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.

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BUILDING RESILIENCE IN A VUCA WORLD

3 MANAGING UNCERTAINTY WITH MINDFULNESS

4 GETTING YOUR TEAM’S “OK” TO CHANGE

6 BALANCING STRATEGY AND AGILITY

If you would like your organisation to be featured in this pullout, contact us at editor@leaderonomics.com
DON'T UNDERMINE YOUR ABILITIES

PEOPLE ARE MORE CAPABLE THAN THEY THINK

By SANDY CLARKE
editor@leaderonomics.com

JOHN DeMartini is a world-renowned educator, human behaviour specialist and author, but his road to success has been one that's less travelled on.

Speaking to host Roshan Thiran on The Leaderonomics Show, DeMartini says he struggled with learning difficulties as a child, describing his younger self as a "street kid" who was told he would never amount to anything. Given that he wasn't able to read until the age of 18, the cruel prediction didn't seem entirely without substance. Nevertheless, it's a prediction that turned out to be flat-out wrong. Meeting his mentor at the age of 17, DeMartini was inspired to become an educator and travel the world. The aspiration was so strong, it literally became his dream. And he worked hard from that point on to make it happen.

As he stresses on the show, "People have more capability than they realise," and with a strong realisation concerning his own potential, a love for learning was born. To help make his dream come true, DeMartini told his mother that he wanted to "fill his mind with the greatest thinkers." This desire would lead the aspiring educator to develop a voracious appetite for reading – a habit that led him to devour thousands of books over the past 40 years.

When asked about his purpose in life, the performance and behaviour expert responds by insisting that we all have something great within us waiting to come out – we only need to realise what's truly important to us and connect our learning and growth with those values.

"I'm not a motivational speaker. I don't want to motivate people; I want to help them access what inspires them from within," says DeMartini.

In short, he leads people towards achieving extraordinary things. But if we all have potential greatness within us, why are many people unable to access this on our own? For DeMartini, it comes down to the way we set goals.

"Any time someone sets a goal, which is not congruent with what they value, they will self-deprecate. The self-depreciation isn't a symptom of something wrong with them; rather, it's a feedback that's letting them know they're trying to be somebody they're not."

He insists that "envy is ignorance – it has the capacity to transform fear into determination". This determination is what fuels people to be the best they can be.

To help people unlock their potential, DeMartini – author of The Values Factor – leads them to first identify what's truly valuable from their perspective. From there, they are encouraged to identify a specific void they could fill through utilising their skills and abilities. To ensure continuing growth, he advises people to set metrics for themselves on a daily basis, so that there's a clear pattern of accomplishments.

"When you do that," says DeMartini, "you have something to be grateful for every day. When you have gratitude, your heart is more involved in what you do. When people know what they really value and they connect what they want to learn with these goals, it leads them to first identify their highest values, they become more engaged and produce more profitable results."

THERE IS STILL ROOM TO GROW.

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How to Build Resilience and Maintain Mindfulness in Times of Instability

By DANIEL RUSSELL
editor@leaderonomics.com

In today’s volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) business environment places extraordinary stress on employees. A UK survey found that 47% of employees believe that work is becoming more stressful (with 42% saying that it is the same, and only 10% saying it’s less stressful). Andrea Ovans wrote “What Resilience Means, and Why It Matters” in Harvard Business Review that the greatest source of workplace stress is dealing with colleagues and office politics. Cognitive resilience is important for high-performing leaders to advance and thrive. Leaders also carry the added responsibility for building resilience into their employees and organisations. Being resilient is a precursor to inspiring and guiding others to continuously achieve ambitious goals.

We all face struggles in our personal and work lives. Why is it that people react so differently to these challenges? Some people get mad, some quit, some avoid the situation, and some become deeply depressed or physically ill.

Leaders Who Fell and Rose Again

In contrast, there are many leaders who face difficulties with excitement and vigour. The most resilient leaders refuse to accept failure as the end of their story. Instead, they come back after multiple failures again and again, each time learning something new and returning stronger and smarter after each attempt.

Some of our most vaulted entrepreneurs have faced and overcome multiple failures. One of Bill Gates’ first commercial opportunities called the “Traf-O-Data” (a system to help government agencies manage traffic information) didn’t work when he tried to demonstrate it the first time.

While most of us have heard of Virgil’s successes (airlines, mobile phone, music), we don’t remember Virgin Cola, Virgin Brides, Virgin Cars, Virgin Vie, Virgin Clothing, or Virgin Digital—all failures. Sir Richard Branson has what he calls a “fail-ure principle” by which he takes risks and learns from them each time.

Even Steve Jobs faced a massive failure when his Lisa project caused Apple to lose a considerable amount of money. The Lisa failed to be accepted by users and he was fired from the company he founded in 1995. Jobs said that he was “devastated” by the failure but he learnt from his past mistakes and became a better leader.

With such drastic differences in how leaders face failure and demonstrate resilience, it leads us to ask why there are such stark differences. How can we improve our own response to adversity?

