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LESSONS FROM THE EAST

WHAT THE AMBANK BIZCONFERENCE IN SABAH AND SARAWAK TAUGHT US

By MATT NAYLOR
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A

5 FashionValet co-founders Vivy Yusof and Fadzarudin Shah took to the stage, where there was a keen sense of anticipa-
tion in the air. Hundreds of young, eager entrepreneurs and small business owners had filed into the room at Hilton Kota Kinabalu to learn the “hows and whys” from two of Malaysia’s most influential retail minds.

Speaking at the free AmBank BizCONFERENCE Kota Kinabalu, the mar-
ned couple sat with Leaderonomics chief executive officer (CEO) Roshan Thirani to discuss their lessons learnt from building FashionValet from humble beginnings to a major player in the region.

Here are some of their lessons:

BUILT ON PURPOSE

What started as a small online retail business selling clothes in 2010 quickly grew as Malaysian brands were given the spotlight to reach customers easily.

With the next steps in their development, FashionValet decided to start carrying more and more brands on their portal, including high-cost international names. It was a move that nearly cost them a lot of their initial fanbase.

“We were too focused on profits at that time and had forgotten our purpose,” said Fadzarudin.

“Everything should be about your mission and ours was supposed to be helping local brands to grow and become sustainable.

“What we noticed was that these brands were encountering similar internal and external problems that we were, so we were able to have that knowledge sharing and support each other,”

Today, the company has grown to carrying hundreds of both local and international brands and has customers all over the world. From those early days seven years ago until today, FashionValet has put their customers first and allowed them to be the driving force behind change.

“When I look at our first website now, I actually feel sorry for us. It was terrible,” joked Vivy.

“I am lucky though that I have always had direct access to my customers online and they have, at times, been very frank with me and told me what’s wrong or what needs to be improved.

“We have listened to them, taken their feedback on-board and made the necessary changes.

“I think that it is one of the most important things to know for growth is that you allow all of your stakeholders to feel that they are involved in the process, something which builds engagement along the way.

“The best advice I can give is to learn from the people that have differing opin-
ions to yours. If you only ever get advice from your friends and family, of course they’re always going to tell you that you’re the best person in the world and to keep doing what you’re doing.

“But ask a stranger, someone with an outsider’s point of view, for their honest feedback. Then you will truly know what needs to change.”

The AmBank BizCONFERENCE series has been built on the bank’s keen desire to provide a knowledge sharing platform for successful business owners to tell their stories of success and failure.

Vivy Yusof and Fadzarudin Shah in an interview with Roshan Thirani at the AmBank BizCONFERENCE in Sabah.

“The Kota Kinabalu leg of the nationwide tour was no different, with entrepreneurs from a wide range of industries coming together to sit under Vivy and Fadza’s learning tree. It was not to be AmBank’s only stop while in East Malaysia, however...

LESSONS FROM KUCHING

The series’ next stop on their path around Malaysian Borneo took the series of conferences to Kuching. Sarawak Chairman of Cube Innovation Datuk Patrick Lie and SHINE Pharmacy founder Charles Liew led a lineup which also included AmBank’s managing director of Business Banking Chris Yap, Roshan and Leaderonomics Good Monday CEO Joseph Tan.

Datuk Patrick’s Cube has been at the core of growing businesses in the resource-rich state with many a fledging start-up owner getting their companies off the ground within the shared office space.

He said: “We like to think that we have the knowledge and experience that we can share with these young start-ups to get them off the ground. We provide them with more than just an office space, it is a place where companies come to grow.”

Who is so much potential here in Sarawak to build a solid base and a lot of companies’ eyes are being opened to this fact.”

This ‘potential’ is a sentiment very much shared by Charles, who entered the crowded pharmaceutical marketplace wanting to give the state a local brand they could be proud of.

“Who says that Malaysia’s next multi-
national cannot originate from a smaller and quieter place like Sarawak?” he said.

“I came back home after having spent many years abroad and knew that it was here in Kuching, not in Kuala Lumpur or Singapore, that I wanted to grow my own company. I knew that the support sys-
tems were there, both for me personally and for business incubation, that would help me to succeed.”

