DISCOVERING YOUR ROLE IN A DIGITAL WORLD

4 WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT BLOCKCHAIN
6 IS YOUR INDUSTRY LEFT BEHIND?
10 HOW TO STAY FOCUSED IN A DIZZYING TIME

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6 INSIGHTS TO DRIVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

1 ENGAGEMENT IS STILL A NEW CONCEPT

Engagement is still a new concept – even for leadership speakers without condition is a senior executive. In the marketplace, being taught at 4 PDF version. can download the

2 EVERYONE MEASURES ENGAGEMENT DIFFERENTLY, BUT THE FINDINGS ARE THE SAME

Gallup reported in January 2015 that 30% of the employees in the United States is willing to do anything and everything that you can do to help what they do, and if they don’t have high morale by engaging leadership speaker without condition is a senior executive. In the marketplace, being taught at 4 PDF version. can download the

3 LOW ENGAGEMENT CAN’T BE ENTIRELY PINNED ON BAD MANAGERS

In April 2015, I wrote in Fast Company which directly expressed the idea that managers have the greatest impact on employee engagement. While Ray doesn’t refute this, she’s nevertheless hesitant to say this “lays entirety at their feet.” Ray sees a workplace that changed profoundly around the crash and recovery that began in 2008. Many companies removed multiple levels of management in an effort to cut costs and preservation-motivated measures. Consequently, many people who were individual contributors were additionally tasked with managing teams on top of their original roles.

4 HELPING PEOPLE GAIN BACK TIME IS ONE POWERFUL WAY OF DRIVING ENGAGEMENT

With people spending most of their waking days at work, many have the additional stresses of raising children, caring for elderly parents, and dealing with long and tedious commutes. Ray insists that we have no direct responsibility for supporting employees with these challenges. “Smart employers are figuring out how to help people gain back time back in their original roles.”

5 CASE STUDY ON QUICKEN LOANS: AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT FULL ENGAGEMENT LOOKS LIKE

Organisations including Whole Foods, Alcoa, and NASA were profiled during the DNA study. However, Ray was emphatic in suggesting that mortgage giant Quicken Loans may now be the most actualised employer on the planet. She stressed that few companies have committed themselves more to creating a positive and enabling workplace, which they fully leverage to drive high performance.

6 A CARING BOSS MAY STILL BE THE GREATEST ENGAGEMENT DRIVER

Ray shared what she would say to large group of CEOs seeking to create high engagement in their companies. “Many recruiters try to tell people how it’s going to be much better down the street,” she says. “But if you can get a caring manager who makes you feel valued and respected, people are going to go somewhere where they might not be as lucky as with the manager they have now. “If you have a boss who cares about you, is interested in your development... if you find someone who has your back and has your best interests at heart, and wants to see you become better and more down the road, that’s the type of leader you want to be working with.”

FEELING LOVED AND RESPECTED AT WORK

With unemployment back to pre-recession levels and the job market heating up, people now have choices about where they work. All things equal, people will stay at a company where they feel loved, respected, and where they do not work they enjoy and believe in.

For all of us who manage other humans at work, we must always remember what Ray said was one of the most important conclusions of her research. “The culture you create or the culture you destroy will determine the success of your business.”

Mark spent over 25 years as a senior executive in financial servi-

nances, and now is a leadership speaker & consultant. In his book, Lead From The Heart, he is now being taught 4 American universities.

To engage with him, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

To love someone without condition is to love a person that is based on fleeting emotions with no anchoring depth. To love someone without condition, on the other hand, means to love enough to hold him/her accountable to certain standards of integrity. Check out this article on Leadership.com: bit.ly/2spsSh5

In the marketplace, can we really unconditionally? Let’s discuss at editor@leaderonomics.com.

Discover how to improve team morale by engaging with your team members and applying the three fundamental principles of strengths-based coaching via Leaderonomics’ Strength-Based Leadership programme. Email us at info@leaderonomics.com to find out more.

Emotions with no

The study yielded many uncommon and useful insights, most especially these six:

- Psychological meaningfulness: a sense that their work was worthwhile and made a difference.
- Psychological safety: a feeling they were valued, accepted and respected, and also able to perform in a positive work environment.
- Availability: routinely feeling secure and self-confident while possessing the emotional and psychological energies to perform their job.

