UNQUENCHABLE APPETITE TO LEARN

PRINCIPLE # 1: HAVE AN UNQUENCHABLE APPETITE TO LEARN

In an ever-changing environment, leaders need to have a huge appetite to learn. Futurist and philosopher Alvin Toffler once wrote: “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”

Knowledge is power. However, there are also cycles of knowledge relevance. Knowledge that is vital today may very well be irrelevant tomorrow. Hence, in a Vuca world, leaders need to have:

1. The desire to learn: This puts the leader ahead of the learning curve to attain the necessary knowledge and skill sets in order to be successful in the present and also to have the foresight to anticipate the challenges in the future.

2. The humility to unlearn: Much of the failures experienced by leaders and organisations are due to their unwillingness to innovate and explore new ways of doing things. The arrogance of insisting that “it has always worked in the past” will only bring calamity in the future.

3. The urgency to relearn: When it comes to surviving and even thriving in a Vuca environment, timeliness in taking the right action is of utmost importance. This can only happen when leaders and their teams have a sense of urgency to quickly gain new knowledge and skills to address the new realities.

In a 2014 White Paper presented by Centre for Creative Leadership, Adam Mitchinson and Robert Morris suggested that there are five facets of learning agile behaviour. They are:

- **Innovating**: Agile learners are not afraid to challenge the status quo.

- **Performing**: Agile learners remain calm in the face of difficulty.

- **Reflecting**: Agile learners take time to reflect on their experiences.

- **Risking**: Agile learners purposefully put themselves in challenging situations.

- **Defending**: Agile learners are simply open to learning and resist the temptation to become defensive in the face of adversity.

Effective leaders need to have learning agility. Simply put, learning agility is having the ability to remain open to new ways of thinking and to continuously learn new skills. This is a non-negotiable for 21st century leaders who want to thrive in a Vuca environment.

PRINCIPLE #2: HAVE A RESOLUTE MINDSET TO EMBRACE CHANGE

A Vuca environment is all about change. Very often these changes are forced upon us whether we like them or not. Effective leaders don’t resist change. When change does happen, good leaders are neither surprised by it nor reject it. Good leaders embrace change.

In fact, great leaders change before change is even needed. They are always ahead of the innovation curve. These leaders have great strategic insights to anticipate Vuca conditions. Consequently, they will build strategies, processes, culture and crisis management plans to successfully mitigate difficult times.

I recently provided leadership consultation to a multinational organisation that experienced major cultural issues that affected their team dynamics. There were many expatriates in the organisation as the Malaysian office was their regional hub. For example, one of their sub-teams of six people comprised of people from four different nationalities. Added to the complexity were other diversity factors such as gender, language barriers and generation gaps. Moreover, they had a flexible “work from home” arrangement and most of the team members only met each other face to face for one to two days a week. It was indeed a very challenging and complex work environment which led to much conflict.

TO discover Eric’s final principle to thrive in today’s uncertain world and to read the rest of this story, head to: http://bit.ly/leadershipvucaworld

Like this article? Follow us @Leaderonomics on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

**Eric Lau** is a strategic leader with a relentless belief in people. His personal mission is to inspire and influence others to rise up to their full potential and calling. Eric is a leadership consultant and trainer and regularly leads training sessions in the areas of leadership, management and personal development. To get in touch with him, e-mail editor@leaderonomics.com

MAXIMISING YOUR LEADERSHIP IMPACT IN A V.U.C.A WORLD

THRIVING IN TIMES OF VOLATILITY, UNCERTAINTY, COMPLEXITY AND AMBIGUITY

By ERIC LAU
editor@leaderonomics.com

THE world’s landscape in the 21st century is vastly different from that of previous generations. Not only are there major shifts and changes in every fragment of our society, but the pace and frequency of these changes are more intense.

When I bought my new car a couple of years ago, I was excited because it came with a built-in GPS navigator. But today, thanks to Waze, my car’s GPS navigator is practically useless because, although it gives me directions, it does not provide traffic conditions. The phones we use become obsolete after two years. One localised incident of a terrorist attack can cripple an entire nation’s tourism industry overnight. Disease outbreaks like SARS and Ebola and natural disasters like tsunamis and earthquakes have the ability to deliver massive blows to the social and economic dynamics of entire nations.

Given all the above, the acronym Vuca best describes the world we live in today. Vuca stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. This term originated from the United States Army War College to describe the conditions resulting from the Cold War. This concept has since been adopted throughout the world of leadership and management to describe the challenging conditions that businesses go through.

Today’s business leaders must have an appetite to embrace Vuca. We don’t have a choice. We either prepare ourselves to lead effectively in the midst of chaos or we simply fall prey and become victims.

There is still room to grow.

Are you a CEO wanting to grow your SME business? With our unique FOUR-CONSTRAINTS MODEL we can help you identify the ONE key gap in the organisation that can catalyze your growth, and strengthen your brand while we’re at it.

Contact our SME growth specialist Michael at +60 18-355 7183 or michael.oghene@leaderonomics.com to get a free consultative session

www.leaderonomics.com | Saturday 5 August 2017