One of the key lessons that Charles imparted upon the audience was that he learnt his greatest successes through failure. Once his first and now flagship store had grown to a certain level, he had earned the opportunity to open a second branch in one of Kuching’s many shopping malls.

Ultimately, the second store failed to live up to the success levels of the first and it was becoming a costly mistake. However, it opened the door for SHINE to open a third branch at arguably Kuching’s most famous and successful mall, The Spring.

While that second store was ultimately closed down, today Charles has his two remaining branches and a new wealth of experience to take forward with him.

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At the end of the day, I could look back on it and say that it was a disaster and the company lost a great deal of money there.

“Ultimately though, I never would have had the two very successful stores that I do now were it not for that experi-
cence,” he said.

“Therefore I can have no regrets and I learnt many more lessons that I will take with me to take my business forward.

I would urge anybody here to embrace your failings, be prepared to take risks, you never know what is on the other side of it.”

For the assembled Kuching crowd, many of whose companies were in their infancy and ready to break out on a nationwide scale, it was the words of encouragement they needed from two exceptionally driven and committed speakers.

THE NEXT STEPS

The pair of conferences mark the final stops on the road to the capital before the AmBank BizCONFERENCE Kuala Lumpur on November 1.

Taking place at KL Convention Centre, speakers for the day include Mindvalley CEO Vishen Lakhiani; CEO of Gobiz Group of Companies Hannah Tan; CEO of REA Group for Malaysia and Singapore Haresh Khoobchandani; SelfDrvn and Netshell CEO Lam Mun Choong; Rowsley Ltd executive director and CEO Tan Wei Tuck; COL co-founder Ganesh Kumar Bangah and IHS Markit Malaysia manag-
ing director Vimalawati K Ramasamy alongside Roshan and Yap.

Finally, the AmBank BizRACE is draw-
ning ever closer as AmBank begin their search for Malaysia’s Best SME. With FashionValet’s Vivy and Fadza among the spectacular lineup of celebrity judges, the chance to grow your business to the next level is fast upon us.
THE HEADHUNTING ERA

EXAMINING THE NEED TO BOOST YOUR RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

By LOW FANG KAI
editor@leaderonomics.com

I t has never been easier to find the right person for a job. Countless digital platforms enable employers to post job descriptions with the touch of a button, reaching thousands and thousands of willing employees who may be actively looking for a job.

There is no doubt that with the technology that we have today, hiring can be a breeze. The question is, when do you employ a headhunter and how do you conduct your hiring online?

I will be the first to say that I am an advocate for technology. In fact, my own staffing firm relies on a complex IT infrastructure that has the capability to increase our recruitment efficiency multifold.

Using technology also makes for faster candidate delivery. However, I also take the stance that nothing digital can fully replace the human factor, which is the very DNA of recruiting companies and headhunters. The final touch is our human element.

In a Forbes article written by Meghan M. Biro, she notes that we should ‘remember the human dimension’. She argues that the best human resources (HR) practitioners know their organisations and culture on an extremely deep level.

While she agrees that finding talent can be made easier by amazing technology out there, finding the right fit goes beyond technology. In short, HR management jobs are likely not to go out of style for a very long time.

RECRUITMENT PARTNER

As a company looking to hire, employing a good headhunter can save you time and costs. In fact, industry-specific headhunters often play the role of a business partner (or recruitment partner) where the headhunter provides detailed advice to the company.

Simple things like re-aligning the reporting structure or deciding to hire a multi-skilled candidate can go a long way in saving additional HR expenses or operational costs.

The key here is to ask probing questions, i.e. the right questions.

As a headhunter, your job is to be on the constant lookout for how to save your clients’ time and cost. Imagine how much cost you can save if a headhunter can find you a candidate who can do the job of three freelancers.

Only a headhunter would be able to suggest streamlined processes to help your business.

TALENT POOL

Another important point to note when deciding whether to employ a headhunter or conduct your hiring online is that the pool of candidates. Potential candidates are usually divided into two categories – active and passive.

Active candidates are on the lookout for a new job for a variety of reasons, whereas passive candidates are most likely contented with their jobs and are not interested in finding something new. Active jobseekers are mostly freelancers, as their work is governed by projects with charges that go by the hour.

These platforms are specifically meant for project-based work.

