UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF BRAND ADVOCATES

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If you would like your organisation to be featured in this pullout, contact us at editor@leaderonomics.com
I MAGINE you’re an entrepreneur with a network of professional fitness clubs across the country. Of course, the market includes people interest-
ed in well-being and good health. But you also know that clients are dif-
ferent in so many ways, so dividing them into several categories would help you optimise your services. For example, young parents would require childcare services when they are in the club. Obviously, they should be treated differently as their needs are slightly different. There are also people who come in after work and train intensively for one hour or so. Basically, there are at least a few groups of clients whose priorities, desires, and needs differ.

MEETING THEIR NEEDS
The solution is market segmenta-
tion – the process of dividing the target market into clearly defined subgroups of customers with common needs, require-
ments, and priorities (in layman’s terms – a specific approach to each category of clients). This approach can significantly increase sales and improve customer loyalty. Even if you sell the same product to different subgroups, you can create dif-
ferent experiences and provide different services.

Although most marketers intuitively understand the criteria for the division, it’s important that all business owners know the methods and techniques of market segmentation. To understand the benefits that your business will get, let’s get back to the fitness club network scenario. Your visitors, on a particular season, may consist of parents and pensioners.

1. To incite parents, you can place ads focused on family health. Place this ad on your website, blog and relevant resources. You can also offer the service of childcare or create a children’s room in the club.
2. Moreover, you can reduce the price for day visitors because usually fewer people come at this time.
3. The next subgroup – pensioners – has very different needs. They need per-
sional coaches who specialise in helping people of a certain age.

WHERE TO START
Firstly, examine each group carefully to ensure that you have divided them accordingly:

- Availability
- Will you be able to achieve your goals?
- Do you have enough money, resources and distribution channels?
- Measurability
- Are you able to estimate the number of customers in each subgroup so that you can effectively distribute the money on marketing?
- Essentiality
- Is this subgroup of clients large and stable enough to guarantee your pay off?
- Viability
- Will consumers be able to afford this product or service? Do they understand all the benefits that you offer them? Do they see your product or service as better than that of your competitors?

Take into account the following factors when segmenting the market:

- Geographic (country, language, region, etc.)
- Psychographic (lifestyle, values, and interests)
- Sociographic (religion, age, education, occupation, ethnicity, the level of income)
- Demographic (gender, age, occupation, ethnicity, the level of income)
- Psychographic (lifestyle, values, interests)
- Behavioural (the purpose and the advantages of the product).

These four elements are nothing new, of course. Businessmen and market-
ers have been using them for decades already, but they still need to be used together with other strategies. You cannot assign too much value to one of these elements. For example, there is still a huge difference between people of the same age in terms of their interests, values, and behaviour.

MARKET SEGMENTATION AND BEHAVIOURAL PSYCHOLOGY
Technology has allowed business own-
ers to reinvent business models and seg-
ment the market based on behavioural psychology. For example, Amazon was the first to advertise products on the base of the purchase history of the client. Netflix offers movies based on the same crite-
ria.

Both companies keep track of pur-
chases and activities of their customers and segment the market based on their behaviours. The development of communication has brought about many new strategies for segmentation. Apple positions its products as pre-
mium and providing a different outlook on a person’s lifestyle. Apple’s customers, therefore, pay a lot of money not only for the quality of the product but also the desire to be special.

At the same time, Apple sells old models at a reduced price. This approach attracts new customers by giving them opportunities to try out old models, evaluate them and then decide if they want to purchase a new one later.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS
By constantly tracking and learn-
ing new technologies and approaches, you’ll be able to gain a competitive advantage.

Everything changes at breakneck speed in this digital age, so keeping up with the times to stay on the crest of a business wave is more essential than ever.
PASSION: AN UNTACHABLE TRAIT

FIND IT TO SUCCEED ON YOUR OWN TERMS

By ROSHAN THIRAN
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“"You must give everything to make your life as beautiful as the dreams that dance in your imagination."”
– Roman Payne

WHAT does it mean to have a passion? Can you really be passionate about customer service? Can you truly have a passion for human resources (HR) management? Can passion really arise within a person whenever they see a spreadsheet filled with numbers?