Nearly 25 years later, these three elements remain at the core of most theories of employee engagement. It’s also important to note that pay isn’t even on the list.

While false compensation will always be a key component of job satisfaction, it’s not a factor as a day-to-day motivator of behaviour. Neither is whether a company can attract and retain talented people.

The conclusion for organisations everywhere is this: Employee engagement can never be bought; it must be earned.

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By ROSHAN THIRAN
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“Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then try to win.” — Sun Tzu

I t’s fascinating that we can have leaders whose ideas and philosophies have profoundly changed the world—and yet very little is known about the person. Sun Tzu is one such person.

While the Athenians and Greeks had Socrates, China had Sun Tzu, whose enigmatic intellectual powerhouse in the form of Sun Tzu. Some might not immediately recognize the name, but will know his famous work: The Art of War.

Sun Tzu (544–496BC) lived during China’s Warring States period and was a military specialist born in the state of Ch’i. He became renowned for his ability to win battles, using his leadership philosophy centred on the use of psychology rather than force.

The revered general’s ideas have influenced armies and politicians alike through the ages, and his principles have been used ever in the business world of the 21st century, where ‘war’ amongst business competitors were intense and brutal.

Former Secretary of State for the United States Colin Powell said, “I’ve read the Chinese classic The Art of War written by Sun Tzu. Sun Tzu has been studied for hundreds of years. He continues to give inspiration to soldiers and politicians. So every American soldier in the army knows of his works. We require our soldiers to read it.”

SIZE DOESN’T MATTER

One reason that explains the enduring legacy of Sun Tzu is that his work is one of the earliest and best known explorations of what it means to be an effective leader.

At a time when seven states fought for control of China, it might have seemed prudent to build the biggest and best army. However, for Sun Tzu, size didn’t matter—it’s how the army is used that determines defeat or victory.

In today’s world of business, this same principle still holds true. While huge organisations like General Electric struggle to appease investors, smaller and more nimble companies can scale and revolutionise their industries. The size of your army (or workforce) matters little and does not determine success or growth.

WHAT MATTERS THEN?

According to Sun Tzu, the following are essential to be a successful leader:

1. A leader leads by example, not by force. Great leaders are always in the front and the first in battle.
2. You have to believe in yourself. If you personally don’t believe in your organisation’s vision and your ability, nothing will happen. It starts with you.
3. Opportunities multiply as they are seized. Are you aware of opportunities? Are you saying “yes” to them?
4. If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

LESSONS FROM THE ART OF WAR

Here are five key lessons from The Art of War that we can leverage as business leaders in our organisations.

1. “Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak.”

In the business world, the stakes are high and competition fierce. If you’re a leader who sometimes feels unsure about yourself, Sun Tzu’s advice is the original “Fake it until you make it.”

On the other hand, if you are in a strong position, you might want to hold off revealing your cards too soon as it might give your competitor a valuable insight into your next moves.

2. “The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.”

While Sun Tzu had a penchant for psychological warfare, in today’s world, we can be a little less forceful—our successes are still best achieved through subtle diplomacy. He adds that “Supreme excellence consists of breaking the enemy’s resistance without fighting.”

How do you do so? Dialogue and partnership have enabled many small organisations to scale significantly without having to go head-to-head with the big giants.

Sun Tzu also believes in leveraging influencing skills. If you’ve ever known a leader who can influence you towards doing what he wants you to do without trying, that’s an effective leader.

Conversely, we’ve all known people who try to get things done through sheer force of will, and yet they often receive little more than minimal compliance from people.

3. “Can you imagine what I would do if I could do all I can?”

This is a lesson that applies to all of us. What would you do if you knew you couldn’t fail? What would you pursue if you knew it would be within reach, if only you tried?

So many setbacks and failures come from hesitation and limiting beliefs. If we can learn to push beyond our doubts and work towards our dreams without fear, there’s no telling what great successes we could achieve.

4. “Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.”

We all tend to fall into either category—tactical or strategic. Sun Tzu advocates for both.

For those who are big picture and strategic, the best thing we can do is partner with an operator who can get things done. Likewise, an operator will never win the war without a visionary by their side.