What is Resilience?

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines resilience as “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, or significant sources of stress”. We know it when we experience it and see it in others.

Neuroscience tells us that genetic factors play an important role in an individual’s response to stress as well as in exhibiting resilience. Based on genetic research, we know that some people are more vulnerable to depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. In addition, neuroscientists have also been able to influence the shaping of our neural circuits that regulate our ability to respond to stress. Specifically, prolonged episodes of uncontrollable or overwhelming stress during childhood can lead to “learned helplessness”. However, exposure to mild to moderate stresses that have a positive outcome can help children become more resilient in the future.

With such drastic differences in how leaders face failure and demonstrate resilience, it leads us to ask why there are such stark differences. How can we improve our own response to adversity?

5 Ways to Improve Resilience

1. Cognitive training

Research has shown that cognitive training methodologies improve resilience. The first is called “cognitive reappraisal” and the most effective type of cognitive reappraisal is a practice called “distancing”. Distancing involves training participants to view their circumstances as if observing themselves to learn from the situation and then “reframing” the event in positive rather than negative terms.

Coping self-efﬁcacy training has also shown promise in building resilience. Coping self-efﬁcacy involves practising and receiving feedback on dealing with stressful scenarios through real or simulated exposure (e.g. role playing).

Finally, training in problem solving has also helped some people to improve how they frame problems and improve cognitive flexibility to learn to address issues in new ways that reduce stress.

2. Emotional regulation

Mindfulness training, including reflec-
tion and journaling, has been shown to have a signiﬁcant positive impact on resilience by helping participants to focus on positive memories and emotions rather than constantly dwelling on negative events.

Exercises such as keeping a gratitude journal help individuals to start and maintain the “upward spiral” of emotions that go along with improving resilience.

3. Social support

Research shows that strong and deep connections with friends and family improve resilience. Having people with whom you can share and talk through troubles with supports positive emotions and clear thinking that underlie resilience.

Programmes such as the Penn Resilience Programme train people to build relationships by challenging beliefs that hinder good communication and build skills that improve communication.

For example, participants are taught to focus on giving praise, increase their ability to have active and constructive conversations, and improve communication feasibility in response to the situational demands.

4. Physical health

Much like the relationship between resilience and emotion, the relationship between physical health and resilience goes both ways. To improve resilience, it’s important to begin a virtuous cycle by working to improve your overall physical health in any way you can. Getting enough sleep, exercising, and eating right are factors that can improve resilience. Additionally, research has shown that getting less than six hours of sleep is a tantamount to not sleeping at all and creates a downward spiral in cognition, emotions, and overall performance.

Likewise, exercise and diet impact the physiology of the brain in ways that can either support or undermine an individual’s ability to deal with stress.

5. Neurobiological training

Meditation is one of the best ways to enhance your brain’s abilities to deal with stress. Neuroscientists describe mindfulness as non-judgemental, present-moment awareness and recommend meditation as one key to practise mindfulness.

They encourage mindfulness training to help our brains healthy, to support effective decision-making, and to protect ourselves against stress—all key components to improving resilience.

Conclusion

In her book, Bystanders, comedian Tina Fey explains resiliency as being “blorft”. She defines “blorft” as “an adjective I just made up that means completely over-whelmed but proceeding as if everything is fine and reacting to the stress with the torpor of a possum. I have been blorft every day for the past seven years.”

While this approach may work for famous comedians, blorfting your way through each day is not an effective strategy for dealing with the VUCA nature of today’s business environment.

But there is hope. There are ways to learn to manage through constant stress and changes which will allow leaders to grow stronger and better at dealing with ever increasing levels of challenge into the future.

As Winston Churchill said, “Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

Organisations that do not constantly challenge themselves and aim higher will find themselves lagging or worse, going obsolete.

Effective Strategic Thinking workshop is designed to help you apply best strategic practices that will drive growth and results for your business. This workshop will make you question the practicality, efficiency and effectiveness of business practices that are well entrenched in your organisation. It will also identify ways for you to do things faster and better and help prioritise and focus on the right business needs to gain competitive advantage.

Contact training@ leaderonomics.com to find out more.
HOW TO GET YOUR TEAM’S BUY-IN WHEN IMPLEMENTING CHANGE
MANAGERS MAY FIND IT HARD TO HANDLE WITH CARE

By CHLOE MOK editor@leaderonomics.com

CHANGE is inevitable – more so in these times, when real-time communication is the new standard, and the transfer of knowledge and information are expected to be transparent and detailed. As a manager, there will be times when decisions will be tough, and resistance from colleagues emerges. There will also be times when change is not at all favourable and the team’s confidence and morale are shaken. This could be detrimental to advancing the business and future plans.

Change – whether it is in the form of innovation or improvisation – is fundamental to the growth and survival of any business, and ultimately every individual involved in the process. It could be a delicate process and many managers find it hard to handle with care.

