There are 13 great leadership articles in this week’s pullout. Our website is loaded with an enormous back catalogue of articles, with 50 new online features being added every month!

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Beyond just social media

Only by listening to what the world is saying will you build your brand

By Nicole Nee
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In the age of a social media explosion, the value of social media listening has begun to gain momentum as the foundation of every successful social strategy. Social media posts are valuable sources of real-time feedback, trending every minute of every day.

Unlike traditional modes of feedback, the underlying data from social media is always updated, spontaneous and continuous. Hence, social media listening actually makes for more accurate – and valuable – customer and industry insights that are cheaper and easier to collect.

As our everyday vernacular becomes embedded with social media lexicon, it is ever more essential for businesses to find out what customers and competitors are saying. Otherwise, history would repeat itself and we would never see the end of cases of poor customer service on social media.

Given the spontaneity of social media, it is possible for companies to give an official response and react to troubling news in an instant. Those that take too long to do so can have no excuse.

Don’t treat it as simply a social media tool

It is shocking to think that, even in 2017, there are no shortage of companies that are reluctant to allocate a bigger budget to social media data mining. This is perhaps due to the existing misconception that social media is only limited to furthering a company’s marketing efforts.

However, the online conversations happening simultaneously on social networks can, in fact, provide valuable insights to formulate fundamental organisational goals that any business should have.

In other words, social media listening tools can be used by just about anyone in the company for a number of reasons, not just for marketing purposes.

Whether it’s customer service, risk and intelligence, or product development, ensuring that relevant data feeds back to the relevant functions can aid strategic decision-making in a timely manner.

Listen with the intent to understand

Social media listening is more than just monitoring your mentions and responding when prompted, which is what too many organisations are doing. Rather, it is listening with the intent to understand and making strategic decisions with the gathered data.

Never be a passive or selective listener; go beyond the expected by seeking opportunities to surprise and engage consumers. This not only builds loyalty and relationships, but also turns these customers into advocates of your brand.

However, with billions of social media posts a day, making sense of what is being said and what is shaping your reputation can be challenging.

To be able to reach the right people at the right time, you need to know what they’re talking about in the first place, which is why developing a social listening strategy is fundamental to successful marketing.

Social media listening tools are a dime a dozen across Asia, but there is no one solution that provides consistent and extensive coverage across all markets and languages.

This is because Asia is a maelstrom of various cultures and languages, and the resulting fragmentation of conversations makes it very difficult to understand the prevailing sentiment.

Moreover, there are far more platforms in Asia where a large number of conversations is likely to be occurring, such as forums and other home-grown market-specific platforms like Weibo in China.

Social listening strategies thus have to be market and language specific to be able to form an accurate picture of the actual conversation.

From social listening to social intelligence

Now that you’ve got the data and have started to glean meaningful insights, it’s time to act on them and formulate smarter business decisions.

Used preventatively in crisis management and communication, social media listening is a way to discern negative buzz, or identify competitive moves. Being proactive in seeking out competitive risks will afford you sufficient time to build resilience and extinguish potential fires before they manifest in real-time.

On the other hand, social listening also aids in the management of a public relations crisis as you can constantly check to see if your message is resonating with your customers.

We all like to think our businesses are perfect but there are always things that can be improved upon and critical reviews provide valuable suggestions on how to do so.

While there are bound to be negative reviews, don’t forget that you can encourage and thank satisfied customers who leave positive reviews to offset the negative ones.

Staying on top of market trends has never been easier with social listening tools.

Robust social listening will help businesses become better at predicting market trends, by identifying how consumer preferences are changing and what is being said about competitors.

With a firm grasp on how to have the right conversations, you can get involved in the right way and engage in timely interactions to stay ahead of competition.

Moreover, the ubiquity of social listening tools has made competitive intelligence widely available for businesses, providing clear insights into the identity of competitors and what they are doing, against which businesses can then benchmark themselves.

In conclusion

Maximise the benefits of social listening and make them last by operationalising the use of the available social media monitoring tools and ensure that the right conversations flow to the right stakeholders.

Make social listening an integral part of normal data gathering to glean valuable insights for business objectives, and incite social listening as part of the organisation’s culture so that employees strive to create more meaningful and customer experiences every day, while building a credible reputation for your brand.

“Awareness is the greatest agent for change.”

– Eckhart Tolle

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THE NATURAL PHILOSOPHER
HOW SIR ISAAC NEWTON’S LESSONS ARE STILL RELEVANT TODAY

By ROSHAN THIRAN

“If others would think as hard as I did, then they would get similar results.” – Sir Isaac Newton

THROUGHOUT history, every once in a while, a person transforms our understanding of the world in a way that is truly amazing. In Sir Isaac Newton’s case, “the man who birthed the industrial revolution” gave us scientific discoveries on motion and energy that are still as relevant today as they were 300 years ago.

Possessing a mind of unparalleled genius, he also discovered the laws of optics (figuring out that white light is composed of several colours), the laws of motion, and the universal law of gravitation.

If that wasn’t impressive enough, Newton also invented integral and differential calculus after a friend posed a question on the shape of planets.

Amazingly, most of these phenomenal achievements were made by the time he turned 26.