5. “Treat your men as you would your own beloved sons. And they will follow you into the deepest valley.”

This is such a valuable lesson for today’s leaders. It’s astounding that many people at the top fail to grasp the power of recognising, appreciating and valuing others.

If you want people to care about your vision, you have to first show that you understand and care about what makes them tick, who they are, and what they want to achieve. Only then will they invest themselves in you.

If you’ve ever known a leader who can influence you towards doing what he wants you to do without trying, that’s an effective leader.

By the time we end this week and begin a new one, all your competitors are 20th century. Today, it’s the business of collaborative leadership model that wins the day.

Check out this relevant Be A Leader video here: MAL/BALKILLCollab

How does this turn up if our leaders can learn to listen and collaborate for the greater good of our nation than to engage in a war of words? Think about it.

Sun Tzu outlined five key essentials that are critical to achieve victory. They are:

1. He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight.
2. He will win who knows how to handle both superior and inferior forces.
3. He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout—tactical or strategic.
4. He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared.
5. He will win who has military capacity and is not interfered with by the sovereign.

How is Amazon different from Alibaba? At the World Economic Forum, Alibaba founder Jack Ma clearly marks the distinction.

While Amazon is like an empire, Alibaba is an ecosystem that make every company become Amazon through its growth model capabilities. Likewise, going into business with the mentality of winning the war by any fall all your competitors is so 20th century.

Sun Tzu is a Chinese military strategist who written The Art of War, which is for everyone to learn from.

From The art of War

Sun Tzu’s ideas have profoundly changed the world and are still relevant today.

This article is available at www.leaderonomics.com, where you can download the PDF version.

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE ART OF WAR

CHINESE MILITARY STRATEGIST SUN TZU REVEALS SECRETS TO SUCCESS

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Sun Tzu outlines a critical element of leadership—decision making. Great leaders know when to fight and when to quit.

When to inspire and when to drive. When to play offense and when to play defence, as we end this week and begin a new one, all your competitors are.

As Sun Tzu points out clearly, most of leadership begins within you—“Know yourself and you will win all battles.”

Be a leader.

By Roshan Thiran
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www.leaderonomics.com | Saturday 3 February 2018
By GLENN GOW
editor@leaderonomics.com

WHETHER you are in business or government or at least interact with both the public and private sectors (that should be all of you), blockchain technologies will impact you in a profound way.

People who have studied blockchain deeply say this is like the internet before Marc Andreessen co-invented the browser.

Then, we had no idea that the world would change as radically as it has. The world will change drastically again, and no one can predict how.

However, let’s take a glimpse into the future at what people are working on now, so you get just an inkling of what’s possible.

IBM is putting a lot of metal behind the blockchain arrow and aggressively going after business. One example is a project with Walmart to track food shipments.

Let’s use the example of mangoes. Why is this important and how does the blockchain fit in?

This food-tracking application is important because Walmart wants to have all the information it can about the mangoes it is buying.

Armed with this information, Walmart can do many valuable things:

- **Verification**: Verify that the mangoes claimed to be organic are actually so (ensures quality).
- **Tracking**: Track the mangoes as they travel from the farm to the store, so handlers know where they are and when they will arrive (reduces cost).
- **Ensure quality**: If they need to be refrigerated to certain temperatures to ensure freshness during shipment (ensures quality).
- **Recall management**: Know exactly which mangoes should be taken off the shelves if there’s a problem with the food (ensures quality and reduces cost).
- **Automation**: Reduce human interaction required between farmers, distributors, brokers and buyers (reduces cost).

Where does the blockchain fit in?

Here’s how a blockchain-enabled mango-buying transaction works better than a process without the blockchain.

1. **VERIFICATION**

   It turns out that people eat more food that has been labelled “organic” than is farmed.

   However, there is a possibility that some non-organic ones can make their way into shipments unbeknownst to the buyer.

   Now, the mangoes get labelled at the source by a trusted entity that deems them organic. That information is then recorded on the blockchain, and that information cannot be changed.

   The “proof of organic” is now locked in and Walmart now fully trusts its mangoes as organic.

   It makes it difficult for anyone in the chain to fraudulently sell you mangoes that are not organic.