The answer to all of the above is: of course. So what does it mean to have a passion for something?

It means to have such an intense grasp on a problem you can’t stop thinking about solving; it means learning about and spending time with that problem as much as possible, and as long as it takes for ideas to manifest on how you might go about finding a solution.

It means looking for the excruciating pain points that, when alleviated, provide a much-needed service to others, or makes some kind of positive difference to the society around you.

One person’s passion is another person’s slog – but whatever we do, if we have yet to find our passion, we should find it as soon as possible: great achievements are born from great passion.

Some people might find the idea of being passionate about customer service to be a truly dull pursuit. Passion, some might say, is not about solving problems; it’s about discovering what really matters to you and putting your heart and soul into it.

But, for some people, delivering great customer service or HR management, or improving numbers that appear on a spreadsheet is what really matters to them.

It’s what keeps them up at night as they think, “How can I make the kinds of improvements that will genuinely make a difference?”

AN UNTACHABLE SKILL

“It doesn’t matter what you did or where you were...it matters who you are and what you’re doing. Get out there! Sing the song in your head and let everyone know who you are!” – Steve Maraboli

What we’re passionate about is, of course, subjective.

One person’s passion is another person’s slog – but whatever we do, if we have yet to find our passion, we should find it as soon as possible: great achievements are born from great passion.

We can be taught everything else: competencies, problem solving, communication skills, practical skills, networking – they are all teachable, except for passion.

That can only come from within ourselves.

We have seen enough research to suggest that much of the world’s workforce is disengaged in the work they do. It’s not challenging enough, it’s monotonous, it’s stressful, it’s demanding, managers fail to offer direction and development, and so on.

But what if we worked with others to help them find passion in what they do, to see deeper meaning and purpose in what they’re helping to work towards?

You might say, “That’s all very well, but not everyone can be a success, we can’t all be passionate about what we do.”

Of course, there will be those who lack the courage to go looking for their passion, while others will remain indifferent to the idea that they should find one in the first place, or even look for it wherever they happen to be.

But it’s true: not everyone can be a success and not everyone will discover their passion.

But for those among us who feel that they have the potential to help solve an exceptional problem, or those who already have that nagging desire that won’t leave them alone until they take on that nagging challenge, there is nothing in the world that can offer a more fulfilling and meaningful satisfaction than when you fully engage in your passion – whatever it may be.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE OR INTEGRATION?

“If you want to identify me, ask me not where I live, or what I like to eat, or how I comb my hair, but ask me what I am living for, in detail, ask me what I think is keeping me from living fully for the thing I want to live for.” – Thomas Merton

There is no need to separate ‘work’ and ‘life’ because there is no dissatisfaction and no desire to separate the two. Being engaged in one’s passion already brings a sense of balance – there’s nothing to adjust.

Most of us will be aware of the debate over whether we should aim for a work-life balance, or whether we should opt instead for a work-life integration.

Personally, I would suggest that the choice is a personal one. All of us should be free to choose whether we separate out lives into different compartments, or be free to choose whether we separate the parts of our work, where’s the time for friends and family, rest and relaxation?".

This would be a problem that falls within the work-life balance: having a work-life integration doesn’t mean that every moment is spent on the work, rather, it means to so enjoy your passion that you are able to fit it around your life, which is entirely different than feeling that you have to find time for the important things outside your work.

It’s the shift in perspective that makes the difference.

SENSE OF PURPOSE

In discovering what we’re truly passionate about, we have more zest for life. We can get up every morning – whether it’s a Monday or Friday – and feel the same enthusiasm for whatever we’re trying to achieve.