With Gen-Y taking over the workforce, mid-level managers often find themselves stuck – at times battling – between senior management insistence and ground level resistance, and they are often left to “manage the situation” with very little guidance. Here’s what managers can do to keep their teams from falling apart with every change that comes along the way.

STEP 1: HAVE THE BIG PICTURE IN MIND
That big picture comes with prioritising stakeholders and objectives. Depending on your industry or the nature of business, often find it best to work my way down starting from health and potentials for business growth before moving into team morale and changes to the organisation’s structure.

Mapping out everyone’s role or job scope changes is also good for you as a manager, to better understand the subsequent processes. Think about how it could affect your life balance for your staff, which seems to be priority for most Gen-Ys.

Once you have reasoned out with yourself that this decision is the best, after weighing the pros and cons, put yourself in their shoes. Your goal here is to first believe that this will bring about the best outcome for the big picture.

There are also some form of resistance that you do not believe in. If this decision came from top down and you don’t think it is the best, and that balance expectations between superiors and subordinates, do not hesitate to bring it up with your superiors, to see if any aspect of the change could be postponed or altered without jeopardising the intended results.

If your team senses a tinge of resistance from you, their resistance will only be strengthened, making your job even tougher.

STEP 2: STRUCTURE YOUR EXPLANATION FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
If need be, illustrate. Depending on what the change demands of everyone, trying to choose the right words and rehashing the lines in your head, in order to avoid any awkwardness or potential backlash.

If possible, anticipate all possible tricky questions and get them answered in your head before your big announcement.

In my case, switching weekends to Mondays was a big shock to my team. I started by explaining that everyone was crucial to the operation of the business and it was important to have a few eyes and ears during the weekends.

I first laid down the problems we faced over the months with data to back me up, i.e. lower customer satisfaction rating, urgent yet unresponsive e-mails, and how this has affected the business and its customers.

I kept to the seven-minute rule when disclosing the final verdict and solution to our problems. I brought up all the questions that I anticipated and answered them all before opening up the floor to more questions and this helped ease the tension. The ultimate announcement on restructuring and rotating work days came right at the end.

There were some form of resistance and it took time for everyone to process the information. In instances such as such, it is important to insist that everyone save their questions until you are done with your explanation. Always keep in mind that you do not want to explain ahead of time and jumble up your thoughts.

STEP 3: ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR
Keep checking for the next 10 to 30 minutes (depending on how big your team is), to see if anyone has any questions at all. If you sense that some are not opening up or are afraid to speak up, meet them privately to hear them out.

Let them know that you genuinely care and that you value their opinion before a decision is made.

As managers, our biggest fear is to “accidentally” lose loyal and good workers in the process of change management. Sadly, many employees leave good companies due to problems that could have been rectified. The onus, then, lies with mid-level managers, who should be sensitive to both superiors and subordinates, to balance the situation in the best way possible.

Think about it. If you are a treasured employee – your superior would want to hear your honest opinions instead of risking your loss of confidence in him or her.

STEP 4: RESTATE YOUR MESSAGE
After you have ironed out all questions and doubts, do not forget to put everything in black-and-white. This is to solidify the change or any decisions made at the announcement and keep everyone on the same page. This is important because when there is resistance, people tend to hear what they want to hear. This way, you can ensure that everything that was communicated during your big announcement is reiterated for everyone’s knowledge.

In this written announcement – whether it’s a memo – you can also discuss the process that will be in place to help with the shift around.

The more frequently you talk about this picture and for you as a manager, a good understanding to their level of acceptance.

There is one more step that managers should take note of. To find out what it is, read the full article by Chloe at www.leaderonomics.com or scan this QR Code.

By MINDA ZETLIN
editor@leaderonomics.com

HOW THE SMARTEST LEADERS COPE WITH CONSTANT CHANGE

If you’ve ever tried to stay upright on a wildly pitching boat at sea, you have a good sense of what it’s like trying to manage a small business in these rapidly changing times. Established industries from publishing to healthcare, to retail, to manufacturing, have had their norms upended thanks to dramatic changes in technology, marketplaces, and in some cases, politics.

The pace of change is only going to get faster. How do you remain an effective leader no matter what crises or changes you are faced with? It’s not easy, but it can be done. Begin by remembering these five truths:

Every rule you know is subject to change. I’ve watched this first-hand in publishing. Once upon a time, the divisions were simple. Writers wrote. Readers read. Now with blogging and commenting, social media and citizen journalism, the line between writer and reader is increasingly hard to find.

Every industry is like this. There was no way a small startup could take down a whole industry until Netflix came along and put the entire concept of video rental stores to rest. Every box chains would always win over mom and pop shops, until e-commerce made big box stores eat dust. Even the music and pop that were still standing thrived thanks to personal connections with their fans.

There are many places now where eating a marijuana brownie is legal and smoking a cigarette is not. Whatever rules you count on, stop counting on them.