Newton (1643-1727) was a physicist, mathematician and philosopher whose work revolutionised science in the 17th Century, and had enormous impact for social and industrial advancement.

I asked myself, what can we learn about leadership from a physicist? As I started studying the life of Newton, I discovered that there is a lot we can learn about leadership and ‘transformation’ from everyone, including a scientist who lived more than three centuries ago.

INSATIABLE CURIOUSITY

One of Newton’s most powerful traits was his insatiable curiosity. He asked questions about everything he observed which (like Leonardo da Vinci and many other great leaders I have written about) was something that served to enhance his creative intellect to even greater levels.

Leadership starts with curiosity. When we are curious, we begin to ask questions, which begin to help us see the world in a different light.

PASSION FOR LEARNING

Newton also had an unyielding passion for learning and poured all his energy into building on the knowledge of others that went before him. He was known for always having a notebook and pen beside him as he jotted down excerpts of the various books he read.

He was heavily influenced by the works of the French philosopher Rene Descartes, as well as the astronomers who developed theories about the Earth’s place in the cosmos in relation to the Sun and other planets.

These included Nicolaus Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, and Galileo. Newton paid a touching homage to his fellow scientists in one of his most quoted sayings: “If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.” And he meant it.

Newton believed that we had to learn from others. His creativity stemmed from combining ideas learnt from reading other works. We can do likewise.

REDEFINING THE WORLD

In Newton’s view, being an innovator didn’t mean that he necessarily had to reinvent the wheel – he just had to create a refined version of the ones that had come before. He understood that, in order to make any kind of valuable progress, it was vital to first learn from and understand the work of prominent experts. From this vantage point, we are better able to see what others can’t and build on previous discoveries and achievements. But Newton did much more.

He understood that, for anyone to truly change the world, relationships matter. He once said: “We build too many walls and not enough bridges,” urging everyone to break down the silos between us and connect deeper with each other.

Only when we truly connect and learn from one another will we make a deep impact.

While some have argued that Newton was the greatest scientist to ever have lived, others often make comparisons between him and Albert Einstein, who changed Newton’s view of the universe by asserting that space, motion and distance were relative rather than absolute, and that the universe was far more complex than Newton could ever have known.

With over 200 years separating the two scientists (Einstein was born in 1879), it would have been fully expected by Newton that his work would be built upon and new observations made, just like he had done from the great scientists who had come before him.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Nevertheless, it is indisputable that the work of Sir Isaac Newton laid some of the foundations that greatly enriched our understanding of the universe.

When asked to sum up his life’s achievements, he replied: “I know not how I seem others, but to myself I am but a small child wandering upon the vast shores of knowledge, every now and then finding a small bright pebble to content myself with while the vast ocean of undiscovered truth lay before me.”

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*Each workshop is limited to 30 pax. Admission is by registration only, on a first come, first served basis.
By SARA YEE
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Selling is always something that is crucial to just about any part of life. People usually associate sales with a person or an organisation selling a tangible product or a service. In this age, however, you have to be able to sell not only the things you produce, but also yourself – not as a product, but as a person capable of contributing to a particular project or organisation.

Selling yourself is a key point in the question of whether you will be hired or not. If your “sale” goes successfully, this will allow you to get the job but the impression you leave will make further selling – asking for a raise or applying for a promotion – that much easier.

Here are the “good” and “bad” when it comes to selling yourself.

THE GOOD

1. Dress to Impress

It has been proven time and again that the first impression, regardless of how unfair they may be – being snap judgments – is the first insight into a person’s assessment of you.

Giving a good impression in terms of dressing style will go a long way. Dress appropriately for work and professionally for meetings.

If you have some leeway in choosing what to wear, keep it in line with the company’s dress code. Remember, first impressions can last long.

2. Strengths And Weaknesses

People tend to downplay weaknesses and advertise strengths whenever they go for an interview.

The most important thing to note is that it is alright to admit your weaknesses and work towards improving them by leveraging your strengths.

3. Flexibility

This is extremely important, being able to bend and adapt to situations is something that can help you go far.

It is not so much that you are thinking out of the box, but more that you are willing to try other people’s ideas if they are to work better than your own.

Flexibility helps keep your mind open. Those who observe you can see that you are keen on suggestions and, if feasible, are willing to work on them.

4. Appreciation

This is something you do not hear very often but showing appreciation for the people who have helped you along the way – or have done something for you – demonstrates that you have genuine gratitude for people.

This is particularly important because giving proper credit shows that you can admit that you are not solely responsible for your successes.

THE BAD

1. Cannot Take Criticism

Nothing kills interest faster than someone who is not open to criticism.

No good pitch comes without its constructive criticisms that are designed to give you suggestions on how to improve and perhaps correct certain mistakes.

If, during this time, you are not keen on such criticism or are vehement about your work, you may come across as close-minded.

2. Talking Behind Backs

Person A and Person B are good friends. Person A soon realises that everyone has stopped talking to them, and they do not know why. Person B is the only one who talks to them. Person A finds out that the motive is jealousy over a promotion, one for which Person B was passed over in favour of Person A. Person B subtly plans Person A’s subsequent downfall.