And because we’re so engaged and alive in cultivating a deep sense of purpose, we connect better with everything and everyone else around us, and we magically find the time for everything that matters to us, precisely because we are more attuned, focused, and driven, thanks to our passion.

Without constant innovation, organisations will face a tough business terrain. Learn the importance of innovation and know how to cultivate the 5-step design-thinking process. E-mail info@leaderonomics.com or go to leaderonomics.org for more information.

Passionate people are sometimes regarded as the crazy ones, or the misfits; the rebels, the troublemakers. But we believe these are the ones who change things and push boundaries. Here’s to the crazy ones. bit.ly/leaderonomics

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A NEW SPARK
THE WEEK AWAY FROM THE OFFICE THAT CHANGED ME

By TAMARA JAYNE
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WHEN I signed up for SPARK Leadership Programme as a camp facilitator last month, I thought, “Great. I can help teens become a better version of themselves even if it is a small part to play as a facilitator.”

Little did I know, how much I would gain.

Flashback to when I was 16, I remember looking at other ‘older’ people I respected with eagerness to be ‘as confident’ and ‘assured of myself’ as they seemed to the young naive me.

I thought that once I reached that stage in life, I’d know more, be more, and possibly give more.

It now seems silly thinking how gullible I was and how I’ve learnt that age doesn’t determine how much you know if you don’t actively search for knowledge.

GAIN MORE WHEN YOU GIVE
The first day of camp was like a frozen block of ice that has never seen the light of day and is now taken out of the freezer to defrost.

I sat with a group of 14- to 16-year-olds from different backgrounds who were awkward and shy with each other. The ice began to melt as we bonded over game conversations and what we liked doing in our spare time.

Over the following days, the sessions were impactful and practical. The friendships created were shared over meal times and working as a group.

As the Leaderonomics Youth team ran activities, I watched each nervous teen who spoke up on the first day with a shaky voice slowly transformed into a budding individual gaining confidence. It was humbling to watch the more vocal ones help the shyer participants, and to witness people from different walks of life across Malaysia, come together for one purpose — to become better leaders.

Sara (name changed for privacy), one of the girls I met, is a bubbly and observant individual who started to open up to her team.

During one of the sessions, with watery eyes, she shared with the group about the struggles she faces. Watching her fellow teammates reach out to her and support her left me teary.

These kids were amazing. Through struggles of their own, they learnt to look out for someone else and be there for others, no matter the race, status or background.

And it wasn’t an experience specific to me as I discovered during our facilitators’ debriefing sessions later on.

PROJECT DAY
The teams were asked to plan a project to visit the elderly and children’s homes alike, and to make a difference in their communities. Some cooked, some cleaned, and some sang and danced.

It was fascinating to watch them giving their time, love, and effort to brighten someone else’s day.

My team, in particular, made pisang goreng (banana fritters) and teh tarik (milk tea) for the senior folks, who lapped it up and asked for seconds.

BIGGER WORLD
Spending one week with this bunch of kids left us all closer than ever. There were lots of laughter and tears, but the best of all, I believe each person’s world opened up just that little bit more.

On the final day, as we were preparing to go our separate ways, the facilitators were given the opportunity to highlight and share the strengths of each person in our teams.

We were able to share about what we had observed and learnt about each of them in the past seven days spent together.

As we packed to leave, one of the participants came up to me and said, “Thank you for facilitating and making me a better person.”

No. Thank you for making me a better person.

SPARK Leadership Programme is a partnership between ECM Libra Foundation, AirAsia, Leaderonomics and Epsom College in Malaysia. SPARK aims to help 80 deserving participants carefully selected from all across Malaysia to develop their leadership attitude, self-awareness, critical and creative thinking, communication, and self-confidence.

The participants are required to execute a live community project during the duration of the programme. This challenge is specially designed to ensure that participants can confidently apply the things they have learnt throughout the programme, and are able to integrate these skills and principles into their personal leadership journey.