There is no sure-fire formula for success. There never was, but it certainly could seem like that. Author Wendy Stelting conducted focus groups where she asked women what they most wanted to change about themselves.

The resulting book, Thin Thighs in 30 Days was almost guaranteed to become the huge bestseller it was. Today it might be called Thin Thighs in 30 Days app and she might have published it herself rather than seeking out a major publishing house. Or maybe it would have been something completely different. Not only success itself, but even how we define success is constantly evolving.

So whatever your business model, even if it’s working great for you, be ready to change it quickly. Never stop assessing your own vulnerabilities and keep constantly looking for the next opportunity.

Your expertise, education, and experience aren’t as valuable as you think. I’ve seen many people with long careers and highly developed skills struggle mightily with this truth, but there’s no getting around it.

The futurist Jacob Morgan argues that in the near future, knowledge workers will lose their value to be replaced by “learning workers,” whose most important skill is their ability to quickly absorb new information.

It can be frustrating to learn that the knowledge you’ve amassed over 20 years of hard work can be matched by a college graduate with a smartphone accessing a few well-chosen websites. But in the great scheme of things, this is a good thing. Knowledge shouldn’t be restricted to those with the money for an expensive education or many years of work and study – the more knowledge everyone has the better it is for the whole world.

So rather than complain about your younger, less experienced competition, try grabbing a smartphone and learning how to dip into that vast knowledge stream yourself.

To read the full article by Minda, visit www.leaderonomics.com or scan the QR code.
By PAUL SMITH
editor@leaderonomics.com

“Everything must have a tough
decision. Why didn’t you just wait
another few years and retire first?
How’d you finally decide? How did you
know that was the right move?
Wasn’t it scary? How’d you get
started?”

MAKING THE LEAP
SWITCHING FROM A CUSHY CORPORATE CAREER TO SELF-EMPLOYMENT

EXCEL
I confirmed that I could excel at this
job—or at least be better than average.
My first book hit No. 1 on Amazon’s
Business Communications bestseller
list in the first six months. It’s now in its
eighth printing, and is available in seven
languages around the world. And the
feedback and applause I got at the end
of my early keynotes and training events
told me I was doing something right
there, too. Compare that with my old
job. Nobody gets a standing ovation at
the end of a budget meeting.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
One of the greatest rewards an
author gets for his or her work is to
hear from readers. Each week through
e-mail, Twitter, Amazon reviews, blog
posts, Facebook, or personal visits to the
podium after a speech, I get to hear what
people like about my book or how they
felt after one of my speeches.

And while you would never tire of
hearing kind words about your work,
what you live for are those moments
where you realize you’ve made a life-
changing difference for a total stranger.
And that was happening on a regular
basis. Again, not the kind of reaction I
was getting at my corporate desk.

To learn what else Paul did before
making the leap from a cushy cor-
porate job to being his own boss, log on
to www.leaderonomics.com or scan this QR
Code.

PASSION
I already knew I would like speaking
and training. But I wasn’t sure about the
writing part. And since I knew that I’d
spend 75% of my time researching and
writing the next book I was working on, if
I didn’t love writing, this was going to be
a huge mistake.

Writing a book confirmed that I loved
writing. In fact, I found myself so impa-
tient for the one hour a night I’d set aside
for writing that sometimes I cheated. I’d
snack at 30 minutes at 6 am before I was
even out of my pajamas, or squirrel away
for a few minutes in a closet somewhere
at work over my lunch hour.

If that’s the way you react to getting to
spend time in your dream area, you’re on
the right path.

ALL FOR A GOOD CAUSE
Team spirit and focus were two noticeable
elements demonstrated by (from right) 16-year-
olds Muhammad Ridwan and Yong
Jian Sek, Citi Malaysia Security Services
Operations staff Juhari Jinus and Ioy
Cher and another student V. Sadasivha, 17,
during a school makeover project at
SMK La Salle Brickfields recently.

This activity, which was part of Citi’s
Global Community Day (GCD), is held
annually with a mission to address
community needs. These needs include
urban revitalisation, environmental
conservation activities, literacy and
education programmes. As Citi’s country
HR Director Marcela Mihanovich puts it,
“this is our way of giving back to
the community.”

Teacher S.Ganesan said the school
had not been painted in a long time,
and the learning environment had
become increasing less conducive for the
students.

La Salle Brickfields was among the nine
schools across Kuala Lumpur, Penang,
and Johor Bahru that were given a makeover
corporate volunteers, family and friends.

The event saw a turnout of 80
students, 23 teachers, and 220 of Citi
Malaysia’s employees, family and friends.
THINKING IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

UNCERTAINTY

Uncertainty is the new normal. The only certainty is that it will happen in the presence of the organization. Uncertainty calls for new strategies to take advantage of the situation, as the ancient saying goes, “Turn the enemy and know the rules.”

Similarly, organizations can cultivate an antifragile mindset that helps them thrive in an uncertain world.

