CREATING ‘WOW’ CUSTOMER SERVICE

2 THE BANK THAT GROWS WITH ITS COMPANIES

4 ALWAYS THINK: ‘WHAT’S IN IT FOR THE CUSTOMER?’

6 PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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FROM MALAYSIA TO THE WORLD

THE LEADERONOMICS SHOW MEETS AMBANK GROUP CEO DATUK SULAIMAN MOHD TAHIR TO LEARN ABOUT HIS VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF MALAYSIAN BUSINESS

By SANDY CLARKE
editor@leaderonomics.com

Banking can often seem like a banal industry of lending and repayment but, for Datuk Sulaiman Mohd Tahir, the banking world is one of action, building relationships and helping Malaysia’s businesses grow.

In November 2015, Datuk Sulaiman was appointed group chief executive officer (CCEO) of AmBank Group. With a distinguished career in banking spanning over 30 years, a key part of his role is to lead the bank in helping small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia to flourish.

He began his professional career as an auditor, after graduating with an accounting degree from Australia’s Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. But he soon set his sights on banking, revealing that he wanted to see “more action” in his career and to make a difference in the banking world.

In his appearance on The Leaderonomics Show, he tells host Roshan Thiran that there is more to his industry than most people realise.

“Banking is not just about lending money or getting paid, it’s about the growth of business and how you’re seeing it become sustainable in a way that’s helping your customers,” he says. “That’s what makes it really worthwhile.”

Early in his career, Datuk Sulaiman – the man currently at the helm of 175 AmBank branches and 55 business centres – placed a premium on having clarity and being able to measure the accomplishments that he and his team had achieved.

He believes that having this kind of structure in place enables a strong focus on reaching more goals and objectives. “In my dealings and interactions with people and my employers, it’s about giving clarity of what’s expected of them, especially when you have a team – everybody must know. It’s like a football team – everybody needs to know his or her role and how to contribute to the team as a whole.

“Sometimes, people might think that they should just try to please their boss, but to please their boss might not be to please the firm. It’s important that everyone in the organisation knows what he or she adds to the firm as a whole.”

Datuk Sulaiman ensures that everyone at AmBank Group has a collective input into the bank’s direction and future goals, and how it plans to get there. Like any effective leader, he is acutely aware that when people can see the purpose behind what their organisation is doing and where they fit in, they are more likely to take ownership in helping to realise that vision.

Part of bringing a vision to life comes from his commitment to investing in people’s growth and development. “It’s not just about building the bank today; it’s about what kind of leadership we need in the bank for tomorrow,” he remarks.

Since his arrival, AmBank Group has been focusing on specific areas of growth and products and services in order to maintain its impressive edge in Malaysia’s increasingly competitive banking industry. “In two years, I’m happy to say that the areas in which we want to grow, we are growing. The SME space is very important to us. Around 98% of businesses in Malaysia are SMEs. In this space last year, we grew 17.4%. In the first quarter of the 2017/2018 financial year, we grew 4.7%, which is close to 20% over the year – that’s phenomenal growth.”

Being able to grow in the SME space is all about going the extra mile and reaching out to businesses. If SMEs want to embrace the digital market, for example, they need to work alongside people they can trust to help them to do that – one area in which AmBank’s people look to develop a strong relationship tailored to their customers’ requirements.

For Datuk Sulaiman, banking should be more than a source of funding for its business customers, and AmBank places a strong emphasis on understanding each customer’s needs, knowing where the customer wants to go, and helping the customer to get there.

To that end, AmBank leaders have been proactive in offering free seminars to SMEs and CEOs to help them understand and develop their business potential.

Datuk Sulaiman has helped to establish the AmBank BizClub, where a series of free events will span the country. The AmBank BizCONFERENCE began in Penang on September 19 before next being held in Johor Bahru on October 5, Kota Kinabalu on October 10, Kuching on October 12 and finishing in Kuala Lumpur on November 1.

Bringing together elite leaders from across the country to share their stories of success and failure, the events are intended to give SME leaders the advice and cautionary tales they need to be aware of in their growth stage.

“Building relationships with customers, we need to help them know what’s important to them – how can we make them grow? This education, training, networking, exposure and learning becomes very important because it becomes part of the journey of developing that relationship.”

While around 98% of businesses in Malaysia are SMEs, 70% of businesses fail to make it past the three-year mark.