To find out more about the programme, email our Leaderonomics Youth team at youth@leaderonomics.com.
CORPORATE STORYTELLING AND HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

WHY DO SOME BRANDS APPEAR SO MUCH MORE AUTHENTIC THAN OTHERS?

Another way to preserve heritage is to build an archive that can be used to offer indisputable evidence that the image you’re trying to project, the values you espouse, and the reputation you defend are not only legitimate, but also completely warranted.

REACHING BACK INTO YOUR ARCHIVE CAN SUPPORT TODAY’S REPUTATIONAL CLAIMS

Another way to preserve heritage is to build an archive that can be used to offer indisputable evidence that the image you’re trying to project, the values you espouse, and the reputation you defend are not only legitimate, but also completely warranted.

You want to demonstrate that you’re an innovative company? Or that you’ve been at the forefront of environmental preservation over the course of your history? Well, often the proof can be found within your own archival assets, which can then be repurposed to validate your claims.

THE POWER OF THE COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS IN STORYTELLING

Among the best chroniclers of any organisation’s story narrative are the men and women who have worked there over the years. Oral histories derived from current employees and retirees are a powerful way to gather context about important periods of historical change within any organisation.

Nothing will get a group of employees more engaged or emotionally connected to an organisation than hearing the authentic stories of a past leader, or even a previously unsung hero (a rank-and-file employee) who made a unique contribution that bent the curve of history, shaping the organisation of today.

WHY ANNIVERSARIES MATTER

In a world where many businesses fail within their first five years, commemorating a significant anniversary represents another powerful form of heritage management that’s an authentic way to support your brand.

Huntington Bancshares, which celebrated its 150th year in 2016, was a case in point. Among the 200 oldest banks in the United States, the Columbus, Ohio-based Huntington used its sesquicentennial to engage its employees and other stakeholders around the stories embedded within its history.

It’s an inspiring example of how the men and women of Huntington and its predecessor banks, through grit and determination, built an organisation that could survive the Panic of 1893, the Panic of 1907, the Great Depression and the Great Recession of the past decade, and went on to become one of the largest banks in the Midwest.

This narrative of growth and success also links to the future, as the company later announced plans to buy FirstMerit Bank in a deal that would make Huntington the largest bank in Ohio, and an emerging contender in Chicago and Wisconsin.

IN A GIST

Today’s consumers and employees, especially Millennials, are looking for relationships with organisations that have a clear purpose and character.

The book offers useful case studies about ways in which leading organisations are embracing history as a means of defining (or in some cases, redefining) their brand so that authenticity becomes more than just a mantra.

DO YOUR PEOPLE RECOGNISE THEIR STRENGTHS?

Let us help your employees understand what it takes to grow their leadership skills and bring positive impact to your business.

Our coaching experts are ready to journey with your organisation to discover and unlock hidden potential in your workforce.

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In 2014, president of The Inquiry Institute Marilee Adams, who was our guest on The Leaderonomics Show was so fascinated by the story of Leaderonomics that she turned the articles around and interviewed our co-founder Roshan Thiran on the genesis of Leaderonomics instead. Check out this interview at: bit.ly/4DhStoryvid

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SALES TRANSFORMED
HOW MACHINE LEARNING IS CHANGING THE GAME

By PETER ECONOMY
www.leaderonomics.com

Machine learning is the key to unlocking the full power of data. Just as Henry Ford taught the world how to mass-produce the automobile, machine learning will allow organisations to mass-produce insights. However, the power of machine learning lies in the hands of data scientists and business analysts who can help executives and board members make sense of the data. This is where the role of data analysts and data scientists becomes crucial.