To be productive in a volatile environment, organizations need to develop a resilient, antifragile mindset.

Antifragility

An antifragile mindset

The team went back to the drawing board, got the groups of three to brainstorm solutions. Finally, Jack, the team leader, said, “We should try to develop a platform where you could just post your thoughts in 140-character snippets. It looks simple and addictive.”

In 2009, Jack launched Twitter, and became an online sensation that people are still referring to in their work.

The key to take into account the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) is a tool developed by antifragility for the last three decades, as it expanded across the globe.

In 2013, it announced a big event of antifragility - the first in 20 years but not the last, as performance continued to plummet. As a launched a self-cannibalizing platform, Jack sprinkled it with trues and false truths, adding to the confusion.

Some observers have pointed out that the tale of the firm's rise to the top of the social media world, and the timing couldn't have been more fitting.

The team's efforts to come back to the platform that had just been launched by the company, and had a privileged information and quotes from the owner of brands such as Cartier, Dior, Bvlgari, and Tiffany.

There is no doubt that spending pat-

The new normal isn't the time to shrink; it's the time to work even harder. The new normal is not just a time for leaders to change the game in their favour with new boldness.

Identify and discover patterns of market dynamics as a sole basis for growth. There is no question that spending pattern changes are shaking business foundations. Why? Because new boldness is the new normal.

Business leaders cannot wait for a more opportune time.

Tommy is a CEO coach, author, and speaker. He is also a leaderonomics.com co-founder. He has helped many business leaders become great! To book him for your meeting or event, contact him at new@leaderonomics.com.

The LEAD Club is a platform for leading professionals. The LEAD Club is the best way to learn, grow, and network with leaders. The LEAD Club is the best place to develop essential skills to drive your company forward. Share this article by a rea-

A GATHERING FOR YOUNG LEADERS BY YOUNG LEADERS

The LEAD Club continues to be the platform of choice for aspiring leaders, helping them stand out from the rest of the crowd.

Mary says that the LEAD Club gives you a platform to share your ideas, as well as a network of like-minded individuals who can help you achieve your goals.

A meeting with Mary is well worth your time. She will provide you with valuable insights and strategies that will help you take your business to the next level.

Mary believes in being open-minded and accepting new ideas. She encourages her members to share their stories and experiences, creating a community of like-minded individuals who support and inspire one another.

Mary is passionate about helping young leaders grow and thrive. She believes that everyone has the potential to be successful, and she is dedicated to sharing her knowledge and expertise with others.

Mary is available for speaking engagements, workshops, and mentorship opportunities. Contact her today to learn more about how she can help your organization and your team reach new heights.

Mary says that every journey begins with a single step. Make that step today, and see where it takes you.

Mary is a mentor, a coach, and a leader. She is also a leaderonomics.com co-founder. She has helped many business leaders become great! To book her for your meeting or event, contact her at new@leaderonomics.com.
LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES IN A COMPLEX WORLD

AN EVER CHANGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT REQUIRES AN AGILE MINDSET

By PABLO TOVAR
editor@leaderonomics.com

I work with many outstanding leaders with extraordinary competencies; they are brilliant people from whom I’ve learned a great deal. I am grateful and privileged to be able to work with people like this.

Almost every one of them says they are overwhelmed and worried about not living up to their responsibilities. They are bombarded with emails, meetings, and expectations that are almost impossible to meet.

They are experiencing increasing demand from multiple directions, with challenges that do not stop growing in size and scope. Many have not heard of VUCA but all suffer from it. I believe it is very possible that leading today — in a VUCA world — is the biggest challenge leaders have faced.

The VUCA concept was introduced sometime in the early 90s by the US Army War College to refer to the multi-lateral world that emerged after the end of the Cold War and it was characterised as being more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous than ever before.

In a business context, the VUCA concept took off after the global financial crisis in 2008 and 2009. Since then, it has featured heavily in the development of leadership skills in various organisations. The concept describes a business environment characterised by:

Volatility – A brutal increase in four dimensions of the changes that we face today: the type, speed, volume, and scale. Uncertainty – As a result of the Volatility, we are unable to predict future events.

Complexity – Widespread confusion, with no clear connection between cause and effect, affects all organisations nowadays.

Ambiguity – There is a lack of precision, and the existence of multiple meanings within the conditions surrounding us.

We are dealing with a world where change is ever greater; future is less predictable; options increase exponentially, and the way we think about these options has undoubtedly changed.

Today, leaders must make decisions faster, processing huge amounts of information at a time when everything is more interconnected than ever before. We may think that this has been the case for every generation throughout the different periods in history; surely the feeling must be the same.

But, one of our biggest problems is that we have been raised to believe that the world is predictable. We need to work with a different mindset, where the focus and way of thinking have to shift from what is probable to what is possible.

Again, how does one prepare for it?
How do we change this mindset?
Our brain loves to categorise and learn from the past to secure our future.