The vision for Datuk Sulaiman is to work alongside SME leaders to ensure that Malaysia’s local businesses utilise the exceptional talent and vast potential that exists and thrive as a result – a vision that he and his team at AmBank are determined to realise very soon.

Places are limited for each AmBank BizCONFERENCE, so register now at ambankbizclub.com and take the first step towards growing your business.

Register now! ambankbizclub.com
STOP WAITING. JUST START!

IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE, NOW'S THE TIME TO DO IT

By ROSHAN THIRAN
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A 6 I visit businesses, schools and universities all over the world, I am always bowled over by the enthusiasm of people who have a big desire to develop themselves and make a difference in the world.

Each time I engage with students, professionals, senior managers and chief executive officers (CEOs), the questions I’m asked could fill a book — and I relish the challenge of having my mind stretched.

Hearing that, every now and then, I get into a conversation with someone who is somewhat less enthusiastic about what they are trying to achieve, and it’s for this kind of person that this article is written. These are the people who will tell me things like: “What if I don’t want to be a leader?” “Why is everyone telling me I need to be successful — can’t I just be happy with where I am?” and “I don’t want to change the world, I’m quite happy working in my nine-to-five job and leaving my work at the office.”

For every one of these interactions, I have very short responses, which are respectively:

“You don’t have to be a leader — you can be whatever you want to be” — how exactly do I start?

Let me be clear — if you are genuinely happy with where you are, then you should absolutely continue doing your thing. There’s a reason it’s called “your” life.

You should absolutely continue doing your thing, and “Who’s saying anything to me, and I listen politely and realise they’re trying to convince me of anything — they’re trying to convince themselves that the lives they’re now leading is exactly what they wanted.”

Let me be clear — if you are genuinely happy with where you are, then you should absolutely continue doing your thing. There’s a reason it’s called “your” life.

Bob Dylan once said that success is ongoing. Always.

Oprah Winfrey is not successful. Their success is ongoing. Bill Gates is not successful. Oprah Winfrey is not successful. Their success is ongoing. Always.

Warren Buffett has a net worth of over $857.5 billion and he’s still working hard, pushing new boundaries, continuing to learn, and making a difference. At 86 years old!

A baffled look comes over their faces. As a result, they look like you don’t want to do something — and they are desperate to make some kind of contribution beyond what they’ve already done.

If you feel that you don’t need more, don’t shoot yourself in the foot. If you feel like you don’t want to develop yourself and contribute more to the world, nobody can make you do otherwise.

START SOMETHING

Here’s the interesting thing — in almost all of these conversations I have, it quickly becomes clear that the person does want more, they just shoot themselves in the foot, and they are desperate to make some kind of contribution beyond what they’ve already done.

As it turns out, a lot of these people don’t know where to start. As a result, they’re pulling this defensive story in their minds that they use to convince themselves that they’re quite happy with where they are.

As the conversation goes back and forth, clipping away at the story, the question eventually arises: “OK, so let’s say I could develop myself and do more — how exactly do I start?”

They answer their own question here. But I return it anyway, just in case.

“You start.”

A baffled look comes over their faces and I try to explain to them what I mean by this fundamental piece of advice.

When I was younger, I was terrible at sales — and I mean terrible. But I knew it was a skill that I needed, and so how did I become better at sales? Did I read books? Attend seminars? Speak to people who have mastered the art of selling? Sure. But that only gets you so far.

So I said to myself, “You have to start.”

And so I began selling door-to-door and I honed my skills over time. All the things I had learnt before only really sank in after I began putting myself in the position of selling. The reason I became better at selling was because I started to sell.

(On a side note, I used to go door-to-door selling knives at the age of 18 while I was in college in the US. Yes, kitchen cutlery and knives. And yes, I hated doing it. But I only quit after I was named the best salesperson for the month just to prove to myself that I could do it.)

YOU DECIDE

The penny starts to drop at this point as the realisation dawns on the person that life isn’t going to wait for them. There is no right moment. No-one can do your growing for you.

You’re in charge and you have two choices — you can either get out there and grab life by the throat or you can sit back and let life’s current sweep you along wherever it pleases. Either way, you make the decision.

Again, if you’re happy with your life, that’s great. Maybe someone else will try to convince you to be this or that, but I’ll applaud the fact that you are where you want to be and leave it there.