HOW MACHINE LEARNING WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE SALES FUNCTION

There are many ways that companies can use machine learning in their sales process. Here are just a few of them:

- **Predict customer needs**: Business success relies on how well we provide what our customers need. Machine learning can improve how responsive and proactive we are to the needs of our customers.
- **Bigger & better sales efforts**: Machines won’t forget to follow-up. Even though many organisations have automated lead generation, machine learning will now help sales organisations maintain contacts and ensure that ongoing relationships are kept alive.
- **Better approach to data**: When you gather data on your prospective client (company size, stakeholders, existing employees) and then, through machine learning, have the ability to compare it to other data sets, you can connect the dots and better predict what solutions would be effective and the likelihood of the deal closing and how long it will take. This insight helps sales management better allocate resources and project sales projections.
- **Efficient transactional sales**: According to Harvard Business Review, by 2020, customers will manage 85% of their interactions with an organisation without interacting with a human. How can we help salespeople look particularly professional to potential customers?
  - **Lack of eloquence**: The main obstacle people have when grappling with whether or not to purchase something is how the product will benefit them. The better we are at addressing our customer’s questions, the more likely they are to consume our message.
  - **Lack of product knowledge**: There’s nothing worse than being caught off guard when someone asks you something you’re supposed to know – especially when you’re attempting to convince the other person to purchase the item.
  - **Relying on what you’re selling**: Read up on what you’re selling before you make any sales call, so that you can answer all the most personal questions.
  - **Talking more than you listen**: It’s important to market what you want to give your buyer, not listen or respond – to questions and concerns is a huge turn-off for any potential buyer. Make sure to pay attention to what your customer says – selling is a two-way street.
  - **Inability to turn product features into benefits**: The main obstacle people have when grappling with whether or not to purchase something is how the product will benefit them. The better we are at addressing our customer’s questions, the more likely they are to consume our message.
  - **Buying from the price too early**: Without a clear understanding of how you can help your customer, offering the lowest price can make you appear less professional and less empathetic to your customer’s needs. Put into practice this rule: you have a greater chance of finding the solution to the problem.
  - **Not customising the presentation**: Nothing ticks off potential buyers more than receiving a canned presentation for a product that has nothing to do with their own unique needs.
  - **Making the buyer into just another person**: Selling is a two-way street. To make salespeople look particularly professional to potential customers.

SALES BAD HABITS

The 7 Things That Make You Look Unprofessional

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It has been an exciting journey so far for participants of the first ever AmBank BizRACE. We had so many excellent businesses in our Top 100 that our esteemed panel of judges faced a tough task shortlisting just 30 finalists. Therefore, we have decided to include five more businesses to form our Top 35 finalists. We would also like to thank everyone who took part in this exciting challenge to scale and grow their business to the next level.

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By PETER ECONOMY
www.leaderonomics.com

As all salespeople know, it’s not always easy to convince people to buy things – especially things they don’t want. You can easily come off as too salesy or too eager, too pushy or unenthusiastic.

Sticking the perfect balance can be difficult. But it’s something that’s completely necessary if you don’t want to come across as unprofessional to potential customers. This is why you need to know your product very well. You need to know your product very well. You need to know your product very well.

We get a glimpse of what’s to come with Salesforce’s Einstein: the world’s leading data platform for sales. The better we are at addressing our customer’s questions, the more likely they are to consume our message. However, the power of machine learning will now help sales organisations maintain contacts and ensure that ongoing relationships are kept alive. When you gather data on your prospective client (company size, stakeholders, existing employees) and then, through machine learning, have the ability to compare it to other data sets, you can connect the dots and better predict what solutions would be effective and the likelihood of the deal closing and how long it will take. This insight helps sales management better allocate resources and project sales projections.

Sales communication: There will most likely be dramatic changes to sales communication as a result of machine learning. If business communication mimics the transformation of consumer communication, the businesses will be able to learn by using virtual reality. This will allow prospects to tour a factory and even talk to their salesperson from the comfort of their home. This will help salespeople look particularly professional to potential customers.

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MORE THAN A PRODUCT
DON’T LET ONE OFFERING DISTRACT YOU FROM BUILDING A LONG-TERM BRAND

By ROBERT GLAZER
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NOBODY sets out to be a one-hit wonder. But too much focus on a hot product can distract a company from building the culture, operations and strategy it needs for long-term success and sustainability.