Do not do this. It leaves a sour taste in everybody’s mouths and you could be branded as an untrustworthy person.

Do not put another person down through badmouthing for your own betterment.

3. Cautious Communication

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.

Physical harm is more likely to heal fully than emotional or psychological harm – in this case, brought about by careless speaking. Keep this in mind when “selling” yourself. Use words that are direct and clear.

Being unclear may result in a misunderstanding and may even cost you the sale and/or your job.

Even when interacting with people, keep the good things in mind.

4. Social Media Nightmare

It is important to note that everything you post on the Internet stays on the internet. Everything – the good, the bad and, perhaps the deal-breaker – the ugly.

In this day and age where nearly everyone is connected through social media platforms, you should always be mindful that a potential employer down the road may see your posts and decide not to hire you.

5. Bad Body Language

Generally, 55% of what is transmitted through communication is your body language – the bits that do not come through speech are the most crucial ones.

Be mindful of your body language and most importantly, be mindful of other people’s personal space.

You should try to read what other people are saying non-verbally so that you can get an idea as to whether what you are saying or doing is leaving a positive or negative impression.

THE CONCLUSION

Sales is an interesting area in that, at some point in time, we will all experience it.

Remember that selling is a multi-layered process, which in itself is heavily centred on your ability to convince a potential employer to accept your idea, buy your product or even to hire you.

It takes time and practice but, with consistency, and by cultivating the good and dropping the bad, it will help you get far.

LEADERONOMICS IS growing! As we begin the next phase of our journey, we’re looking for awesome people who have the same hunger for growth as we do.

At Leaderonomics, we make it our mission to grow each employee into leaders. Much more than just being an award-winning place to work and offering career growth opportunities for our people, we are providing our employees opportunities to continue their development journey as well.

In the last few months, we’ve sent Leaderonomics to attend to European School of Management and Technology (ESMT) in Berlin, Germany; the International Management Development (IMD) in Switzerland and to visit the start-up bubble of Silicon Valley in the US.

We push our employees to learn to be adaptable and flexible. We have no job descriptions. Job descriptions are so 20th Century. Our roles constantly evolve and we are looking for like-minded people who want to grow not just once a year, but daily.
HARNESSING SUSTAINABILITY
THE INCREDIBLE PROJECTS OF LEADERONOMICS’ M.A.D. YOUTH PITCH OUT

By GURPREET SINGH

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MEETING INVISIBLE

Being the first project to pitch, Meeting Invisible did not fail to impress in making a strong statement with an exciting and bold proposal emphasising and addressing the status of inequality in our nation.

Given the strength in racial diversity in Malaysia, and noticing an apparent divide and growing social segregation, Meeting Invisible proposed the interaction of youths from various ethnic backgrounds, over a meal, under the wrap of a blindfold, to prevent any preconceived prejudices. With the gift of sight temporarily suppressed to withhold the natural propensity to judge superficially, this project hopes to highlight similarities we share as people with the intention to weave a common thread across all races and cultures and to tie them together securely in the bond of unity and peace.

This initiative intends to foster a greater appreciation of that which binds us together as a people, and induce a greater recognition and celebration of our nation today. The most notable M.A.D. Projects that secured funding include:

POVERTY PROJECT

The Poverty Project group are based out of Taiping, Perak. Despite not being able to attend the Pitch Out in person due to logistical limitations, the group was still determined to pitch their idea via Skype, stressing their ardent desire to make a difference.

Their proposal touches on the need for privileged teenagers to grow a deeper understanding and empathy for the poor by experiencing poverty for themselves, first-hand. This is achieved by selecting a group of 25 teenagers to be a part of a two-day camp in a beautiful village in Kuala Sepetang, Perak during the first school holiday window in 2018.

During this camp, participants will be given basic lodging and RMI to sustain themselves without any food or water provided. To ensure survival, participants must interact with the villagers and work together with them to secure their meals. This project aims to also elevate the level of awareness among youth on the plight of the poor in order to galvanise them into action and to reduce poverty in Malaysia.

Sponsorship Amount Obtained:
RM2,500 + Breakout Vouchers

3. ENZYME ESPERANZA

Noting that consumers spend a lot of money on cleaning supplies that are biologically and chemically engineered and cause harm to the environment, Enzyme Esperanza proposed a natural and cost-effective solution to the problem.

In a simple yet insightful solution, combining ingredients that normally go into wastes, such as fruit peels and plastic bottles, with household items like brown sugar and water, a cleaning enzyme can be produced. This solution can be used to clean floors, tables, windows, and even wash clothes, all in a cost-effective and environmentally friendly way.

The simplicity of the solution pitched by the group was also intended to assist the importance of little ones that build up into larger steps over a period of time, both in terms of savings monetarily and ecologically.

Sponsorship Amount Obtained:
RM500 + Breakout Vouchers

4. SEED M.A.D. AGENTS

The SEED M.A.D. Agents sought to rectify a common challenge faced by Orang Asli communities in Malaysia – the supply of clean water, or the lack thereof.

Currently, villages have to travel great distances to obtain water. To make matters worse, the water obtained is unfiltered, unhygienic and brings about a myriad of health issues that have consistently caused great distress among the communities.