When people ask me: “How do you convince people to buy your product if they’re resistant?” I say: “You don’t. If someone has no need for what you have to offer, walk on and find the next person who does. Don’t waste your time or any other’s.”

But, if deep down, you have that idea for a business nagging away at you, if you want to learn those new skills, if you want to go back to school and get that degree, if you want to make a difference beyond what you’re making now, do yourself a favour and see the story that you’re telling yourself for what it is — a bunch of limiting beliefs that are feeding you lies to say that you’re not good enough to do anything but settle and be grateful.

And once you’ve done that? Start. If you’re an introvert who’s terrified of networking but wants to connect with others? Start.

Attend as many events, gatherings and parties as you can and talk to people. Is it tough? Sure! So was selling items door-to-door, but you learn so much and grow so much in confidence when you just decide to put yourself beyond your comfort zone.

Perhaps you have an idea for a business but are unsure where to begin?

Start.

Read three books by experts in your area of interest; connect with people on social media who are relevant to your business; engage with them and add value to that relationship; ask questions; take one or two industry leaders out for lunch and ask for their insights.

Build up from the bottom and don’t give up until you reach where your personal ‘top’ is.

And remember that success is never an end-point. Warren Buffett is not successful. Bill Gates is not successful. Oprah Winfrey is not successful. Their success is ongoing. Always.

Warren Buffett has a net worth of over $857.5 billion and he’s still working hard, pushing new boundaries, continuing to learn, and making a difference. At 86 years old!

IN A NUTSHELL

Whatever you have nagging away at you, whatever makes you come alive — pursue it with all you’ve got. The fears we encounter tell us the biggest lies we’ll ever hear. Go beyond the limiting beliefs and just “Start”.

You’ll stumble, fall and learn along the way, but that’s where we meet the most valuable lessons in our journeys towards achieving the goals we set for ourselves.

Read all the books you can, talk to all the experts, attend all the conferences — these are undoubtedly valuable resources.

But keep in mind that the most valuable learning of all comes by doing. That’s something that will never change.

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Roshan Thiran is the CEO of Leaderonomics — a social enterprise working to transform lives through leadership development and nurturing potential. He never liked the idea of selling but is convinced that everyone deep-down is in the business of selling. Connect with Roshan on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn for more insights into business, personal development, and leadership.
PUT YOUR CUSTOMER FIRST

AFTER ALL, THEY'RE ALWAYS RIGHT

By TOMMY WEIR
editor@leaderonomics.com

Unfortunately, almost without exception, every decision and every choice is preceded by one all-important question: what’s in it for me? When it comes to customer service, that’s a real shame.

In all our self-serving strategising, we are losing sight of another equally important question: what’s in it for the customer? And judging by my recent experience, the answer to that is rapidly becoming a big, fat nothing.

Don’t get me wrong, “customer first” remains a mantra of many a company. But it needs to be more than a mantra, it needs to be your everyday practice.

When I was in New York recently, I decided to stop by my favourite clothing store on Madison Avenue. As I browsed the current collection, a light-blue gingham checked shirt caught my eye.

Since they didn’t have my size in stock, the sales associate offered to have one delivered directly to my hotel room from another store. “Perfect!” I thought to myself. The events that unfolded, however, were anything but.

Despite assurances, my shirt did not arrive the next day as promised. In fact, it had been sold to another customer, after it was sold to me! The mistakes kept on coming – not only had the suit never been delivered, it had been sold to another customer, after it was sold to me!

As the purchase was taking place, I began chatting with the sales associate who told me the new president would be visiting the store that afternoon. At that point, I expressed my interest in meeting him and recounted my recent let-downs.

“Was that in this store?” asked the sales associate. “No,” I replied, stunned by his lack of concern for the customer. “Good, I feel better,” he responded. “What? Did I just hear this correctly?” I thought to myself.

“How did he manage to twist my problem to make it about him? Shouldn’t he be thinking customer-first?”

It got worse. “Well at least you weren’t so upset that you didn’t come back,” he continued. At that point, my eyes almost popped out of my head. I did not want to believe what I was hearing. But I do believe it. The reality is, we live in an era when customers are treated like they don’t really matter.

This indictment isn’t reserved for this particular store’s diminishing customer service. It’s for pretty much every company out there – probably even yours.

Across the business spectrum, it’s time for “customer first” to transform from an empty motto to a solid method. Simply putting, we need to stop asking “what’s in it for me?” and start asking “what’s in it for the customer?”