Then there is LinkedIn, a widely-used professional networking platform which hosts a variety of jobseekers. Their research shows that 75% of their users are considered passive candidates. This means that only 25% of LinkedIn users are actively looking out for a new job.

While it is safe to assume that those in the passive category are definitely not looking for new opportunities, what if they did know of an amazing opportunity? This is where headhunters come into the picture.

More often than not, headhunters would be looking to target the passive pool where they are likely to find the most talented professionals in any given industry. If you hire a headhunter, they have access to that 75% of passive jobseekers that you may not be privy to.

Assuming that you only rely on online job portals to find your talent, you would only be tapping into 25% of the talent pool.

CRITICAL INFORMATION

Another thing to consider is that senior management talents from the passive pool are unlikely to send in their resumes to online job portals. It would benefit them greatly by partnering with headhunters who know the industry landscape better than anyone else.

Also, if you’re looking for a more senior position such as Head of Finance, there is a low chance that you would hire freelancers for the job.

Freelancers are not governed by HR policies, thus opening up your organisation to vulnerabilities especially if the role deals with critical company information.

Rules suitable for freelancers are more often consultative or advisory in nature.

MOVING FORWARD

I believe that headhunters need to be more adaptable to changes by constantly increasing their industry knowledge. Even though there are many things that cannot be replicated by a machine, we are living in the 21st century.

You need to know what is happening out there. You also need to understand emotions, because a headhunter’s job deals solely with humans.

Skill sets and knowledge can always be learnt but if the attitude matches the opportunity, it may just be the right ‘fit’.

As a headhunter, it is imperative that you recommend someone not only based on their past, but the potential you see in them. As a fellow human being, you are able to sense the burning desire from within. I don’t think there is any digital device that can gauge that.

In an ever-changing world like ours, embracing technology is not only the key to survive, but to thrive. As Darwin once said, “it is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.”
DID you know that your brain scans your environment for danger, threat or reward five times per second? This understanding comes from the work of neuroscientist Dr Evian Gordon, who found that the brain’s organising principle is to minimise danger and maximise reward. This happens at an unconscious and fast pace.

Threat Versus Reward State

While we don’t look out for wild animals in our environment anymore as our ancestors did, there are still many perceived dangers in our everyday existence. Negative emotions such as frustration, fear, anxiety, anger or impatience create a threat state.

This causes us to become less focused, have fewer insights, become more risk averse and feel less connected. The flip side of this is that positive emotions create a reward state, creating clearer thinking and more effective production. The aim, therefore, is to create a calm, happy, interested, curious and appreciative team of staff.

Of course, not all people are the same. The prefrontal cortex needs the right mix of neurochemicals for peak performance. We need to find out what each person requires to attain their reward state.

For example, if I want to get the best performance from Ben, I need to know what state he works best in. Some people need more stretching and challenging; others need to feel stable and comfortable to be at their best.

Get the Right Mix

John is an accomplished sales person and enjoys the thrill of the biggest challenges. His best moments are in selling to large international 5-star resorts, clients that are considered a long shot, but the deals are big and the pay-off is good.

John’s manager needs to ensure his territory and opportunities include these bigger clients. John was instead handed a territory of a whole lot of already existing small hotels, and was asked to grow this territory. There were no big deals or negotiations, just more administration.

The people he was dealing with were not as sophisticated when it came to the use of this technology, and didn’t have the budget to upgrade. John became frustrated, disappointed, and felt undervalued – which resulted in low engagement and motivation, and poor subsequent results. John ended up on extended stress leave, costing the company thousands of dollars.

This was as a result of him being given a territory that, from one perspective, should have been easier and less stressful for John. However, the demands of his manager and the lower level of challenge impacted his performance by underutilising his talents.

John has now left this company and works for a competitor that recognises his talents. He is once again on the hunt for the challenging large opportunities in the market, pitted against the company that didn’t have the foresight or management capability to utilise him in the best way.

Changing Workplaces

The workplace is changing. In the past, many people went to work each day without much thought about whether they were happy or fulfilled in their work. Or at least, if they weren’t happy, there would be less likelihood of making changes because it was a job that paid the bills and there were not as many opportunities to make changes.