When you step back and think about it, nearly every sustainable company is about more than a product or two. For example, Apple has proven that it knows how to evolve, successfully shifting from personal computers to content distribution to phones that have disrupted the cellphone industry.

Certainly, the majority of Apple’s sales come from iPhones, but the tech giant had also become a leader in smartwatches previously.

Built around reinventing itself, Apple was bigger than any one product.

And that’s a good thing, because when you bet your company’s future on just one product’s explosive success, that doesn’t automatically translate to long-term growth.

In fact, just the opposite often happens: innovation is stifled. If there’s too much hubris related to a single offering — too much belief that the future will look like the present — your company will eventually hit a wall.

TOO HOT TO HANDLE

Hot products can lead to unsound financial decisions. Riding the wave of a single product’s success too far and too fast can result in excess inventory or unsustainable infrastructure expansion.

Many times, when a new company looks up from its product’s success, it finds itself out of money.

Twenty-nine percent of failed startups in one study blamed their respective failures on money and the effort to determine how it should be spent.

Successful companies know they can’t rest on a product’s success even for a moment, they keep looking ahead.

Of course, that’s not easy; making the most of a hot commodity while basing strategic decisions on your company’s future can be a sweat-inducing situation.

1. DELIVER ON A BIGGER VISION

Our company delivers high-quality performance-marketing programmes each day. But we also strive to keep a broader, more aspirational focus.

Give our vision of driving digital marketing to be performance-based, and changing the work-life paradigm, we’ve forged a mission that focuses on leading through innovation, exceptional client service and superior results.

In other words, no single offering can achieve our vision.

Homing-in on the right forward-thinking vision is challenging but critical.

So, if this is your aim, start by identifying your company’s core values and aligning them with current offerings.

But don’t stop with solving today’s needs, figure out how to keep your values and products aligned as the market evolves.

Look ahead five or 10 years, and map a strategy that is designed for a longer period.

Success companies know they can’t rest on a product’s success even for a moment; they keep looking ahead.

2. COMMIT TO R&D FROM THE GET-GO

When a product is at the height of its success, the company that created it typically finds it easy to believe that demand and growth will continue at that momentary peak — which is never the case.

That’s why great companies, from their inception, commit to investing a percentage of revenue into ongoing research and development (R&D). For example, Netflix is so proactive about staying ahead of changes it was willing to make its own product obsolete.

Establishing a clear vision and tying strategy decisions directly to it will help reinforce your efforts to build a whole business, not just a product.

What’s more, a strong vision will directly improve your bottom line. When employees feel that their company’s vision is meaningful, their engagement level tends to exceed the average by a remarkable 15 points.

3. DON’T OVERLOOK OPERATIONS

Even though finance, human resources (HR) and operations are a little less exciting than sales and marketing, they’re also key to long-term success.

Too many Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, for example, treat people and operations as secondary, focusing more on product development or customers.

We found that consciously giving equal attention to operational excellence, especially hiring practices and company culture, can help transform good products and services into profit.

Hiring smart and building an open culture that inspires innovation doesn’t just happen; it requires listening to employees about what’s working and where they see opportunities for improvement.

From there, focus on offering tools and resources to help employees stay sharp and grow in their careers.

Work with HR to create a culture that attracts, motivates and engages in step with your company’s vision.

So, for the last time: are you a one-trick pony?

A good test is to ask whether people know the name of the company that makes a particular product.

If consumers don’t know your company name but do know your hottest product, you may be a one-hit wonder.

Developing a product that taps into a market need is a great thing — a true game changer.

But, building a successful business around it means making sure people know your brand and what you stand for, not just its most famous product.
**Connecting with Customers**

**Keep it short and simple**

The onus is on the CEO to distill a complex business situation into a simple message of seven to 10 words. It is possible but rarely done effectively. Simplicity and brevity cut through the chatter and create recall and impact.