2. **TRACKING**

   Walmart is great at removing costs from their supply chains—maybe the most efficient company in the world for this.

   Now, they can build in a delivery price guarantee into the system, without human intervention. It works like this:

   Using a smart contract (code that represents an agreement), Walmart can say they will pay a certain amount for mangoes that show up on the shipping dock within a specific shipment window.

   However, let’s say the transportation company has thermometers on their truck to continuously report the temperature of the truck during transport, then Walmart will know that the mangoes are fresh when they arrive, ensuring high quality.

   Again, this is done automatically on the blockchain due to a trusted source of information (the thermometers) communicating with the smart contract that has set the temperature parameters.

   To read where the mangoes are going next in the supply chain and the role of blockchain, head to Leaderonomics.com here: bit.ly/GGblockchain

3. **ENSURE QUALITY**

   If the refrigerator truck in which the mangoes are shipped malfunctions, the mangoes could go bad.

   The shipper and Walmart might not realise there’s a problem, but ultimately, the consumer will be very unhappy.

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   And, they can do that without having to create paperwork representing a different price for a late shipment.

   The payment to the late shipper gets changed automatically, based on the code in the smart contract.

   **WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOUR EMPLOYEES?**

   1. **Their family. Their children.**

      Give your employees the opportunity to integrate work and family by providing a platform for their children to also discover their leadership potential. Our camps encourage children and youth to develop new skills, build healthy relationships, and empower them to make a difference wherever they are.

   2. **Employee engagement starts from the heart, why not invest into what matters most?**

      Contact us today at youth@leaderonomics.com to find out about our customisable leadership camps.

   3. **CarE about bloCkChain**

      By GLENN GOW

      editor@leaderonomics.com

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AI – A THREAT OR A TOOL?

HOW IT CAN HELP US WITH OUR COMMUNICATION

Even Alfred Pennyworth, Bruce Wayne’s trustworthy butler, who also happens to be excellent at analytics and engineering works, cannot match the processing power of Jarvis. Not even Niles, the butler from The Nanny series, whose sense of humour and sarcasm towards Cee Cee Babcock, was once thought to be unparalleled. Jarvis was simply exceptional, but far from a reality.

THE DAWN OF AI SYSTEMS
The idea of a human-like, truly self-aware AI, although completely legitimate, is still limited by technology itself. Human beings are fully aware of their existence, and that means they are aware of every component, function and interactions within the human body.
At the moment, AI systems are only able to execute individual tasks, independent of others. They may have excellent image or voice recognition capabilities, but these two functions are not aware of each other. Picture yourself as having your left hand and right hand as two separate units, requiring two sets of brains to function, and these brains are not aware of each other’s existence.
Simply put, we have not arrived to a place where one single AI system can perform all human functionalities.

FROM INFORMATION TO COMMUNICATION
In the midst of these advancements, we must realise that we have long moved past the Information Age and are now heading towards the Age of Communications. Information technology was revolutionary back then because it transformed the way people send and receive information. It made information easily accessible to almost anyone with a smart device. With information now readily available, the breakthrough needed was no longer in how information is accessed but in how it is communicated.
Together with smart devices, instant messaging platforms and social media networks have certainly transformed how we communicate. However, much of these changes have been cast in a negative light with the loss of privacy and the rise of anti-social behaviour. As people prefer digital communications to personal touch, we could be heading towards a worldwide communication breakdown.

LEVERAGING AI FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION
The field of AI that deals with human languages is known as Natural Language Processing. After years of research and development, and many failed attempts like the infamous Microsoft Office assistant, Clippy and the early stages of Apple’s Siri, AI has finally had a major breakthrough in the area of communication.
As a result, we have seen a rise in chatbots, which is now popularly used as a replacement for online customer service, and even apps like Replika that solve the need for relationships for some. There is even Buush, Microsoft’s chatbot on Facebook that has the personality of a girl who enjoys anything Bollywood.
She can even reply in Hindi and is capable of making typos to make her replies sound as natural as possible. On that note, why not use AI to create products that enhance communications not only from a social perspective, but in a way that creates a more tangible effect?

As Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam once said, peace in the world starts from righteousness in the heart. Could it be possible for AI to make us better people? Imagine some of the most popular and effective personality and behavioural assessments used by many, now having an AI tool to provide a clearer and more continuous reflection of our character.