Then along came the millennial generation and the internet. This generation integrates their work and life, which is made possible thanks to the internet and digital technology. They expect more from their employers and are not content to work hard to make their boss richer.

This means that the workplace is a much more integrated situation (or has potential to be) than ever before.

This is where good communication is paramount in determining what each team member needs to perform at their best. Ask them what would make their work more interesting, raise the bar if they need to be challenged or create tighter deadlines if they are not good at organising their workload.

By communicating with individuals, you make them feel appreciated and allow them to have some ownership of their role in the team.
RECREATING SILICON VALLEY IN PENANG

HOW THE ISLAND BECAME THE NATIONAL HUB FOR E&E GROWTH

By MATT NAYLOR
matt.naylor@leaderonomics.com

It is the home of thousands of start-ups as well as 39 of the Fortune 1000. Google, Intel, Netflix, Facebook, Apple, Yahoo!, Adobe, Tesla Motors. All headquartered there. There is even a TV show about the early successes and failures of a start-up in the region.

Yes, Silicon Valley in California, USA has become a household buzzword thanks to its fiercely competitive atmosphere. As the region thrives and expands its global acclaim, however, there is a place much closer to home being branded as the “Silicon Valley of the East”.

Penang may be an idyllic holiday destination with its quirky street art, stunning beaches and world-class food, but its reputation as a hub of tech start-ups is strengthening every year.

“SILICON ISLAND”

The name was first coined when Intel and Bosch set up operations at the Bayan Lepas industrial park in the 1970s. Since then, some 300 multinational corporations (MNCs) have established offices on the island and its attractiveness for fresh graduates has become a major calling card.

Offering a deluxe work-life balance thanks to the abundance of culture and relaxation spots, Penang has marketed itself cleverly as a relaxed alternative to the hustle and bustle of Kuala Lumpur.

And indeed, it has grown accordingly, keeping up with Malaysia’s capital and even Singapore in hosting and growing these multinationals.

Riding this wave of growth and momentum is a slew of Malaysian start-ups building their base from “Silicon Island” and looking to stamp their own marks on the global marketplace.

STARTING UP

Two such companies in Penang who capitalised on the industry growth were ViTrox Corporation Berhad and Aemulus Holdings Berhad, started in 2000 and 2004 respectively. Founded by entrepreneurs with similar backstories, they have

One of the other aspects of the business that Aemulus and ViTrox have in common is that both have leveraged MDEC’s GAIN programme to accelerate their globalisation efforts.

In line with a vision to develop Malaysia’s digital economy, the Global Acceleration and Innovation Network (GAIN) programme was inceptioned to catalyse the expansion of local technology SMEs that have the potential to become global players through market access, leadership and capability development, brand visibility and scale-up capital.

GAIN provides customised assistance based on each and every GAIN company’s needs and goals; whether it is elevating brand visibility, facilitating market access, upskilling capabilities, match-making for merger and/or acquisition or accessing funding ecosystem.

To visit www.mdec.my/mnc-malaysia-gain for more information

Chu says: “No highly developed country is reliant on foreign companies; if we want Malaysia to be able to compete with the most developed countries in the world, we need to have our own ecosystem of multinationals.

“Starting with instilling entrepren...
ARE WE READY FOR SMART MANUFACTURING?

IT'S BUSINESS AS UNUSUAL

By LAY HUAN, LIM
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For the longest time, manufacturing has provided jobs for millions of people around the world. However, today’s manufacturing landscape is changing at a rapid pace, and the world is not ready for this digital revolution.

The manufacturing sector, which is a significant contributor to global GDP, is facing a major transformation as a result of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). This revolution is being driven by advancements in technology such as automation, robotics, 3D printing, and the internet of things (IoT).

Digitalisation isn’t just affecting end customers, but also suppliers and their customers to the relationships between themselves. For instance, 3D printing is used to build complex components for heavy industrial products such as aircraft engines.

The global manufacturing company in Malaysia, according to a recent study, has several opportunities for growth and innovation. However, many of these companies are not ready to embrace these changes. The reason is that they are not aware of the potential benefits and challenges associated with digitalisation.