This has worked well for thousands of years. Without this ability to predict the future based on the past and identify the risks and opportunities, we would have disappeared as a species.

This complex internal evolutionary system has done an incredible job of protecting us and allowing us to prosper for millennia, but right now, it is beginning to fail and limit us.

In the VUCA environment, we need to focus on what is possible (because anything can happen) rather than what is likely to occur (which is determined by the past).

Making this change, where we must go from trying to figure out what is most likely, to seeing the possibilities that lie before us, is easier said than done. Research repeatedly shows this is something that does not please our brain.

Our general pattern is to cut, reduce and simplify information. To achieve this change, we need to create new habits and new patterns. We need to talk to each other differently, collect information differently, and develop different strategies and plans for the future.

There are four habits that can help us evolve and improve our ability to deal with higher levels of complexity. These four habits are easy to implement:

- Ask different types of questions
- Take on multiple perspectives
- Develop a systemic vision
- Look at the whole picture; take a step back to see what’s possible

This challenge is so critical that our survival depends on it. I believe there are strategies to learn not only to survive, but also to thrive in our environment.

We may as well enjoy it while we change our mindset. That’s what leadership development and coaching is actually about.

LEADERSHIP: NOT A ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL

In today’s volatile world, building effective teams has never been more important for leaders. Situational leaders possess fluidity in their approach to get the best out of their people and optimise team performance. In an exciting gamified session, our iLead simulation uses instant feedback and analytics to help your emerging leaders practice their situational agility.
HESITANT TO GIVE AND RECEIVE FEEDBACK?

Wie SHEERA HUSSIN
editor@leaderonomics.com

A person, admitting one's mistakes and accepting one's failures is not habits we fully embrace. Our minds do not "prepare" us for our own defeat no matter how much we foresee it coming, so does the feedback that comes with it. Contrary to the popular concept of learning from your own shortcomings, we still perceive feedback as a threat and fear the opinion of others.

Does your heart sink when your boss mentions "performance review"? How do you take it when your colleague criticises your work? If it is very crucial, why don't people give and receive feedback more often?

According to Daniel Kahneman, "True intuitive expertise is learned from prolonged experience with good feedback on mistakes". In turn, giving and receiving feedback lead to greater employee engagement in your day-to-day operations, which helps in keeping their morale high and well-integrated. Let's take a look at how we can encourage feedback exchange in our respective organisations.

GIVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Constructive feedback needs to be learned and mastered by those at the giving end. It needs to be tailored to the receivers' concerns, leading them towards positive transformation. Instead of merely saying "well done", you may choose to be more specific and construct a more useful statement such as: "You have shown relentless effort in ensuring that the workflow process is consistent and adaptable by others".

Instead of saying: "You should not have done that", you may use a constructive sentence like: "Your attempt is brave and admirable. Although it may not be suitable given the current situation, it can certainly be applied in other sessions".

There are also other things that we can observe to do achieve the desired outcome. Among them are:

1. Choose a suitable time
   While public recognition is appreciated, public scrutiny is not. Provide any negative feedback privately and only to the targeted person. If you are overwhelmed with emotions such as anger or frustration, say it off before you face the individual to provide any feedback. You should avoid announcing feedback that is unrelated to others in a public setting such as group meeting, group chats or office notice board.

2. State what you observed
   Be specific when delivering your feedback by stating your thoughts based on concrete evidence and not based on rumours or biased opinions. Explain the impact of a behaviour on you, the team, or the organisation so that the recipient understands how he or she has influenced a situation.

3. Give suggestion for improvement
   You should make your receiver feel that you genuinely care and want to help the person grow. Make sure you provide actionable suggestions and be open to receiving and considering alternate views from your recipient.

HOW TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK IN THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE

At times, it is difficult for us to feel like we are wrong, let alone hearing it from others. Although it is easier to take feedback personally, we should strive to perceive all feedback as a learning opportunity. It is up to us at the receiving end to listen, receive and react to feedback in a non-defensive way.

1. Be open
   "With a positive mindset, be prepared to receive new ideas and learn to control your emotions. Don’t forget to practice an appropriate body language that encourages the other person to talk.

2. Be reflective
   Give an indication that you understand being said and ask examples if you require the person to illustrate the feedback further. After that, assess the value of the feedback and give a careful consideration on what to do next. If you have any doubts, ask for a second opinion.

3. Be accountable
   Plan and execute the changes that you need to rectify or improve based on the feedback given. Don’t forget to thank the person who took time to give you constructive feedback. Don’t forget to conduct a follow up to discuss your improvement.

Marshall Goldsmith, a renowned American leadership coach emphasised the importance of dealing with hard truths especially for leaders of organisations to refrain from being defensive when receiving feedback from others.

Goldsmith says leaders should always have the courage to ask for input and the humility to admit that one can improve.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

When giving or seeking feedback, focus on:

- Where am I going?
- How am I going?
- Where to next?