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LEADING THE CHARGE
HOW MALAYSIA’S HEALTHCARE TRAVEL INDUSTRY BECAME THE WORLD’S BEST

By MATT NAYLOR
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WHEN considering the question of which country globally has the best healthcare system, a few commonly recur. Germany, the UK, the United States, Dubai, South Korea, Singapore, Australia, even Thailand and Japan, are most people’s go-to responses.

Now celebrating a third year running as the very best in the world, however, is Malaysia. Proudly named by the International Medical Travel Journal (IMTJ) as the “Medical Travel Destination of the Year” for three consecutive years since 2015, Malaysia has opened the eyes of patients all over the world as the recognised place for healthcare.

Malaysia has also received recognition as the country with the Best Healthcare in the World from 2015 to 2017 by International Living’s Annual Global Retirement Index, a further testament to Malaysia’s promise of quality care.

BEST IN THE WORLD
For the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC) chief executive officer (CEO) Sherene Azli (pic), the IMTJ result was quite the surprise the first time our nation was awarded the honour.

“When I joined at the start of 2015, I really didn’t know where we were on the global stage, so my first priority was to work on building that awareness,” she says.

“I didn’t have any expectations and we were always told that other countries in the region were destinations of choice. I remember when they announced us as the winners, I was holding my phone at the time at the table and I actually dropped it in shock. It all seemed to happen in slow motion.”

The esteemed panel of judges looked at criteria such as quality, accessibility and affordability when selecting their winner.

With prices up to 80% lower than those being offered in the United States, without compromising on quality of service, relatively low waiting times and its connectivity to all major transport hubs are some of the traits that earmarked Malaysia to make itself known internationally.

Perception of Malaysia as a destination of choice changed instantly as those in attendance learnt of Malaysia’s newfound dominance in the category.

“The announcement was made during a two-day IMTJ conference in London,” recalls Sherene.

“The first day, almost all of the speakers were talking about Thailand, Singapore, Dubai, Jordan, South Korea, and Europe. The awards were held on the first night.

“The second day, all anybody was talking about was Malaysia. The perception about us literally changed overnight!” IMTJ has become the industry standard for excellence on the subject, with the award of “world’s best” incredibly prestigious and something that has been a major boon for Malaysia’s medical travel industry.

Malaysia has now won the award the following two years as well and continues to set the bar so high now its healthcare system is so celebrated.

“We have set the bar so high now and it is going to be difficult for us to return to No.1 than to first get there, so we are really focused now on building awareness and further developing our systems,” says Sherene.

“For an organisation of that credibility and reputation, to go to all this effort and we have really helped to shine a light on the work we are doing.”

The council was formed as recently as 2011 targeting the vision of “Malaysia as the leading global healthcare destination”. Few could have predicted that they would have been honoured as such in just a handful of years.

PUTTING PATIENTS FIRST
The ambitious CEO has huge plans for the future of MHTC as she continues to focus on delivering the best possible service to those patients arriving from overseas. It is all part of MHTC’s renowned end-to-end service initiative, in which patients are given comfort and convenience even before they arrive on Malaysian soil.

As Sherene describes it: “We have started welcoming patients from the aerobridge at KLIA and Penang International Airport.

“We also have a concierge and lounge for this need.

“Prior to their travel, they can get in touch with our call centre, which will accommodate their needs accordingly.

“We welcome them at the bridge, escort them through passport and immigration and put them in our lounge so that they can wait comfortably for their transport to take them to the hospitals or hotels. This ensures that the process is seamless.

“When they return, of course, they still have access to these facilities so the end-to-end process becomes as convenient as possible. Patients who are very unwell need to be taken care of from the moment they arrive and so that is why we facilitate these things.

“We help establish a connection between our services here and their doctors back home so that they can guarantee the best post-treatment as well once they return home.”

Taking a “customer service” approach to patient care, MHTC has put the needs of the patient ahead of all else.

Sherene points to the fact that they are an agency under the Ministry of Health, as proof of their focus on healthcare.

“This way, we are able to prioritise medical care and keep the fees regulated,” she adds.

As with any “customer” service provider, however, MHTC is aware of the need to meet the needs of a diverse range of patients. The emphasis on cultural sensitivities and understanding the needs of each individual patient are the foundations upon which the ambitious future of MHTC is being built.