THE CHALLENGES OF DIGITALISATION

One of the main challenges is the lack of awareness among manufacturers about the benefits of digitalisation. Many companies are hesitation to adopt new technologies because they are afraid of the risks and uncertainties associated with it.

Another challenge is the lack of skilled workforce. Digitalisation requires a workforce that is skilled in technology and innovation, which is currently not available in many countries.

Finally, the cost of implementing digitalisation is another challenge. Many manufacturers are not willing to invest in new technology because they believe it is too expensive.

THE OPPORTUNITIES OF DIGITALISATION

On the other hand, digitalisation offers many opportunities for manufacturers to improve their competitiveness and profitability. Some of these opportunities include:

1. Increased efficiency and productivity
2. Improved supply chain management
3. Enhanced customer engagement and experience
4. Greater data analytics and insights
5. New business models and revenue growth

However, manufacturers must be ready to embrace these changes and take advantage of the opportunities offered by digitalisation.

In conclusion, digitalisation is transforming the manufacturing sector, and manufacturers must be ready to adapt to this new reality. By embracing digitalisation, manufacturers can improve their competitiveness and profitability, and help drive economic growth and innovation.

By CHANDRAN NAIR
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The merits of 4IR are undeniable. But a small business decision on whether the market demand for a product is there and the cost to service that market demand must be estimated. It requires an understanding of what the world’s majority is looking for. Solutions often have a poor understanding of what the world’s majority actually needs and wants, and their solutions are too complex for the real world.

The truth of the fact that the application of technology will have paradoxically negative effects, is rarely, if ever, mentioned by those who are pushing for a widespread adoption of 4IR. Many of technology’s defenders argue that these inventions will do wonderful for the developing world. It is possible that robotics, artificial intelligence, and the like could have a positive impact on the lives in the developed world. – the fact is that the world’s majority is looking for something in return. But there is a pressing need to shal… (To be continued...)

Pirates of the South China Sea

Pirates have been a problem in the South China Sea for many years. However, in recent years, the problem has become more serious. The South China Sea is one of the most important economic areas in the world, with many nations having economic interests in the region. As such, piracy has become a major concern for countries in the region.

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The Great Digital Divide

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Empowering youth to make a difference

DIODE Camps are specially designed camps for youth aged 8-19 who are eager to fulfill their potential to be great leaders of the future. Through DIODE, we aim to help youth take their leadership learning to the next level where they will be challenged to discover their comfort zone and be positive influences among their peers.

For more info and to register, email editor@leaderonomics.com or whatsapp Nick at 017-2299288.
FROM DULANG WASHER TO A BUSINESS OWNER

HOW MY GRANDMOTHER CONQUERED STEREOTYPES

By ONG CHENG YEE
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My grandmother had high integrity in her work and with the ability to be a leader of the group of dulang washers earlier in her career, she was trusted by her friends and they remained loyal to her as she brought them the rewards she promised. This is a key leadership characteristic if you want your team to succeed.

I was never interested in the family business, but writing this article has given me a new level of admiration for the women in my family.

Based on my own observations, here are some key leadership characteristics upheld by my grandmother which I believe led to her success.

1. HIGH INTEGRITY

As I was growing up, I saw the same old ladies working in the amang factory and up to today, one of them is still working.

My grandmother had high integrity in her work and with the ability to be a leader of the group of dulang washers earlier in her career, she was trusted by her friends and they remained loyal to her as she brought them the rewards she promised. This is a key leadership characteristic if you want your team to succeed. At times as a leader, you are able to see the vision of the company and where the company is headed. However, it is not the same for your team. Once you have shown integrity in your work, your team would develop trust in you. They would follow your lead with the belief that their hard work will eventually be fruitful.

2. SPEAK UP!

My grandmother was known for being upfront when speaking her mind and sometimes, with a certain level of tough talk. This is a requirement being in a tough business that needs heavy labour and sometimes, with a certain level of tough talk. This is a requirement being in a tough business that needs heavy labour and hard work, your team would develop trust in you. They would follow your lead with the belief that their hard work will eventually be fruitful.

A study published in a Harvard Business School Article had shown that from a man’s point of view, women were seen as incapable in contributing during meetings because they were either not loud enough or they were not able to find their way to interrupt the conversations.