Remember that feedback is not about you or me. It's about what you do and how to do things better. After all, the best way to prepare for receiving feedback is, in fact, asking for feedback regularly. When done with a thoughtful consideration, feedback is one of the most powerful tools for personal growth and career development.

LISTEN TO THE CONCERNS OF YOUR EMPLOYEES

By KARIN HURT
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The No. 1 frustration I hear from team leaders is that their feedback falls on deaf ears. The employee is overwhelmed with emotions such as anger or frustration. They block him out and do the best they can. Whatever I do, I can't seem to please my manager. What do I do to improve?

Sure, there are some folks out there "you just can't fix", but frequently that's not the real issue. Every time we meet, he's giving me something else to work on. No matter what I do, I can't seem to get it right, so I've learned to just block him out and do the best I can.

If you want real change, isolate one behaviour at a time.

1. The Feedback Flood Factor
   "I'm trying to do better, I really am. But it's all just too much. Every time we meet, he's giving me something else to work on. No matter what I do, I can't seem to get it right, so I've learned to just block him out and do the best I can."

If you want your employees to hear your feedback, be sure you're following your own standards. If there are reasons you make exceptions, clearly differentiate and explain the thought process, so that others can follow consistent parameters.

2. The 'Do as I Say, Not as I Do' Factor
   "My boss keeps telling me to call customers credits are too high – that I'm costing the business too much money. So I really worked on that for a while. But then, I found my customers asking to speak to my supervisor. And guess, what? She always gave them the credit! She looks like the hero, and the credit she gives them goes against my numbers and I still end up on progressive action."

If you want your employees to hear your feedback, be sure you're following your own standards. If there are reasons you make exceptions, clearly differentiate and explain the thought process, so that others can follow consistent parameters.

3. The 'I Don't Know How' Factor
   "My manager says I need to be more strategic. That sounds awesome. I'm all for that. But what does that mean? How do I do that?"

Be sure your feedback is specific and actionable. Explain what success looks like in terms of specific behaviours.

4. The 'I Disagree' Factor
   "My supervisor keeps asking me to do this, but I just don't think that it is right. It's going to have a negative impact on my customers. I've tried to explain my concerns, but she just keeps citing policy and I still end up on progressive action."

If you want your employees to hear your feedback, be sure you're following your own standards. If there are reasons you make exceptions, clearly differentiate and explain the thought process, so that others can follow consistent parameters.

Most employees want to do a good job. If your feedback is being ignored, dig deeper to get to the root cause. Your turn. Why do you think feedback is ignored?

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 siblness of a yagi, the reflection of a marathoner, and the joy of being a mum raising emerging leaders. To engage with Karin, e-mail us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

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SEEING IS BEHAVING

HAVING THE RIGHT VISION DRIVES RESULTS AND SUSTAINS THE BUSINESS

By JOSEPH TAN
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All things are created twice.

EVERY leader is supposed to have a vision of where the organisation should go but what if the going gets tough? Does the toughness of reality invalidate the vision?

On the contrary, the present challenges accentuate the seriousness of your vision and reveal the depth of your leadership commitment. It’s no great surprise that visioning is one of the key demands of executive leadership. Successful leaders are able to look at, across, and beyond the organisation, even beyond the clear and present dangers to the clear and future rewards for those they lead.

The simple fact is this—the future is worth visioning because this is where we will eventually live. The creation of tomorrow must begin today. Although Walt Disney died in 1966, five years before the opening of Disney World, it was reported that the vision of the project was so vivid in his mind that when he described the future, he speaks as if he had already been there! It was his clear depiction of the future that gave life to the project and rallied the entire design and construction team together even before the first brick was laid.

Leaders like Disney have a talent for seeing the future and making it happen. They use highly visual language that paints pictures of the future for their followers. As a result, they seem to attain bigger goals because they create a collective mindset that propels people to help make their vision a reality.

The best leaders talk often about the future and how it will be better than the present. Their forward-looking approach engages and excites their audiences and elicits commitment. There are five steps to consider whether you are able to engage your audience with your “visioning enthusiasm”.

1. ARTICULATE CONSISTENTLY

The message of the leader is not about novelty, rather it is about consistency. If a leader articulates a different message or vision every time he or she speaks, then it is difficult for employees to follow because a shifting vision inevitably leads to unstable priorities. Eventually, this results in unclear and even conflicting expectations. When you talk about the future, can your team members expect the same story or does the plot change with your mood of the day?

2. ESTABLISH LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS

The strength of your vision is dependent on the strength of your relationship with people whom you trust, with team members who share the same worldview and perspective. The saying is true—If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

Without an intentional effort to forge long-term partnerships, the pang of loneliness can often set in and dilute the leader’s moral courage to carry on the fight. Most successful organisations are usually founded by two persons with complementary talents—this is the power of two at work. Do you have this power of leadership at work personally for yourself?

3. COMMUNICATE AS A TEAM

The future can be envisioned by the organisation, even beyond the clear and present dangers to the clear and future rewards for those they lead.