To read the rest of this article, please head to Leaderonomics.com at bit.ly/AKaipeace

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Customer service needs a makeover. The fact is that while companies are falling all over themselves to build chatbots from scratch, many of them aren’t making effective use of the customer service data at their fingertips. AI is about the people and not the machines, and companies can’t lose the human touch in their rush to automate customer service. Check out what this is all about here at bit.ly/znQmgF

■ Arun is the Digital Initiatives Lead at Leaderonomics. He believes that we should never settle for today and never quit from tomorrow, and therefore aims to inspire as many as possible to pursue their purpose, passion and dreams. What did you think of this article? Tell us at editor@leaderonomics.com

CAN YOUR MANAGERS SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE?

What if your managers made decisions with your whole business in mind? Train your new managers to see the full picture and to understand how their decisions affect the whole organisation. Our Build Your Business simulation will stretch their strategic thinking and execution skills in a competitive yet safe environment.
**DIGITAL IMPACT, DIGITALLY? IS YOUR INDUSTRY AFFECTED TOO?**

*By Sandy Clarke*

WE live in an age of advancement. The importance of digital technology in our lives is vast and profound. New age digital tools have changed the way we share information, connect with others, and conduct business. The potential of today’s technology is vast, because people are at the heart of these innovations.

As digital technology continues to develop, so too does the concept of digital disruption. Almost everything we do in today’s business world is being transformed by this wave of change. The potential for disruption is everywhere — in how we communicate, how we collaborate, how we sell, and how we buy. Digital disruption affects every industry, and it will continue to shape the way we do business for years to come.

**Change Has Never Stopped**

Change has never stopped — not for the car industry, not for the retail sector, and not for any industry. Change is constant and ongoing — you can be sure of one thing: change is inevitable. The interesting question is how you can respond to it.

**Impact of Digital Strategies**

In its 2017 report, GlobalData predicts that by 2021, 64% of all consumer interactions will be digital. This transformation has transformed the way companies do business, and it will continue to shape the way we do business for years to come. The key is to be able to respond to this digital disruption, to be able to adapt to the changes it brings.

**Healthcare**

Healthcare is one industry that has been particularly affected by digital disruption. The speed and level at which advanced technologies require specific skills, adapting to new digital technologies, and understanding the conditions for a radical rethink of the way these industries are organised.

**Digitalization and its Challenges**

Digitalization means that we have more opportunities to be able to interact with our industry, but it also brings many challenges. Not least of all is the need to make sure that our digital signals are all sent in the correct way.

**The Rise of the Prosumer**

A prosumer is a term used for a consumer who is also a producer. They have the power to influence and manage their own media, and they can be complementary, interconnected, and interconnected, and interconnected.

**Areas of Complete Incompleteness**

Table 1 shows the linkedness between the digital and Eastern worlds. And differences with the Western world.

**Digital Transformation**

Digital transformation is a process of transforming a company's digital strategies and services, and communications, and if they can create an authentic message and add进去 to the customer's value for the product, then they don't always open such a prospect for industry leaders.

**Yin/Yang Theory**

Yin/Yang theory seeks to understand the relationships between seemingly opposite or contrary forces. It tries to explain how seemingly opposite or contrary forces can be complementary, interconnected, and interconnected, and interconnected.

**Table 1**

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**Conclusion**

The key is to be able to respond to this digital disruption, to be able to adapt to the changes it brings. The question is, are you ready for the changes that will come?
DON’T HIT SEND!
5 RUDE EMAILS YOU’RE SENDING WITHOUT REALISITING IT

Sending emails that consistently tell people what they do wrong and what they shouldn’t be doing, really takes a toll. Even if you are trying to offer constructive criticism, you need to avoid negativity in your emails at all costs.

1. THE COMPELLING CC AND ‘REPLY ALL’
CC-ing people all the time is one of the most annoying things you can do via email. I’d say it’s the most annoying, but this honour is bestowed upon the excessive “reply all”.

If someone sends an email to you and a bunch of other people, do you really think every recipient needs to get another email from you saying “thanks”? They don’t, and when you do this, it sends people climbing up a wall. The trick for knowing when to CC someone is to treat your email as if it’s an in-person meeting.