With the use of simple tools and incorporation of contemporary and basic technology, Orang Asli villages can obtain a supply of clean water for their everyday use. Along with this ground level initiative and to ensure the sustainability of the project, the SEED M.A.D. Agents also expect to educate the Orang Asli communities about clean water and hygiene, train them on the maintenance and handling of the system, as well as to encourage them to replicate the system provided to other surrounding villages.

Sponsorship Amount Obtained:
RM10,000 + Goodie Bag from Petrosains

URBAN WILDLIFE RESCUE

Deforestation is rampant in Malaysia and is an issue close to the hearts of the duo that form the Urban Wildlife Rescue Group.

With massive and abrupt development gripping the forested regions of our country, there is a need to not just raise awareness on the effects of urbanisation on wildlife, but also to build and grow a society of young people that are aware and compassionate in sustaining the environment and supporting green initiatives.

With highly fragmented forests slowly becoming the norm, the project aims to achieve, as its primary objective, the building of bio-bridges that will enable animals marginalised as a result of the deforestation, to cross over the roadways to the other side of the forest safely.

Sponsorship Amount Obtained:
RM1,000 + Breakout Vouchers + Video covered by Leaderonomics Media

The Judging Panel:

Dr Daniel Loy, director of Center of Learning and Innovation at Petrosains, Caroline Ong, director of Client Engagement at Leaderonomics, and Arshad Ahmad, senior vice president of Yayasan Hasahan and head of community development.

Seed Funding Obtained:
RM2,000 to continue research + Goodie Bags from Petrosains

6. BEING COMFORTABLE IN YOUR OWN SKIN

One of the most intrinsic and important human needs is to be comfortable in your own skin, expressed a group member in her opening statement during the pitch out.

Society ought not to be the narrator that dictates the activities youth choose, simply on the grounds that certain activities, for example playing football, are perceived to be more masculine.

As a means to escape this entrapment, students within this group proposed a one-day experiment where boys and girls exchange lives and dress in the opposite gender with the objective of raising awareness that both genders are equal.

A girl can choose to play football just as boys can choose to do ballet.

To further entrench the point, the experiences of the participants and their feedback will be recorded, and this video will thereafter be used to promote their gender inequality campaign.

Sponsorship Amount Obtained:
RM1,000 + Breakout Vouchers + Video covered by Leaderonomics Media

But wait! The story’s not done there...
To read the rest of Gurpreet’s article and his summary of the day, visit bit.ly/madpitchout
A PERSONAL BRAND TO FIT THE DIGITAL AGE

BE YOURSELF

Grading gives your personal brand the best chance of cutting through in the digital age. It’s easier to be noticed online if you actively do business with you over everyone else.

Why? Because a brand is something that stands for you in the mind of the consumer. A brand seeks to create a better perception, not a better product. As a result, your role is to make the changes necessary to create that better perception. And that’s where authentic social media and digital revolution will put pen on your message and on your page. It’s all that!

Crush a personal brand is simple. Notice that the word was never personal branding. It began as personal action to ready a brand and then plan to fix it. Ask yourself some probing questions to find out what you want your brand to come across.

Finally, what could personal employers currently think of you? If you are honest with yourself, chances are that your first response is not what you expect it to be.

The importance of the personal brand has taken on a newer and more vital role. As we are more connected digitally and there are many ways to go about it, there are some tips to create a personal brand that will impress.

IRRESISTIBLE YOU

Good branding gives your potential customers a reason to work with you. Getting people to want to know and work with you happens because you have given them reasons to do so. People will want to engage your trust and make dealing with your brand the digital age, it’s taken on more importance.

1. Branding gives your personal brand the best chance of cutting through in the digital age. It’s easier to be noticed online if you actively do business with you over everyone else.

2. INTERVIEW OTHERS

Believe in other experts. Ask your best customers why they do business with you. New, incorporate those answers into your personal product or service is only half of what you need to do.

That advice comes from Sherry Beck Paprocki, a personal branding executive search and coaching professional.

3. RECOMMEND YOURSELF

Tell your best customers why you stand out. Don’t try to be different. Just ask them to bring you business.

4. REVIEW YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is the story of your business. Be smart in managing your social media marketing.

5. CHOOSE YOUR SOCIAL COMFORT STYL

Social media is the story of your business. Be smart in managing your social media marketing.

6. DON'T BE BASHFUL

If you don't like something, then don't say it. If you don't like something, don't say it.

7. CELEBRATE YOUR UNIQUENESS

Celebrate your uniqueness. It’s what sets you apart from the rest.

8. SHOW ME YOUR APPRECIATION

And remember, it's not just what you say, it's how you say it.

How you present yourself on social media is the story of your business.

9. SHOW ME THE MONEY

Show me the money. People want to know what you do.

10. BE SINCERE

Be sincere. Your customers are very much aware of how much they pay for your business. If you're not an employee, call your local newspaper.

The attitude you display, the words you speak, the body language you use and the facial expression you make can reflect on you or impact the people who deal with you and your life.

The former already knows that leaders hold the key to the best opportunities at heart, while the latter remains unfulfilled for many opportunities. It can be truly frightening that still for many leaders, when it comes to leadership, they find themselves with the life to say, “I don't need a leader to do that.”