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4. BE OPEN TO FEEDBACK

You can gain great insight from frequent, regular, and ongoing feedback from other people. Although it can cause a great deal of discomfort, honest input helps create the accurate picture of reality and provides opportunities for adjustments so that elements of impracticality can be weeded out.

Since no one individual can mandate a perfectly accurate description of reality, you must draw from other people’s perceptions to imbue your reality with many hues and shades. Remember, other people’s perception of reality, whether you agree with them or not, always add important nuances to your own perception.

5. BE THE VISION YOURSELF

Nothing communicates a vision of the future more effectively than someone who walks the talk and demonstrates the attitude and behaviour of what it takes to get there. Crafting the vision is the easy part, communicating the compelling case for the vision requires that a leader summon the moral courage to present the story for why the vision should be fulfilled in the first place.

It is one thing to craft a vision but quite another to cast it. With the rising aspiration of the younger and talented workforce, employees are now looking for more meaning in their contribution and their loyalty is determined by the integrity of the company’s vision and mission. In other words, employees need to put a face to the vision. Without that personal association between the message and the messenger, the vision remains as a legalistic reminder, not a motivated energiser.

THE SEEING COMES BEFORE THE BEHAVING

Emotions drive attention. Visioning taps on to the hidden potential within the human spirit to rise up above the mundane of daily grind. Adding vision brings meaning and purpose to any activity—the danger to successful leadership is not busyness, rather it is a sense of mindless and routine activities which do not add up to a motivating future. To be busy is not the same as being purposeful. Purpose needs vision and vision can only be birthed by leaders who see beyond. Beyond the issues and even beyond themselves.

BREATHING LIFE TO COMPANY VALUES:
How to translate them into day-to-day behaviours

Core values are the essence of a company’s identity. But in today’s world, these are merely words plastered on a wall. Take action on internalising the values of your organisation. Join our Values to Life webinar on

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Attendees are eligible for a free phone coaching session. SMS your email address to 019-348 6413 to register. Spaces are limited.
Steady Leadership in an Unsteady World

In short, these rapid-fire changes are putting extreme pressure on business leaders to lead in ways not here-tofore seen.

THE VUCA MANAGER

Now is the time for authentic business leaders to step forward and lead in ways that business schools don’t teach. Let’s examine the different ways of leading comprising VUCA 2.0.

Vision – Today’s business leaders need the ability to see through the chaos to have a clear vision for their organisations. They must define the True North of their organisation: its mission, values, and strategy. They should create clarity around this True North and refuse to let external events pull them off course or cause them to neglect or abandon their mission, which must be their guiding light. CEO Paul Polman has done this especially well by focusing Unilever’s True North on sustainability.

Understanding – With their vision in hand, leaders need in-depth understanding of their organisation’s capabilities and strategies to take advantage of rapidly changing circumstances by playing to their strengths while minimising their weaknesses. Listening only to information sources and opinions that reinforce their own views carries great risk of missing alternate points of view. Instead, leaders need to tap into myriad sources covering the full spectrum of viewpoints by engaging directly with their customers and employees to ensure they are attuned to changes in their markets.

Spending time in the marketplace, retail stores, factories, innovation centers, and research labs, or just wandering around offices talking to people is essential.

Courage – Now more than ever, leaders need the courage to step up to these challenges and make audacious decisions that embody risks and often go against the grain. They cannot afford to keep their heads down, using traditional management techniques while avoiding criticism and risk-taking. In fact, their greatest risk lies in not having the courage to make bold moves. This era belongs to the bold, not the meek and timid.

Adaptability – If ever there were a need for leaders to be flexible in adapting to this rapidly changing environment, this is it. Range-long plans are often obsolete by the time they are approved. Instead, flexible tactics are required for rapid adaptation to changing external circumstances, without altering strategic course. This is not a time for continuing the financial engineering so prevalent in the past decade. Rather, leaders need multiple contingency plans while preserving strong balance sheets to cope with unforeseen events.

With external volatility the prevalent characteristic these days, business leaders who stay focused on their mission and values have the courage to deploy bold strategies building on their strengths will be the winners. Those who abandon core values or lock themselves into fixed positions and fail to adapt will wind up the losers.

Bill is a Harvard Business school professor where he has taught leadership since 2004. He is the author of four best-selling books: 7 Lessons for Leading in Crisis, True North, Finding Your True North, and Authentic Leadership, as well True North Groups. To engage with him, e-mail us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

Contributing writer Jecilla Shanti says that even high performers require some motivation at the workplace. Most employers tend to think that high performers are self-driven and do not require the external push. Read “Help Me! I am a Performer at Work” to learn why employers need to pay attention to what drives their star employees.
WHAT IS STOPPING YOUR BUSINESS FROM MOVING FORWARD?

WEAK STRATEGY, PROCESS, LEADERSHIP, CULTURE

Our research has found that these key barriers prevent your organisation from scaling to the next level.

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