3. HARDWORKING

Before suffering from a stroke in 1996, my grandmother had the same daily routine of waking up at 5am and being in the factory as early as 7am. At the age of 81, I walked to markets with my grandmother and I remember feeling how rough her hands were. Her hands were evidence of the hard and harsh work she had done throughout her life to get to where she was. To be a respected leader, you will need to show that you can dig into the dirt and solve issues.

Although Apple Inc. was established in 1976, success came when the iMac was introduced in 1998. They achieved bigger success when iPhone was launched in 2007. Steve Jobs is known to have worked closely with his team and he worked hard because innovation doesn’t come over night.

4. ABILITY TO IDENTIFY TALENT

Having the right talent for the right position in your organisation is key.

This could be a biased opinion because I view my mother as a talent in the organisation. My grandmother asked my mother if she was interested to join her more than 30 years ago. Back then, my mother was working as a chief dietitian in the UK. She knew the periodic table like the back of her hand, wrote contracts for my grandmother and I remember feeling how rough her hands were. Her hands were evidence of the hard and harsh work she had done throughout her life to get to where she was. To be a respected leader, you will need to show that you can dig into the dirt and solve issues.

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A brief introduction to this old business – “amang” are tin waste deposits which were abundant in the ex-tin mines of Perak. My grandmother set up a heavy machinery factory that separated heavy materials such as Ilmenite (titanium-iron oxide) used in paint manufacturing and Zircon (zirconium silicate) commonly used in ceramic industries.

The amang factory in Pusing was my “playground” growing up and I spent a lot of time watching her and my mother, who was also working in the factory.

My grandmother was born in 1919. As a child, she would follow her mother to the tin mines to earn money as a washer.

As a young and strong-willed lady, she started leading a team of ladies in negotiating work contracts, and naturally, she became the go-to person for dulang washers whenever there were new tin mining projects in the area. As she learned the ropes of the industry, she struck out on her own and started an “amang” factory.

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THE LEADERSHIP CHEMISTRY OF SOAP MAKING

LEARNING LESSONS IN THE UNLIKELYIST OF PLACES

By SARA KANG
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If you remember not too long ago, it seemed as if every bazaar you visited (in the Klang Valley at least) had at least one little stall, if not more, selling their natural, handmade soap or beauty products. Malaysians suddenly developed this interest in handmade goodies!

These were not cheap. A bar of handmade soap was priced anywhere between RM15 and RM30. Most items were marketed to be good for the skin (as they contained fewer or no preservatives) and promoted general well-being for its users.

Being someone who has lived with sensitive skin (and eczema) my whole life, I gave it a try and started to purchase these soaps for personal use. After two weeks, I found that it did make my skin feel less irritable.

But, my bar of soap was diminishing faster than I would have liked. So, I decided to make my own.

Going for a half-day lesson on cold press soap-making was a worthy investment, as I could now make my own soap for a fraction of the price outside. Plus, they also made amazing gifts for friends and family.

Along the way, I discovered that soap-making has its parallels with leadership.

1. HAVE A VISION AND AN END IN MIND

The inspiration for each batch of soap I envision, I always have a plan and I carefully document its recipe. I then buy the ingredients, measure it, make the soap, and wait. The result doesn’t become obvious until I cut the soap into individual bars 24 hours later. Hence, my patience is usually tested.

I have also been the teacher – I helped a friend make her first batch of soap. It took patience to teach someone the basics of soap-making; from the purpose, to the measuring of the ingredients. Every ingredient must be measured to the decimal point for a successful batch of soap.

Leaders must have a certain level of patience, clarity and precision when guiding and sharing their vision. Patience comes when they need to trust and wait for their vision to be realised. It won’t happen overnight.

The important thing is to ensure you communicate clearly when guiding those who help you execute the plans. In this case, it can even be for you to groom your mentee to take over where necessary. It’s much like I taught my friend how to make her own soap.

2. BE PRECISE AND PATIENT

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3. BE FLEXIBLE AND OPEN

Part of the joy in soap-making is experimenting with different types of fragrances and oils. Different combinations produce different results, from the smell to the colour and texture. Each batch of soap can differ based on the ingredients used. With that, I tend to ask for feedback from different people on whether or not they liked the soap or how the soap I made could have been better.