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By JEFF BOSS

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6 WAYS A LEADER SHOULD SHOW UP

6 WAYS A LEADER SHOULD SHOW UP

Dressing the part

A leader should show up when it comes to appearance. When it comes to dressing the part, some of what you wear can make more of a difference than others. So if you’re a leader and do not know what to wear, here are six tips.

1. DRESS THE PART

"Dressing the part” isn’t about looking good. It’s about being good. It’s about looking good because you are good. It’s about being good because you are dressing the part. It’s about dressing the part because you are being good.

2. JUST LISTEN

Sometimes, the best thing a leader can do is listen to others and challenge their ideas. Demonstrate your interest by listening more than you talk and then follow up with an action plan.

3. BE CANDID

Leaders are not supposed on stage, or in a meeting or in a hallway – they should be authentic and authentic. Because the second you appear to be something other than who you are, people raise the red flag regarding their authenticity. If you’re not authentic, people will think you’re not genuine or you’re not trustworthy.

4. PLAY THE ROLE

The common perception of a leader is that they are outwardly good. The leader does not want to role-model – someone who feels comfortable with everything they do.

5. CELEBRATE YOUR UNIQUENESS

Celebrate your uniqueness. It’s a great way to boost your personal brand. If it seems too good to be true, you’re probably doing it right.

6. SHOW ME YOUR APPRECIATION

And remember, it’s not just what you say, it’s how you say it. Your customers are very much aware of how much they pay for your business. If you’re not an employee, call your local newspaper.

The attitude you display, the words you speak, the body language you use and the facial expression you make can reflect on you or impact the people who deal with you and your life.

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http://www.leaderonomics.com

Saturday 2 December 2017

The attitude you display, the words you speak, the body language you use and the facial expression you make can reflect on you or impact the people who deal with you and your life.
YOU WILL ALWAYS BE BUSY
HOW TO LEAVE THE OFFICE AT 5PM, WITHOUT FEELING GUILTY ABOUT IT

By KEVIN KRUSE
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WOULD you like to leave the office at 5pm to make it home for dinner? Would you like to do it without feeling guilty? Early in my career I was constantly overworked and overwhelmed.

As the founder and president of a fast growing startup, I worked long days, slept too little, and literally jogged down the office corridors as I found myself permanently needing to rush from one meeting to the next. Even when I was at home, my mind was still at work.

Going through the motions of date night, stacking blocks with my daughter, but thinking the whole time what isn’t working: When should a leader call and design strategies including marking milestones and celebrating them?

My life changed when I read High Output Management, by then Intel CEO, Andy Grove.

In the book, he describes how he always arrives to work by eight in the morning, but never leaves later than six, and he never brought work home with him.

The CEO of a major tech company clocked out at 5pm every day! How is that possible?

Later I would read about other highly successful people:
- Facebook COO, Sheryl Sandberg, leaves work at 5:30pm every day so she can have dinner with her children at 6pm.
- Doug Conant, as CEO of Campbell Soup Company, made the time to hand-write 20 thank you notes each day.
- President George W. Bush held an annual reading contest with his deputy chief of staff Karl Rove; although he lost the bet, President Bush read 95 books that year.

By DAN ROCKWELL
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We have the astonishing capacity to vigorously defend what isn’t working. When this happens, we eventually blame others for nagging issues. After all, someone has to be responsible for these frustrations.

FOUR STEPS ON THE PATH TO REGRET:
1. Believe you’re right, even though what you’re doing isn’t working.
2. Pour more energy into the same strategies when you’re spinning your wheels.
4. Repeat steps one through three.

WHEN TO BRING OTHERS IN

New strategies for facing nagging issues come from new voices.

Heather Horvath, HR Director at Aflac Inc., says: “I was brought into a coaching conversation as a third person. It led me to ponder the question: When should a coach get others involved?

“If you have been spinning your wheels, it might be time to introduce a third party.”

STOP DEFENDING WHAT ISN’T WORKING:

#1 New eyes see and state the obvious.
Gradual development is less effective when you’re stuck. Blindness creates tipping points.

A new voice turns the lights on by saying the same things in new ways.

#2 New voices intensify the gravity of the moment.
Business as usual goes out the door when a new person enters the conversation. A little discomfort is a good thing, especially when you’re stuck.

#3 New perspectives reveal what’s important to you.
We lose sight of our values after grinding away for a long time. Reconnect with what you really want by noticing how you judge new perspectives.

#4 New people bring new feedback. What’s working? What’s not serving you well?
Sometimes the outside pair of eyes taking a look at the problem are the only ones that can see it.

#5 New participants often lead to “aha” moments. You end up saying: “I never thought of that.”

A new person at the table is one way to address the issue of defending what isn’t working.

Kevin is the New York Times bestselling author, keynote speaker, and leadership expert. He is the founder of The Kruse Group. To engage with him, e-mail us at editor@leaderonomics.com

#1 Kevin is the New York Times bestselling author, keynote speaker, and leadership expert. He is the founder of The Kruse Group. To engage with him, e-mail us at editor@leaderonomics.com
LESSONS FROM SUPERHEROES

HOW COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS ENCOURAGED ME TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By DANIEL LEE
editor@leaderonomics.com

W hen I had no shortage of superhero movies, the past few years and neither will we in the near future, thanks to the money that Marvel and DC Comics have made from them.