“We have to be culturally aware to the needs of people coming from other countries,” comments Sherene.

“There is no point in us sending somebody from the Middle East to a hospital that does not have halal food options or an Arabic translator.”

This is part of the learning process for her and the MHTC team as they learn more new particulars about each of the nationalities who visit Malaysian shores seeking medical assistance.

She adds: “We need to make sure that our hospitals are sensitive to the needs of patients and cater to them accordingly. You can’t treat any and all patients the same way.”

“It can be the smallest thing, but each country has its own culture and we need to have our finger on the pulse of these issues, something we are still learning along the way and adapting to.”

MALAYSIA AS GLOBAL AMBASSADORS
Constantly innovating and striving for excellence, MHTC has become a cornerstone of those government agencies that are putting Malaysia on the global map. By being the intermediary between foreign patients and their carefully selected panel of award-winning hospitals, MHTC has created a level of trust in those coming to Malaysia for medical reasons.

A strict vetting process ensures that only the best hospitals in the country qualify to be members, with some 74 in total, a select few of which are given “elite member” status. These care facilities must have international accreditation and hold an in-house Centre of Excellence so that MHTC can navigate

patients towards hospitals specialising in the appropriate discipline.

As word continues to travel, however, MHTC’s focus is on raising awareness locally and encouraging Malaysians themselves to spread the word.

“We need to make our people aware of how good our medical care is here and get them to be the ambassadors globally when they go abroad,” says Sherene.

“Sometimes people take our healthcare system for granted and do not realise what we have locally before venturing for treatment elsewhere.”

“In my previous role, I travelled a lot and met with some very influential people. Unaware of the excellent state of our medical travel history, however, I never shared this with anybody, which I now view as a lost opportunity.”

As the country continues to expand its reach, build on its impressive lineup of offerings and battles to keep Malaysia as the world’s No.1 healthcare travel destination, it will take a collaborative national effort.

MHTC’s bold vision, along with continued support from the Government, the Health Ministry and the hard work of our doctors and nurses providing world-class medical care, the Malaysian medical and travel industries will continue to benefit greatly in the long run.

MHTC will be organising a Medical Travel Market Intelligence Conference on Sept 26-27 at The Vertical, Bangsar South.

The event, Insight2017, will feature world-renowned speakers and thought leaders, including MHTC CEO Sherene Azli discussing the state of the industry under the theme Malaysia Healthcare – Going Beyond.

For more information and to register your place at this not-to-be-missed conference, visit www.mhtc.org.my/insight2017

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

To learn more about the Malaysian Healthcare Travel Council, the list of member hospitals under their remit and the services they offer, visit mhtc.org.my

Matt is a media strategist leader with Leaderonomics. He believes that, in this digital age, it is more important than ever for companies to develop an effective employer branding platform. He is an expert who has lived in Malaysia for many years now, and loves spicy food.
CUSTOMER SERVICE IN INDUSTRY 4.0

By CAROLINE ONG
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Doesn’t the rise of Industry 4.0 represent the demise of customer service as we know it? Not quite. Customer service, in a way, is there to stay. The nature of customer service, however, will definitely change as we move into the digital era. Let’s see how.

What is Industry 4.0?

Industry 4.0 is a modular approach to manufacturing and production that emphasizes digitalization, automation, and networked systems. It aims to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and improve customer experience. This is achieved through the integration of various technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning.

The Importance of Customer Service

In the context of Industry 4.0, customer service plays a crucial role in maintaining customer loyalty and satisfaction. With the rise of e-commerce and online shopping, customers have become more demanding and expect a high level of service.

Customer service in the digital era

In the digital era, customer service has evolved to include online platforms, social media, and mobile apps. Companies are now using these channels to engage with customers, respond to queries, and resolve issues quickly.

The Future of Customer Service

The future of customer service in Industry 4.0 will be driven by technology. Companies will use AI and machine learning to automate routine tasks, freeing up human employees to focus on more complex issues.

Conclusion

In conclusion, customer service is not going away. It will simply transform to meet the needs of the digital era. Companies that can adapt and embrace these changes will be well positioned to succeed.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNITION IN LEADERSHIP

By ANG HUI MING
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HEN was the last time you received genuine praise from your leader that made you feel like you really matter?

Thinking about your role, is it one in which you feel significant and recognised for the value you contribute?