When companies aim at the customer's head with complex or unclear messages, it's no wonder they miss the mark. The striking fact is that a corporate customer is represented by an individual. Understanding what makes a person tick, what they remember and how they act equally applies in the business-to-business space.

Third, companies miss the fact that implicit in the buying decision is a choice. Buying one product means not buying another.

Communication has to help customers make this choice. Presenting information without sharply differentiating and expecting customers to hold information about different companies in their head to make a rational choice is an irrational expectation.

Simplicity, as Leonardo da Vinci once said, is the ultimate sophistication. Most companies do one or all of four things that matter to customers – help them make money, save money, reduce risk or increase convenience. It's really that simple.

Which dimension a company chooses to stress is important. Is it possible for a company to distill its core message in a few words? Most certainly.

A tagline is not a cheap marketing gimmick. It is a powerful business tool if used correctly.

Developing one requires clarity regarding the core value to the customer and discipline about what to say and what to leave out. Some do it well, most don't. Here are a few examples of strong taglines and value propositions:

- **Ajax** – “Stronger than dirt”. Three words only. Straight to the point.

Reinforces the main reason for buying the product.

- **Subway** – “Eat fresh”. Simple. Not only catches the core value proposition but, in two words, it clearly differentiates them from others.

Mac Book – “Beauty outside. Beast inside”. In four words you get why you should buy the product. It also addresses some of the concerns customers may have had about performance.

- **L'Oréal** – “Because you are worth it”. It appeals to the emotion and, in five words, builds the buyers' self-image and self-worth in a powerful manner.

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Most believe that about 70% of what we learn comes from training and classroom sessions. Then networking, role modelling and mentorship (about 20% of what we learn), however, based on research, the reverse is true. It is the on-the-job experience that develops business acumen and long-term career growth. The harder the role, the tougher the environment, the more challenging the assignments, the more you learn and grow. It pays to get your hands dirty. Read more on bit.ly/kotortangan

Tommy is a CEO coach, author, speaker, and advisor who believes in helping good leaders become great! To engage with him, email him at editor@leaderonomics.com

SHOULD YOU BE A HANDS-ON LEADER?

THIS APPROACH COULD SERVE AN ORGANISATION BETTER THAN SEMI-ANNUAL REVIEWS

Micro-monitoring. A leader’s tactical tool

Sadly, this is why leaders need to micro-monitor. Micro-monitoring isn’t a desire to interfere; it’s a tactic to make sure people are delivering. It’s a proven way to prod your employees to deliver according to the plan.

Obviously, you can’t know everything that’s going on inside your business, but you must make sure everyone else is obsessed with the details. It is your responsibility to walk the shop floor so you can help people succeed.

Wal-Mart founder, Sam Walton, famously described his management style as “management by walking and flying around.”

Others at Wal-Mart described it as “management by looking over your shoulder.” I’m sure they didn’t mean this as a compliment, but it beg the question, would Wal-Mart have become a success without it? The answer is no! Wal-Mart enjoys a 20-year average return on equity of 33%, average sales growth of 35%, and incredible sales per square foot – 50% better than the industry norm.

According to Walton, “You’ve got to give folks responsibility you’ve got to trust them, and then you’ve got to check up on them.”

Reactive vs proactive leadership

When leaders have the mindset of making sure their teams succeed, then monitoring moves from inspection, which invokes resistance, to proactively ensuring success. Any boss can set annual key performance indicators and then try to rely on twice-per-year performance reviews as a means to deliver them, but this is simply insufficient when it comes to monitoring for future success. Reactive, after-the-fact performance reviews are the antithesis of hands-on, proactive leadership.

Effective monitoring happens in real time. It is more, much more, than a formal twice-a-year or once-a-quarter process.

The case of Majid

Majid Al Futtaim, owner and operator of more than a dozen malls, including the Mall of the Emirates, walks his malls every single week. Surely, the owner of a multi-billion-dollar business could justifiably kick his feet up on his desk and admire the view from his penthouse office.