Movies that our parents thought would be impossible to make are now part of what we experience on a day-to-day basis thanks to the advancement of technology over the years.

Being a huge comic book fan, this recent blockbuster boom has been great for me. I’ve always been a fan of superhero comics and movies ever since I was a young boy because I loved the idea of saving the world, especially while looking cool doing it.

It could be because of my disability that I fantasised about being able to help others and making a difference.

ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY AS A ROLE MODEL

A good superhero origin movie usually has the protagonist struggle with their identity. Most of the time, they refuse to accept their identity because of the responsibility that comes with being a hero.

However, the story progresses and the character soon realises that, because they can make a difference in the world, they have the responsibility to do what they can with their power. I truly believe that each one of us is born with the potential to make a difference. Whether we realise it or not, we make a difference where we are – be it for better or worse.

I noticed the power of influence we have on each other quite early on during my school days. I had classmates who would skip class and sneak out to smoke somewhere in the school washrooms. I also had friends who did not smoke start the habit after hanging out with that group.

In order to make a difference wherever we are, we need to realise that we are all role models and to accept the responsibility that comes with being one. I must preface this by saying I know that not everyone wants to be a role model to others.

However, if we have the intent to make a difference in the world around us, then we need to use the power of influence we have for a positive cause.

EACH OBSTACLE IS AN OPPORTUNITY

One superhero I’ve always felt I could relate to is Spiderman. Yes, he has super-strength, super-agility, spider-senses and an array of other abilities.

But what makes Spiderman so relevant is that beneath the mask, he’s just (spoiler alert!) Peter Parker, a young reporter who struggles with paying the bills, taking care of his aunt, and juggling his time as a web-slinging crime fighter with his personal life.

Role models are not meant to be “perfect beings” without any flaw. Everyone is susceptible to the same challenges and obstacles in life. We struggle with the decision to do the right thing when it’s hard and finding the strength to continue when we face doubts.

Most people like the idea of completing a full marathon but only some are willing to go through the training and preparation needed to complete one.

For me, I started running marathons with the desire to discover my full potential and inspire others to do the same.

People relate with those who face similar challenges to them and, by sharing my struggles in marathon training and preparation needed to complete one.

I’m currently training as a wheelchair racer, but back in 2013, I was playing in the Asian Youth Paralympic Games in the sport of sitting volleyball. In my experience as an athlete, there were people who would sometimes give me “advice” on how to have a competitive edge over my opponents.

Some of these “nuggets of wisdom” consisted of demotivating the opposing team by booing every time they scored, sneering at them every time we scored, and being hostile before the match.

These were things that unfortunately, some of my team members did. I knew, however, that my role there wasn’t just as a competitor focused on winning, but as a role model to anyone watching the match in the venue or at home on television.

Making a difference with actions can mean different things to each of us. Some of us would spend time volunteering to work with underprivileged children instead of just talking about making a difference, while for others it could mean helping a lost person with directions. Always remember that actions speak louder than words.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH ACTIONS, USE WORDS IF NECESSARY

A superhero is not defined by just their powers or by what they say but instead by what they do.

One of my favourite movie quotes comes from Christopher Nolan’s Batman Begins.

The character Rachel Dawes first said this, and later on in the movie Batman repeated: “It is not who you are underneath, it’s what you do that defines you.”

As an athlete, there is always pressure to perform at my highest capacity and overcome all the other competitors.

I truly believe that each one of us is born with the potential to make a difference. Whether we realise it or not, we make a difference where we are – be it for better or worse.

Even if we stumble and fall, we have someone to help and pick us up, just as a rope is made of millions of strands of incredibly thin material that become stronger only when braided together.

Nothing shows this better than how young people who come together for a good cause galvanise other young people in the community to be involved and make an impact.

I’ve personally seen this in the Leaderonomics Youth camps that I was able to be a part of. I realised that going M.A.D. (Making A Difference) is still most fun when it’s done together.
HOW NLP HELPS ADVANCE YOU AND YOUR CAREER

IT’S NOT JUST ANOTHER MUMBO JUMBO TOOL

By FREDA LIU
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EURO-UNGULISTIC programming (NLP) is an approach to communication, personal development, and psychotherapy created by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in the 1970s. I took up both practitioner and master practitioner certifications in NLP after completing a coaching course because I was intrigued. It was a great add-on because I learnt new tools. A lot of us already practise elements of NLP unknowingly. Learning NLP has helped me tremendously, professionally and personally.

The basic premise behind NLP and coaching is that we are resourceful. If we have the skills, knowledge, or ability to create solutions to various issues. Here are some of the tools:

HAVING AN ANCHOR
An anchor is really what you’re imagining it is. It is any stimulant that associates an internal response with an external or internal trigger so that the response is re-accessed swiftly and covertly.

How do you get to that place where you settle back to a resourceful state? It can be anything really, from a visual to a song.

Every time I feel unsettled or angry about a situation, I go to prayer and a song.