For many people, the answer to each of these questions will be less than affirmative. This "recognition deficit" not only has an impact on how people perform, but it also affects the overall performance of the organisation and the company's bottom line.

In fact, there are many research studies that support the notion that acknowledging and rewarding employee performance is good business – improving many things from employee satisfaction to financial performance. In a 2014 survey commissioned by former Yum! Brand chief executive officer and author David Novak, a staggering 82% of American employees feel they are not recognised by their leaders for the contributions that they make. This lack of recognition, explains Novak, "takes a terrible toll on morale, productivity, and, ultimately, profitability."

Another key finding of the survey found that 40% of Americans say they would be more energised in their roles if they were to receive more recognition for their work. Novak also acknowledged that recognising others and showing appreciation cost very little (if anything) and are hardly time-consuming.

Leaders who make a point of showing recognition and offering sincere appreciation to their team stand to gain a significant return on their small investment – a team that is renewed in their commitment to their leader and organisation, and dedicated to doing all they can to help their company thrive and succeed. In essence, global research conducted by the Cicero Group shows that well-recognised employees have more drive, better work relationships, improved personal standing and stronger connections to their organisation.

PERSONAL ENCOUNTER

To show how this works, I'll share a personal encounter that involved a leader who knew the importance of recognising others and their contributions.

I was then the chief financial officer of GE, Keith Sherin was visiting Asia and I was given the opportunity to present to him the status of our finance leaders in the region and the various initiatives that were run. It was one of the most nerve-wracking moments of my career.

I was delighted as Sherin gave me his undivided attention as we talked about the key points that were raised. He recognised the efforts we put in and offered a sincere "job well done!"

That day, I felt a sense of significance, and I pledged my loyalty to GE again, feeling re-energised and believing that every little things I did mattered and added value to the people, the team and the organisation.

DISSECTING THE RECOGNITION APPROACH

There were five key factors in Sherin's leadership approach that made recognising others a priority for him. Let's take a look at them:

1. Giving undivided attention

Sherin didn't once check his emails or phone during our conversation. And yet, leaders have to constantly stay on top of their communication. Offering undivided attention is something I personally struggle with as the emails, WhatsApp messages and meeting schedules all run into one another. However, when I do give people my undivided attention, I can see that it achieves great results in terms of their motivation and focus, as well as the clarity and communication that exists both ways.

2. Acknowledging effort

Though our plans probably had loopholes and may not have been as "world class" as GE headquarters (HQ), Sherin acknowledged our efforts to localise our plans and said we were on to something that we probably could share and teach HQ.

It can be worth more than gold when your efforts are recognised and held in such high regard.

3. Offering feedback and encouragement

As we talked about our plans, Sherin was engaged in the dialogue and expressed his honest opinions about how we were moving forward. He also shared his considerable knowledge to help us in our endeavours.

This level of involvement made it clear that he respected our team and genuine wanted to help us improve in whatever areas we could.

4. Helping to connect the dots

Whether you're working as a local team or as part of a global organisation, it can be difficult to know how your contributions affect the bigger picture. Sherin took the time to tell us exactly how our efforts helped the company, and made me and my team realise that our roles made a difference to the organisation.

5. Providing moral support

At the end of our discussion, Sherin offered his moral support and endorsement on some plans and linked me to relevant leaders in HQ who could help us out.

Knowing that he didn't dedicate his time for some of the efforts in the region, he was kind enough to make sure we had sufficient support in place from elsewhere in the company.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As leaders, we should regularly be asking ourselves whether we give enough time to sufficiently recognise the efforts of our team. Of course, our time is precious and our schedules are always packed. However, we achieve what we can in no small part due to the contributions of those around us.

While some might say they can't afford the time to show their appreciation, I believe leaders can't afford to neglect making an effort to build trust, engagement and loyalty – and that begins with people feeling that they are truly valued and respected.

Former American secretary of defence, Robert McNamara, sums it best: "Brains, like hearts, go where they are appreciated."

My question to you then is – how will you recognise someone today?
THE LEADERSHIP LESSONS I LEARNT AFTER ADOPTING A PUPPY

By GEETHA BAI

HEN my partner and I decided to adopt a puppy named Bowser off the streets, I was apprehensive and felt a little underprepared. When we first took him home, he was a terriﬁed, meek little puppy. Walking him on leash was a highly stressful endeavour, I pulled hard, chewed and gnawed on it, refusing to come when called or even leave the park. He chewed and gnawed on it, refusing to come when called or even leave the park. This was long before I met Marshall, email editor@leaderonomics.com. He is a true example of the great people that are working with Marshall, email editor@leaderonomics.com.