But, Majid is hungry to see the “shopping bag” test first-hand. How many bags are people carrying in their hands? Are they full? More this week than last week? What types of goods are people buying? This simple manual test is an economic indicator for how well the stores are turning over their inventory.

Some would argue that walking the malls every week is really just too much for an owner, but this is how he keeps his finger on the pulse of his business. This way, he is able notice things that are out of place and redirect his employees’ focus.

Get your hands dirty!

Get out of your office, watch what’s happening in your business. Your employees need you to be hands-on so you can keep them and the business focused.

It’s your responsibility to make sure everyone is actually doing what’s expected. When you know what they’re doing, you can help them succeed.

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Begin a flexible learning experience that complements your work lifestyle!
By MATT NAYLOR
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I T’S always incredibly tempting when we move on from a certain stage of our lives – be it leaving a job, school or even a relationship – to “go out with a bang” and have the last laugh. It’s like when Walter White quitted his job at the car wash in season one of Breaking Bad, he screamed a few choice obscenities at his boss Bogdan on the way out, finally getting his frustrations off his chest.

Spoiler alert – Walter and his wife went back to buy the car wash in a later season and were quoted an astronomical price by Bogdan, who was still smarting from Walter’s tirade. What could have been an amicable transaction between two former colleagues was unnecessarily complicated by Walter; not having been able to control himself previously.
The moral of the story is to resist the temptation to burn bridges and to move on with grace.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING

The need to maintain a network of people from your previous life experiences is not new advice, but I can’t emphasise it enough.

From personal experience, when I first left high school, I decided that I was done with my classmates and removed 90% of them from my Facebook friends list (a hugely rebellious statement coming from a Millennial). Five years later, I left university and reconnected with one of the very few schoolmates with whom I had kept on good terms. It led to his father offering me my first ever full-time job. Yes, I may have tried to distance myself from my school life, but had I made a bigger show of leaving the school with nothing but resentment for those around me, I would never have gotten that opportunity to kick-start my career.

From personal experience, when you leave a place, you never know who you may meet, even from your former life. Even those that you may assume that will never be important, may very well be the ones you need to cross tomorrow. The last thing you want to do is regret the way you previously treated them, now that they hold your fate in their hands.

As we continue to operate our business at breakneck speed, we need to keep expanding our network to keep up with business demands and overcome multiple challenges. Check out this Leaderonomics.com article on how your business may only be as strong as the connections you make: bit.ly/2zwph2z

Who knows where I would be if I had kept in touch with the rest of the masses?

RESPECT THOSE AROUND YOU

Think about that intern you force him to do the most degrading of menial work; that co-worker you just can’t stand; the boss who treats you like you’re subhuman, that difficult client; that incredibly self-important college professor; that ex who drove you insane.

Treat all of them with respect and dignity. Again, it may be tempting to have the final word and show them the finger once you perceive them to be no longer important in your life. But those bridges you burn today may very well be the ones you need to cross tomorrow. The last thing you want to do is regret the way you previously treated them, now that they hold your fate in their hands.

It can be agonising to walk away and be courteous sometimes, but it just may be the best decision you can ever make.

Matt regularly contributes articles with obscure pop culture references. British-born before his many years spent in Malaysia, he now prefers nasi lemak to fish and chips any day of the week.

A good mentor understands that a person can learn important lessons even if they fail, as long as the person does not give up and stay down after the failure. Alvin Dan shares the important role of mentors and role models in the process of growth and mental development. Head to bit.ly/RYGmentoryouth

”Being right doesn’t mean you win. You win by establishing credibility, a relationship, and trust.” — David Brock

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QUOTES

Online Exclusive

Do you have guts for marketing? Stop fine-tuning those marketing plans until they reach perfection. Pick up some courage and start executing them. Without proper strategy or planning you will face challenges to bring out the value of your brand. Read this piece on how you can improve your marketing: bit.ly/marketingwell

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