The question then becomes this: “Would it be necessary or helpful to have this person come to the meeting?”

If the answer is no, then don’t waste his/her time with an email. As for reply all, just don’t do it.

Even if someone else in the thread replies all, you’re still annoying everyone to death when you join the fray. If you have something to say, it’s better to send this directly (and privately) to the original sender and let him/her decide if the group should know about it too.

2. THE WAY-TOO-BRIEF
All too often, the cause of email conflict is an imbalance between the effort in the initial email and the effort in the response to that email.

When someone types up a detailed paragraph outlining important issues, they expect you to respond carefully. Sending back “Got it” or “Notes” just doesn’t do the trick.

Without knowledge of your intent and tone, brief responses come across as apathetic and even sarcastic to the receiver. This is unfortunate because this is rarely the sender’s intent.

The best way to avoid being misinterpreted in a brief response is to share your intent.

Even responding with “I’m a little busy but should be able to read it later this week” comes across much better than “Got it”, which a lot of people will interpret as indifference.

3. THE ‘URGENT’ SUBJECT LINE
Subject lines that say “URGENT” or “ASAP” show complete disregard for the recipient. If your email is that urgent, pick up the phone and give the person a call.

Even in the rare instance when an email actually is urgent, labeling it as such in the subject line is unnecessary and sets a strong, negative tone.

The key to avoiding “URGENT” subject lines is two-fold:

- If the issue is best dealt with in any form other than email, then that’s how you should be dealing with it.
- If this is not the case, then the issue lies in your ability to create a strong subject line. After all, people check their email frequently, so as long as your subject line catches their eye, it will get the job done.

Instead of labeling the email as urgent, ask yourself why the email is urgent. The answer to this question is your new subject line.

If a client needs an answer today, then simply make your subject line “Client Needs Response Today”.

This maintains the sense of urgency without setting a rude, desperate tone.

4. THE DEBBIE DOWNER
Sending emails that consistently tell people what they do wrong and what they shouldn’t be doing really takes a toll. Even if you are trying to offer constructive criticism, you need to avoid negativity in your emails at all costs.

Since people are unable to hear your tone directly, they read into the connotation of words and create a tone in their head as they go along. Negatives become especially negative in email form.

Whenever you find yourself using negative words like “don’t”, “can’t”, “won’t” or “couldn’t”, turn them into positives. Making this change transforms the entire tone of the message.

For example, instead of saying, “You can’t complete reports like this in the future,” say, “Next time you complete a report, please...”

When you must deliver negative feedback, don’t do it in an email. Just hop on the telephone or walk down the hall.

5. THE ROBOT
It’s easy to think of email as a way to get something done quickly, but when you do this to the extreme, you come across as inhuman.

You wouldn’t walk into someone’s office and hand them a report to do without acknowledging them somehow. Jumping straight into the nitty-gritty might seem like the most effective thing to do, but it leaves a lasting negative impression.

Fixing this one is simple. Just take an extra second to greet the person you’re writing to. You don’t have to ask your recipient about his/her weekend. Just a simple acknowledgment of the individual as a human being is all it takes.

This keeps the tone much more respectful than it would be if you were to simply send assignments.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER
The trickiest thing about emailing is making certain that people perceive your message the way you intend them to. You must be socially aware to pull this off. That is, be willing to take the time to consider how things look from your recipient’s perspective before you hit “send”.

By DR TRAVIS BRADBERRY
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MANAGING TECH

4 UNIQUE RULES FOR SUCCESS IN ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TALENT

By JOSEPH GRENNY
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In 2015, the New York Times published a damaging exposé on the culture of tech-giant Amazon. The Times reported that among many abuses, employees were encouraged to “ Tear apart one another’s ideas in meetings, toil long and late... and [hold] standards that the company boasts are ‘unreasonably high’.”

This unsavoury report left many grateful they hadn’t found themselves on the Amazon payroll. Yet, interestingly, it also conflicted with other accounts of glorified work-place cultures in similar tech companies. Just consider the privileged culture at Google, where employee happiness is a top priority and lavish perks include organic, chef-prepared free food, free health and dental plans, haircuts and dry cleaning, gyms, nap pods, and more.