Was it moisturising enough? Did it produce enough bubbles? Was the smell pleasant and how long did it last? With feedback, I can improve future batches.

Leaders need to be aware that everyone has a different ‘flavour’. Their leadership style will not complement every type of person. Hence, it is very important to be flexible and be open to feedback.

It takes a level of self-awareness and understanding of different personalities and leadership styles to motivate and bring out the best in those around them. Leaders who accept feedback understand the value of it. It helps them adapt to others better and build rapport before they can influence others.

4. LEARN FROM MISTAKES

I have made many mistakes in soap making. I could have put in too much olive oil and the soap ended up too soft when it comes into contact with water. I could have miscalculated my water to oil ratio and hence, my soap did not saponify.

I have even mixed the wrong colours and additives which resulted in that batch of soap looking not as aesthetically pleasant as I envisioned it to be. Many times, this had come at a cost – raw materials wasted and time spent preparing it.

Sometimes, they were mistakes made merely based on trial and error. The final outcome often left me a bit frustrated and sad. But behind all that were the lessons learnt on things I should not be repeating in the future.

Leaders are human and they make mistakes. It is part and parcel of life, isn’t it? All leaders have made mistakes and sometimes, costly ones. But what differentiates good and bad leaders are those who manage to rise from these mistakes.

Fail, learn and move forward. The best leaders are those who know how to find the silver lining in any situation, reflect, and move forward.

“To learn and grow, one must take chances and be willing to make mistakes.”
– John Mackey

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

My soap making journey has helped me relate better to my leadership journey. With that comes clarity and a hunger to learn and improve my skills (i.e. soap-making and leadership).

Who knows, my best soap recipe has yet to come and with that, my best leadership lesson.

DO PEOPLE FOLLOW YOU WHEN THEY HAVE A CHOICE NOT TO?

According to Jim Collins, that is the essence of true leadership. How then can your good managers become great leaders who create sustainable impact? Our exciting “Commander” simulation challenges leaders to develop the potent combination of business success and character that can shape a lasting legacy.
**SHOULD YOU PROMOTE BASED ON SENIORITY?**

No two employees are ever truly equal.

They create a culture of mediocrity. How you treat your employees is often how they will treat customers. If you don’t expect and then reward excellence, why would your employees think your customers deserve excellence?

Besides that, seniority is already baked into the process. An employee with three years on the job should be a better candidate for promotion than an employee with one year. He or she has had more time to gain skills, to achieve more, to build better connections with customers and vendors and other employees. The longer-term employee has a huge advantage.

If a newer employee is still the better candidate, either the employee with more tenure didn’t put their time advantage to good use, or the newer employee is a superstar, and, either way, deserves the promotion.

Of course that means you need to really know your employees.

But that’s okay. Nothing is more important than how you treat your employees; everything follows from that. So if you think it’s too much trouble to know your employees, to know their skills and talents, to know their strengths and weaknesses and put them in spots where they can showcase their strengths and improve their weaknesses, then you need to get someone else to run your business.

And if all this doesn’t convince you, here’s one more reason.

Say your company competes with businesses that have greater “length of service.” Imagine how you would feel if a potential customer said: “We’re going to go with ACME just because they’ve been in business longer.”

In your mind, customers shouldn’t care about the fact you’re newer; they should choose you because you’re better.

In short, you want your market to be a meritocracy.

Shouldn’t you treat your employees the same way you want your customers to treat you?

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**HOW TO CUDDLE UP WITH “NO”**

By Dan Rockwell

editor@leaderonomics.com

Dreamers swim in an ocean filled with doom and gloomers who love pointing out danger. Dreamers start with “yes.” Everyone else seems like a kill joy. Dreamers see resistance when others don’t fall in love with their ideas.

Doom and gloomers seem resistant to optimistic dreamers.

Cuddle up with “No” — “No” comforts doom and gloomers. They won’t get in over their heads. They’re protecting current wins. They need a clear path to the end, before they begin. (All good stuff)

Don’t offer flippant answers.

The worst thing you can do is minimise real concerns. You can’t win hearts and minds by pressuring reluctant people into conformity.