Patience is a Virtue

By MARSHALL GOLDSMITH

Patience is a Virtue

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every leader has to start somewhere. This is just the fact of the matter. And, another fact? Not everybody, even some of the greatest leaders of our time, have started off with flying colours.

Take my good friend Alan Mulally, former chief executive of (CEO) of Ford Motor Company.

Mulally took over during turbulent times at Ford and is often hailed as the mastermind behind its epic turnaround.

This incredible story is told in the Wall Street Journal bestseller, American Icon: Alan Mulally and the Fight to Save Ford Motor Company. I highly recommend it if you want to learn about great leadership and who you are.

Mulally’s story at Ford is a success story, but it wasn’t always that way for him on his leadership journey.

A Miststep in Leadership

He started out as an engineer at Boeing. After being promoted to a position of management, Mulally’s ﬁrst employee quit.

A bit disgruntled, the employee shared with Mulally honestly that he felt Mulally’s job was to help him to do his job, not to keep redoing all of his work and show him all of his mistakes.

Mulally took this feedback to heart and realised he was acting out habit No. 2 (mediocre work) and No. 6 (telling too much value) and habit No. 6 (telling the world how smart we are) from my book What Got You Here Won’t Get You There.

This was long before I met Mulally or before the book was published, so I can claim no credit (habit No. 11: Claiming credit that we don’t deserve).

Work Together

Wanting to learn from this experience, he delved into learning about management and leadership and started to understand how to be a better leader.

And he learnt this valuable lesson — that leadership isn’t just about telling people how to do their jobs well or doing their jobs for them; leadership is about helping people to do their jobs well.

It’s about working together.

Over the years at Boeing, Mulally kept asking for more responsibilities – and he kept getting them, including being appointed as president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airlines.

Cut to 2006 and he was asked to lead Ford out of a deep hole, which he did, employing his unique method of facilitative leadership which he calls, very simply, “working together.”

By the end of his time at Ford as president and CEO, the company’s stock price was up, the board and the employees were happy, and Mulally was named No. 3 on Fortune’s “World’s Greatest Leaders” list in 2013.

He is a true example of the phrase, “every leader has to start somewhere.” He didn’t start out as a great leader; he became one.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

On a more personal note, over the many years I have known him, I have never seen him get down on himself, his people, or his company. He has an enthusiasm that radiates to the people around him.

He has an almost childlike joy in what he does. He once told me “Every day I remind myself that leadership is not about me. It is about the great people that are working with me.”

That’s how he leads, and it is this example he sets day in and day out that says more about great leadership Mulally’s approaches to it than his words can ever convey.

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every successful leader, there is a mentor-mentee relationship that
defined by common goal that they share, an ardent desire to learn from one another and
relationships define who we are and what we become, and being surrounded by people
relationships develops as a result of Mentoring Programme. Leaders develop wisdom by
leadership styles could also be one way.

They identify a few high potentials and greatly invest their time and effort
towards a successful career.

Being a coach herself, Juanita is very

A chief executive officer (CEO) boosts

The "leader-mentee" approach through mentoring gives leaders
performing at their best internally and creating a pipeline

One of the ways to address this is for

The "leader-mentee" approach through mentoring gives leaders

Leaders, whether they are mentors or mentees, engage with

The 70:20:10 model approach by
towards their role but also distributing

The impact they have made on my life is profound, from instilling the right values

Every effective leader is inevitably a mentor or a coach who strives to raise

Leaders have individuals who invested in my

Relationships define who we are and

For example, three of the seven principles

One of the ways to address this is for

Among the many people who have had

Being a coach herself, Juanita is very

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Steal a Page from Customer Service

“Whatever you do, do it well. Do it so well that when people see you do it, they will want to come back and see you do it again, and they will want to bring others and show them how well you do what you do.” — Walt Disney

By Lisa Quast
editor@leaderonomics.com

CUSTOMER experience management isn’t a new concept, but it’s one that gained increasing popularity during the Great Recession, when companies realised how much they needed loyal customers.

To keep existing customers and gain new ones, companies began analysing their interactions with customers. What many organisations found was surprising.