When that happens, I feel a sense of peace. Although the situation has not changed, it gets me to a point of clarity so that I don’t do or say anything in haste.

My friend’s anchor is the song, “I’m Too Sexy” by Right Said Fred.

“I’m too sexy for my shirt!” and I guess being at cause versus effect means you have choices in your life – you can choose what is best for you while ensuring the choice is not damaging to those around you, your community and your society.

WHERE ARE YOU OPERATING AT?

As I have to interview a lot of people from statements like “I don’t think I can” and “I never get promoted” versus “How can I get that promotion?” How do these two sentences sound? One sentence sounds like a death sentence and the latter opens the door to possibilities. Catch the words you say.

LIMITING BELIEFS

This is a big one with most people. Nay, everyone. I catch myself with limiting beliefs all the time. It’s the little, little things. It ranges from statements like “I don’t think I can do this” to “Why is everyone better at this than me?”

These statements can paralyse a person from moving forward. In 2015, when I decided to run a full marathon, I injured myself quite badly. It was probably just the body reacting to fear. I changed the words on the day of the marathon to “I am going to enjoy this and take my time. What else am I doing for the next six hours anyway?” Yes, I completed it.

If we communicate to meet the individual’s agenda and KPI whilst getting our point across, then we have win-win.

REFRAMING

“I don’t like office politics!” Have you heard that one before? Who does right? I realised that this also limits your career if you assume everything is about office politics.

This reframing exercise came to me accidentally when Anne Abraham of LeadWomen was having a chat with me about how she never saw it that way.

Anne said she always saw it as comedy, start journaling and write five areas of your life?

Reframing is the key to getting our point across, then we have win-win.

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OPERATING AT CAUSE OR EFFECT

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POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE STATE

This was a gem of an advice given to me many years ago before I understood NLP. Do you want to be bitter or better? Being in a negative state is never a good place. Think about it, a great idea never comes when you’re in a negative mood. Some ways to counter this is to exercise to release some endorphins, pray, hang around positive people, don’t accept negativity from others, watch comedy, start journaling and write five things to be grateful for daily.

PARTING THOUGHTS

These are just some of the key ideas and instruments that I have garnered from NLP.

It has made me more self-aware of my thoughts, words and actions and how I really can take control of a situation even though the circumstances have not changed. And that is powerful.
BUILDING YOUR OWN STRUCTURE

UNDERSTAND THE RULES, THEN BREAK THEM

Before implementing our version of a holacracy, we immersed ourselves in the literature and “rules” thereof. Certainly one of the criticisms of the system is that it replaces one bureaucratic, rule-driven system, with another. There is plenty of jargon and new terms to use and understand. After reviewing it all, we took what we liked, and created some new systems of our own. For example, while no one has a manager at Inventium, people constantly work in different team combinations. So rather than having “circles” as a true holacracy prescribes, we hire people who are self-directed and self-driven and are comfortable working both on their own and with a variety of different team combinations.

REFLECT, REFLECT AND THEN REFLECT AGAIN

A component I felt was missing from a standard holacracy model was finding a fair way to evaluate team members’ performances, especially given many of my team members work solo for a chunk of their time. One of the methods we introduced into our system was a quarterly self-reflection. Each team member is asked questions such as:
- What are the key things you have done/achieved this last quarter which have made you proud?
- What have been your most significant learnings this quarter?
- Reflect on a time that you may have failed this past quarter. How have you incorporated the lessons learnt from this into your current self?
- What are you most looking forward to achieving next quarter?

We have found this self-reflection to be incredibly helpful not only for individuals to look back and recognise what they have achieved, but in making pay rise decisions. Using other data points, such as client feedback, provides a complete picture. In addition, I’ve regularly sought the team’s reflections on how the new system has been working and what needs tweaking. This has led us deviating from the traditional holacracy model, but making it work for our culture.

PEOPLE BEHAVE AS YOU TREAT THEM

One of my biggest frustrations with how I see most companies run is that people (namely, bad managers) treat their staff like children. At their worst, bad managers micromanage and have a blatant distrust for their team. Firing the managers was our way of treating people like adults. I want my whole team to act like a founder and make decisions as if they ran the company.

I had been inspired by Netflix’s slide deck that outlined its “Freedom And Responsibility Culture” and how the company’s expenses policy was “Act In Netflix’s Best Interests.” Essentially, asking people to adopt a founder mindset.

Over the last 18 months, I have seen individuals within the team at Inventium really push themselves forward and take ownership of their development and progress.

I am always pleasantly surprised when I hear about people making changes to processes without my approval because they felt it was the right thing to do.

NOT EVERYONE LOVES NOT HAVING A MANAGER

In running a holacracy, I have found people’s responses to be binary. People either love it and thrive, or it makes them feel extremely uncomfortable and they inevitably leave.

Certainly, at Zappos, 18% of staff voted with their feet and left. To ensure we bring in the former type of people, the two key qualities we now look for when recruiting people are:

- Highly autonomous. People who love having the freedom to do things their way and make their own decisions come to life without managers.
- Self-driven in their approach to learning. While we have a somewhat structured approach to induction, when it comes to learning the tools and frameworks that underpin our innovation consulting business, we give people an end goal but little guidance on how to get there. People who need their hand held every step of the way would hate it, whereas those who are self-motivated thrive and learn fast.