Driven by data, transparency, recognition, and engagement, employees at Google are known to do their best work and do it with a smile. While these exotic anecdotes about tech culture make for fun social commentary and are the source of envy or gratitude for your own work-place, we wondered: “Are they real?” And do they matter?

Specifically, we set out to uncover whether differences between the cultures of tech and non-tech companies are simply a matter of degree or of kind. And secondly, we wondered if the differences change the physics of management.

Whether you work at an Amazon or a Google, there are unique competencies required of managers to thrive in tech companies.

So, we asked those who would know best—senior and mid-level managers in tech. We then confirmed their feedback by surveying 2,800 employees.

What we found is that the differences people observe between the cultures of tech and non-tech companies are profound enough to require a unique set of leadership competencies.

Specifically, there are four unique challenges that substantially affect a tech organisation’s ability to execute and innovate.

1 It’s gotta be cool

Tech employees are drawn to elite companies and path-breaking projects. If their current company isn’t seen as the “coolest”, on top of the latest technologies, or getting top press coverage, they move to companies that are.

2 Relentless pressure

Tech employees face relentless pressure. They work long days, during weekends and holidays, and the pace never slows.

They must meet demanding expectations and deliver on tight timelines and short project cycles.

3 Consistent ambiguity

Tech employees have to navigate unclear, overlapping, and shared accountabilities that are constantly shifting and can create confusion, misalignment, and competition.

4 Déjà vu all over again

Tech employees are one big network. People who are their peers today become managers, peers, or direct reports in another company tomorrow.

We also found that tech leaders’ skill at mastering these challenges is a powerful defining factor of their teams’ overall performance.

While, however, most tech leaders are familiar with these challenges, few tech companies offer training or coaching on how to solve them.

4 STRATEGIES TO FACE KEY CHALLENGES

By combining our in-depth interviews with our 35 years of research into the best practices of influential leaders, we recommend the following management strategies tech leaders can use to address the four key challenges:

1 Connect to cool

To attract, engage and retain top talent, the most successful managers are deft at making the work of their teams “cool.” They look beyond the trendy perks characteristic of the industry and focus on making tight connections between the work they do and one or more of the following strategic areas:

- Strategic advantage. Connect to the organisation’s identifying character, secret sauce or competitive edge.
- Critical uncertainty. Link to a burning platform or urgent opportunity.
- Tech edge. Show how projects push the edge of the technological envelope.
- Careers. Show how the team or project will further a person’s career.
- Social values. Link the team or project to the positive impact it has on customers, society and the world.

2 Build rhythm and flow

The best tech managers actively build a predictable rhythm and flow of work to reduce the relentless pressure of the industry.

- Build rhythm. Engineer procrastination out of the workflow by asking employees to track and report daily progress, provide lifelines to help when pressure peaks and allow employees to utilise and define their downtime.
- Build flow. People’s engagement peaks when they work in a state of psychological flow. When managers provide challenging work, autonomy, feedback and an interruption-free environment, flow naturally follows.

3 Overcome ambiguity through dialogue

Keeping people on track despite overlapping assignments, unclear ownership and changing priorities is a constant challenge in tech.

The best tech leaders handle the problem of consistent ambiguity with dialogue.

They build norms that support those who discover and confront contradictions as soon as they occur—a strategy that minimises formal and informal divergence, inconsistencies, unrealistic deadlines and scope creep in plans and priorities.

4 Déjà vu accountability

Managers who overcome the problem of déjà vu know the tendency to prioritise positive relationships over accountability is a false choice.

These leaders create a culture where accountability doesn’t come at the price of current and future relationships. To do so, they employ the following strategies:

- Create safety. Managers approach accountability as an exploration of causes and solutions rather than blame and shame which bolsters trust and improves performance.
- Build skills. Managers provide training and practice for holding others accountable without undermining relationships. Unless and until people have the skills, they’ll bite their tongues and problems will persist.
- Step out of the middle. The best managers avoid using positional power. In this industry “code wins arguments. Deference to authority should never win out over deference to expertise.”

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

The unique nature of the tech industry doesn’t appear to be changing anytime soon.