“In the early days of customer experience as a field, we realised that many companies weren’t very intentional in how they approached customer experience,” recalled Tabitha Dunn, now vice-president of customer experience at Concur, a business travel and expense management software company.

“The main focus was on creating products and services that customers would purchase and very little time was spent on the quality of those customer interactions.”

Since those early days, customer experience management has become an established profession with best practices for processes, tools and techniques to assess and optimise customer experiences across multiple channels such as websites, call centres, telesales centres, field sales organisations, brick-and-mortar stores and mobile commerce.

Those same techniques that companies use to optimise the customer experience can also be used by — you! That’s right.

According to Dunn: “Anyone can use these techniques to improve their interactions and professional relationships with others.”

The key? Putting your customers at the center of your universe. Here’s how:

Determine your stakeholder groups.

The first step is asking yourself: “Who are my customers?” For example, if you work in a sales role, your main stakeholder group is probably external customers, but you might also have internal stakeholder groups such as marketing, operations and finance teams.

Dunn suggests drawing a circle in the middle of a sheet of paper — that’s you.

“Now, draw other circles around yours that represent all the different groups or departments with whom you interact,” she says. “These become your stakeholder groups.”

Get to know your stakeholders.

The next step is getting to know each group and considering who is supportive and who isn’t. “I like to type the names of each person in the various stakeholder groups into a simple Excel document,” Dunn said.

“Then, based on stakeholder interviews, I highlight each person as an advocate, neutral or negative/detractor based on their opinion of working with me. That way, I have a baseline of where I should start when it comes to improving their experiences and our working relationship.”

Obtain feedback.

One of the best ways to move the needle on detractors or neutral stakeholder relationships is to ask them for their feedback. Examples of questions you could ask are:

- What would you like to see improved in how we work together?
- What do you feel works well in our working relationship and why?
- What would you like to change, if you could?
- What could I do more of (or less of) to help you be more successful in your job?

Build and implement a game plan for each stakeholder group.

Once you’ve obtained feedback from your stakeholder groups, build a game plan by listing the actions you can take with each group (or individually) to improve their interactions with you.

By applying the techniques of customer experience management to yourself and your stakeholder groups, you can improve the relationships you have with colleagues, decrease workplace stress and improve productivity (yours and theirs). And what’s not to like about that win-win situation?

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Customers. Some are merely unpleasant (part of the job?) and some seem to go the extra mile to make your life miserable. We’ve heard the statement that the customer is always right. But is it always true? When does delivering what the customer wants tip over into being bullied by them?

Read on to see how some employers handle this.

Go to bit.ly/customerrightorwrong

Handling customers may be a challenging task at times. But it isn’t the end of the world. Watch Leaderonomics’ Top 10 ways you can best handle a challenging situation with a customer. Head to bit.ly/handlingcustomers

For other great leadership insights and inspiring stories, visit www.leaderonomics.com. If you missed any of our past issues, go to www.leaderonomics.com/publications and download for free!
LISTENING like a leader enables you to make the world about others. An outward mindset precedes leadership. Get started:

Take out a pen and paper. Write your responses to the questions that follow.

Writing is thinking.

Record the reason you want to improve your listening skills. Purpose energises growth. What advantages for yourself and others do you see in becoming a better listener?

Write until you record all your ideas. Wait. Write some more.

Write about the best listeners from your past. What made them good listeners? Think beyond their actions to their attitude about themselves and you. Consider their motivations.

Make a list of the best listeners on your team. Explain why they made the list. Identify three qualities, motivations, or behaviours they regularly exhibit. Jot down one thing you might learn from the best listeners on your current team.

TAKE ACTION:

Invite your team to work on their listening skills with you. Shared projects strengthen respect, elevate enjoyment, enhance follow-through, and fuel progress.

Schedule listening walk-abouts once a day. Take that time to walk around your office listening to people to help you learn and connect.

During the process, leave a bit of yourself with everyone you engage.

Debrief with your team. What are we learning?

WHY LISTEN:

#1. Listening saves time. Stop answering questions that aren’t being asked and solving problems that don’t exist.
#2. Talent goes to sleep when leaders give all the answers.
#3. Answer-givers end up needing to have all the answers, killing initiative.
#4. Listening strengthens connections among people.
#5. Listening is the path to learning. Growth happens in community.

Take time to listen to your people, understand their needs, recognise the value of their suggestions and your whole team stands to benefit.