Bring ideas to doom and gloomers. Listen to concerns. Say: “Thank you. Let’s think about that.” Walk away. Don’t offer solutions. When you flippantly answer the real concerns of doom and gloomers you invite them to dig into their bucket of doom. They’re compelled to convince you that you aren’t seeing reality. Frankly, their concerns may be justified.

When you trivialise the concerns of others, you seem ignorant, out of touch, closed, and stubborn.

Stay open to the possibility that a doom and gloomer is at least 20% right.

7 QUESTIONS THAT DRAW WISDOM FROM DOOM AND GLOOM:

Engage doom and gloomers early. Say: “I’m thinking about this new initiative. What comes to mind?”

What’s behind your concern/reluctance? Is it for things they’re protecting. You may agree.

How might we test this idea? Who might know more about this?

What happens if we do nothing?

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THE POWER OF INTIMATE ATTENTION

HOW TO STAND OUT, BUILD A TRIBE, AND CHANGE THE WORLD

RICKY HENDERSON AND THE VALUE OF A WINK

While writer Jay Baer coined Vaynerchuk’s approach “the gift of intimate attention,” Vaynerchuk himself calls it something totally different: “The Ricky Henderson Effect.”

In a 2014 post on LinkedIn, Vaynerchuk tells the story of what happened when he was 10 years old, attending a Yankees game: “Ricky Henderson catches a fly ball to end the inning and, as he runs into the dugout, he looks up, he looks directly in the face, and he winks. And that’s it. That wink took Ricky, oh, I dunno, a hundredth of a second of effort, but over the next five years of my life, my mom bought me a Ricky Henderson jersey, my mom bought me tons of Ricky Henderson baseball cards, and the name Ricky Henderson came up hundreds of times.”

Henderson didn’t just doff his cap to all the fans down the first base line; he gave a personal, private conversation with them, even to one person at a time.

The Power of Intimate Attention

Ricky Henderson told me, but I’m not asking—used a simple “cool video” comment on YouTube. A simple name check when doing a Q&A session.

While Baer used that phrase to describe how Vaynerchuk connects so personally in a live setting, I think it’s just as true of how “GaryVee” connects with so many of his fans on a daily basis.

I’m not talking about how Vaynerchuk or others “authentically” reach their masses of fans through raw video clips of their daily lives and stream of conscious thoughts.

I’m talking about how Vaynerchuk has spent thousands of hours tweeting back to one person at a time, and how he’ll solicit questions on Snapchat and record video answers to each individual follower.

BY KEVIN KRUSE

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We can help tell your organisational story to the world. For more information, please contact us at editor@leaderonomics.com or call us at +603 7957 5809/5804.

THE POWER OF INTIMATE ATTENTION

We live in an age of “bowling alone” where we barely know our neighbours and even “social media” primarily consists of us blasting each other with links to articles, cat videos, memes and inspirational quotes.

So going back to where we started: How do you beat your competition? How do you compete against the Goliaths? While Goliaths are sending email blasts to thousands of subscribers on their list, you will send one email to a real person.

While Goliaths are busy updating their social media pages with memes, you will answer a question for one person in an online group.

While Goliaths are using social channels as a bullhorn, you will use it to start a real conversation. Simply put, the secret is to connect with one person at a time.

Kevin is a New York Times best-selling author, keynote speaker, and leadership expert. He is the founder of The Kruse Group. To connect with him, email editor@leaderonomics.com

QUOTES

“However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.” — Winston Churchill!

Imagine a bullet train that travels faster than the speed of sound while using as little energy as possible with the capacity to levitate? A train that reduces a conventional five-hour train journey, say from Petaling Jaya to Penang, to around 20 minutes’ travel time. We had a chance to meet the creator, Bibop Gabriele Gresta, co-founder and chairman of Hyperloop Transportation Technologies on The Leaderonomics Show with us. Watch the video interview of him here: bit.ly/LDRbibop

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Alun Evans is a down-to-earth man with a passion for coffee and a heart for people. In 1998, a 28-year-old Evans moved from Indonesia to New Zealand to fulfill his coffee dream.

Moving between his cafes in Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong and soon, Philippines – Evans took time to sit down with us and talk about how he does it and what matters most. Read on at bit.ly/aluncafe

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