So while a holacracy model is certainly not for everyone, it has created an environment at Inventium where people have freedom, are treated like adults, and individually can have a big impact on the company.

Dr Amantha Imber is the founder of Inventium (www.inventium.com.au), an innovation consultancy that only uses tools that have been scientifically proven to work. To get in touch with her, drop us an email at editor@leaderonomics.com

“Personal branding isn’t about social media; it’s about authenticity, purpose”. Do we only network with influential people at events, and consciously ignore other smaller players in the industry? Who are we behind closed doors?

What’s your motive behind your personal branding? Read on at bit.ly/motivationalbranding

“It’s not what you do, it’s how you do it.” —Marvin Schwartz

 Hungarian-born Zoltan Jakab draws creative and fresh ideas from blogs and social media when designing escape rooms. Find out all about how he brings people together in a fun and exciting way! Watch our interview with him as he stopped by The Leaderonomics Show by going to bit.ly/zoltanjakab

By DR AMANTHA IMBER editor@leaderonomics.com

EIGHTEN months ago, I made the decision to fire all of my company’s managers. By “fire”, I mean to ask them to leave without compensation or severance. After reviewing what I did, people have asked me what I did both right and wrong. The key things I’ve learnt from doing this are:

- Fire people who don’t fit the culture.
- Create a culture that is self-organising.
- Create an organisation that is self-driven.
- Create an environment where people can fail and learn from their mistakes.
- Create an environment where people (namely, bad managers) treat their staff like children.

In a city, people and businesses are tightly connected. While adopting a self-organising system may have positive and I have learnt management model hasn’t been to do.”

While adopting a self-management model hasn’t been without its challenges, the net result has been positive and I have learnt several things along the way.
WANT TO BE A SELF-MADE MILLIONAIRE?
WITH ONE SENTENCE, MARK CUBAN REVEALS HOW TO GET RICH

By JEFF HADEN
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MARK Cuban: billionaire, investor, NBA team owner. Nice guy. Mark Cuban knows a little about making money. So when he was asked what he would do if he lost everything, here’s what he said he would do first:

“I would get a job as a bartender at night and a sales job during the day, and I would start working. Could I become a multi-millionaire again? I have no doubt.”

Why does he feel that way? Because success is based — in almost any field — on solid sales skills.

Don’t believe me? Granted, many people feel “selling” implies pressuring, manipulating, misleading: the sell-at-all-costs salesperson stereotype. But if you think of selling as explaining the logic and benefits of an idea, a decision, a project — of anything worthwhile — then everyone needs sales skills. We all need the ability to convince other people that an idea makes sense, to show bosses or investors how a project or business will generate a return, or to help employees understand the benefits of a new process.

Sales skills are, in essence, communication skills. And since communication skills are critical in any business or career, the best way to learn how to communicate is to work in sales.

Gain sales skills and you’ll be better at everything you do — lining up distribution deals, landing customers, motivating employees. Especially in the early stages of starting a company, seemingly everything you do involves some form of sales. That’s why spending time in a direct sales role is an investment that pays off for the rest of your life.

For example, when you learn to sell:

1. **YOU LEARN PERSISTENCE**

   Salespeople hear the word “no” all the time. Over time, you’ll start to see a “no” as a challenge, not as a rejection.

2. **YOU BUILD SELF-DISCIPLINE**

   When you work for a big company, you can sometimes sleepwalk your way through a day and still get paid. When you work on commission, your credo is: “If it is to be, it’s up to me.”

   Working in sales is a great way to permanently connect the mental dots between performance and reward.

3. **YOU GAIN CONFIDENCE**

   Working in sales is the perfect cure for shyness. You’ll learn to step forward with confidence, especially under duress or in a crisis.

4. **YOU LEARN TO NEGOTIATE**

   Every job involves negotiating — with customers, with vendors and suppliers, even with employees.

   Salespeople learn to listen, evaluate variables, identify key drivers, overcome objections, and find ways to reach agreement — without burning bridges.

5. **YOU LEARN TO CLOSE**

   Closing a sale is part-art, part-science. Getting others to agree with you and follow your direction is also part-art and part-science.

   Many people find it hard to ask for what they want. If you want to lead people, you must be able to explain what you want — and then close. That’s why great bosses know how to close.

   Still not convinced? Think of it this way — the more intimidating or scary a position in sales sounds, the more you need to take one.

   You’ll gain confidence and self-assurance, and the skills you gain will serve you well for the rest of your business — and personal — life.

   So if you’re an aspiring entrepreneur, set aside your business plan and work in sales for a year or two. If you’re a struggling entrepreneur, take a part-time sales job.

   One reason you’re struggling might be because you need to improve your sales skills.

   “Knowing what my sales skills are and the products that I am able to sell,” Cuban says, “I think I could find a job selling a product that had enough commissions or rewards for me.”

   And that would generate enough seed money to let him start his own business and let him use his sales skills to make money for himself, not for an employer.

   Successful business owners — successful people in general — spend the majority of their time “selling.”

   Learn how to sell. It’s the best investment you will ever make. Mark Cuban says so.

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