order without question and we get what we want when we want it, it’s time to review the way we communicate.

Are we surrounded by “suck-ups” or are we surrounded by people who will provide their honest feedback without fear or favour?

BE BOLD

Companies innovate when fresh ideas are brought to the table; when feedback is welcomed, and when management doesn’t get defensive. Yes-men are good with carrying out tasks but they would never challenge the ideas to see if they truly work. It may be too late by the time you learn whether your team believes in what you do.

Fellow Leaderonomer Louisa Desodowan, states in her article: ‘Ose The Yes Men’, “If a company has cultivated a yes-man culture, they have unwittingly bred a culture of people who are either too afraid to say anything or just shut up and collect their pay cheques. A corporate landscape and a leader that does not welcome some opposition and moreover collaboration, is doomed to be stuck and risk the business being bagged down.”

When employees stop opening up to employers, perhaps they have been beaten into submission by their behaviour. The more employees shut down, the more the company risks running a mechanical business akin to having a set of robots perform their duties without any form of attachment or sense of belonging.

HOW TO AVOID BEING A YES-MAN

1. Remember that you always have a choice. The first step is to recognise that you have a choice. Often, we become yes-men for fear that we may lose our jobs, or that the bosses may think we are incompetent or not “hardworking” enough. You may feel trapped. Recognise that no matter what situation, the power of choice is in your hands. Ask yourself, “If I say no to this for a good reason, what is the worst possible outcome that could occur?”

2. Know your priorities. What are the most important things on your plate right now? Are you capable of taking on more work? Sometimes, we take on more than we can handle because we think that we can push ourselves. But it really ends up doing more harm than good as you end up stretching yourself too thin.

3. Remember that honesty is a characteristic to be praised. Completing tasks assigned to you with perfection is great. At times, knowing where and when to draw the line is the difficult part. Remember that open communication is vital as a team player. And so is true listening – being open enough to listen to what your employees or teammates are saying and feeling (and maybe not bluntly telling you) before it’s too late.

“I don’t want yes-men around me. I want everyone to tell the truth. Even if it costs them their jobs.”

Samuel Goldwyn

Tamaran is an assistant editor and writer with Leaderonomics. She loves thought-provoking conversations over cups of tea. If she is not writing, you might find her hiking up a mountain in search of a new waterfall to explore. Let her know your thoughts about this article by e-mailing editor@leaderonomics.com

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“Progress means getting nearer to the place you want to be. And if you have taken a wrong turning, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man.”

— C.S. Lewis

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A new Leaderonomics’ series was born when our GM of Media Strategy Matt Naylor went on a road trip with Leaderonomics CEO Roshan Thiran. Their light banter was posted online and there were numerous queries pouring in since then, so Matt had convinced Roshan to document his answer via new web TV show called “Ask Roshan.” Watch the first video in this series by scanning the following QR code or visiting http://bit.ly/AskRoshan.

THE ART OF MANAGING CHANGE INITIATIVES

TRANSITIONS are never easy. And more often than not, the process of successfully shifting from one point to another can bruise, and reveal conditions—good and bad—that we may never have realised during a time of stability. For too long, we knew that this can’t be a bad thing. Ultimately, a change brings with it sharper visibility into what we can do, what we can do well, and what we can do better.

What is clear is this: change management, as we have found in this week’s issue, involves two parallel pathways: personal and organisational.

Here are the key learnings we took as we put together this week’s issue.

1. To change is a personal choice

Acknowledging that change is needed, and deciding to act on it despite being aware of its potential discomforts is where the magic begins. Randi Zuckerberg, whose brother Mark needs no further introduction, made a choice to leave Facebook, the company her famous sibling had started, to make a name for herself. Stepping out of a shadow is a challenge and Randi—in her conversation with Leaderonomics CEO Roshan Thiran recently—illustrated this point. In her words, “It was such a difficult decision to leave. I had been with Facebook for almost seven years...”

Her passion in getting more women into leadership roles within the tech industry became the driver that further propelled her decision to change. Zuckerberg—despite facing hurdles in the process—understood the good and bad consequences of her decision and consciously stuck with it. Today, she drives Zuckerberg Media, addressing issues of women’s empowerment and getting more women into pop culture. Differentiated, driven and dynamic.

2. You have what it takes to evolve

There’s no need to be overly intimidated by the dictates of changes around you. There’s no one-size-fits-all remedy that is going to ease the change process like a wonder pill. But there is a way to get all the right perspectives in place to make that happen.

When we’ve made the choice to move out of our norms, our concerns would shift to our own capabilities. Rupa Sivanoli illustrated on Page 6 that change is situational. And more importantly, it’s the lack of context that deteriorates the efforts put in to drive change.

So here, looking inward and gathering insights into what worked and what didn’t within the organisation can help immensely when it comes to giving companies the best chance at successfully handling change.

“Managing change is like baking a cake; you need a few essential ingredients to come together at the right time before seeing results,” she wrote. And all you have to do is find the ingredients within.

3. Pay attention to feelings

Emotions will run high—whether it’s resistance, excitement or mid-range ambivalence—and you will not be alone here. As companies prepare to take their people to the next level, or even brace themselves to ease the change process like a wonder pill. But there is a way to

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This goes a long way in carving out messages of reassurance, confidence and security in a period of volatility. As Joseph Tan put it on Page 10: “…as a leader you need to first of all, address the emotions, for crisis, it is imperative to understand the complex cycles of feelings that employees go through, and be sensitive during this period.

With confidence from the right places, effective communication and skills, it’s not impossible to achieve the results companies desire from change management exercises.

We hope our issue this week has helped address the intricacies of change management in your work life. Write to us with your thoughts on any of our articles here by e-mailing editor@leaderonomics.com or visit www.leaderonomics.com for more compelling pieces.

Lydia Gomez
Editor
Managers today are faced with managing increasingly complex teams. Influence is the key to effective leadership that drives results. Let us help your managers gain this valuable skill through our Influencing Skills simulation and programme.

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