Tech’s combination of high-velocity competition, complexity, global talent, independence among rivals, and dense geographic concentrations foster unique cultural idiocynasies as manifested by the cultures of Google and Amazon.

What can change and change quickly is a manager’s ability to manage the idiocynastic challenges that come with the territory.

These recommendations will equip managers to excel in a world that outpaces even the best and brightest.

AT LEADERONOMICS, we believe leaders can profoundly affect the social, economic and spiritual health of communities they belong to. And we believe that all human beings have the potential for leadership. No matter who you are, what you do and whatever challenges are hampering your progress, Leaderonomics can help you and your organisation achieve maximum potential.

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In the talent space, are we fighting on the wrong battlefield? Why is the focus on employee experience not the same as that for customer experience? Where is the creativity to find employees in unlikely places? Where are the penetrating insights on employee behaviour and expectations? Check out this thought-provoking article here: NYTimes SNtalentwar

Joseph Grenny is a four-time New York Times bestselling author, keynote speaker, and social scientist for business performance. He is also the co-founder of VitalSmarts, an organisation committed to teaching others how to effectively change human behaviour. To get in touch with him, e-mail us at editor@leaderonomics.com
FIVE thirty-eight in the morning, my little Toshiba laptop screen was staring down and nagging at me with an incessant hum as if daring me to break the silence of the early dawn. My fingers were resting lightly on the keypad as I struggled to write the first sentence.

You see, I was asked to write an article. The night before, I asked my colleague what they really wanted to read, or what they wanted me to write on. I was quite sure whatever I had to say probably had been said somewhere by someone out there. He tested me saying: “Write what your heart desires”.

That didn’t help. I felt like a 6-year-old walking into a well-stocked candy store with all the colours and hues of candies and not knowing which one I liked best. My mind wandered. I fought to be aware of the thoughts in my head. The word ‘focus’ played in my mind. A train of thought began to form when suddenly an email popped into my inbox and my Apple watch buzzed to remind me to stand up and walk.

My thoughts disappeared faster than I could say the word ‘focus’.

This familiar scene is played numerous times in many different places that have an internet connection—‘we fritter our time over triviality and allow ourselves to be distracted easily.’

Yes, focus—why not write about that?

WHAT’S HAPPENING TO OUR ATTENTION SPAN?

We are on the brink of probably the most economically disruptive time in our history. The Fourth Industrial Revolution; the Internet of Things (IoT); the Internet of Everything (IoE).

Today, we have everything from a smartphone to a smart car to smart everything. Yes, it disrupts everything—from the way we work, to the way we relate, communicate, learn, drive and sleep.

Technology has made our lives simpler, and yet it is possible that we have given it too much power. Instead, we search for the next dose of ‘dopamine spike’ as we search for breaking news from the people we follow online.

This accounts for about one-third of the time a person is awake.

This accounts for about one-third of technology-enabled device than worrying about not being focused.

We are addicted to staying connected and having perfected the art of what Linda Stone, an executive at Apple and Microsoft Research called “continuous partial attention” – the modern predicament of being constantly attuned to everything without fully concentrating on anything.

No matter how many times we remind ourselves that we must focus on the people that we see, we continue to be in the glow of smart phones and choose the virtual world of ultra-connectedness. I am guilty as charged. Nomophobia—or, as some people call it “smart phone separation anxiety”—is real and is happening to many of us.

How do we fight for the scarce and transient resource called “attention” so that we can focus on what is important?

The PRICE of TECHNOLOGY

A distracted mind is also an unfocused mind. Technology has caused the product development cycle to shrink and cost of production to decline. It has also bridged the distance between ourselves and our friends and loved ones.

However, it has also provided us with the perfect excuse to wander and be enticed by the “entertainment” that our digital technologies provide us. It has diluted our attention span; our priorities; our focus.

We now expect more from our technology-enabled device than worrying about not being focused.

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KNOWING WHAT TO FOCUS IS KEY

Digitial is here to stay. Chief executive officers (CEO) attention and focus need to be directed at developing the ability to conceptualise how digital technologies can transform their business.

They must not forget that it is strategy that drives transformation, and not technology.

They also focus on building the digital literacy and competency of their people, including their own, besides building the right culture to foster the change to digital maturity.

CEOs must also recognise that there are many competing priorities that can derail their companies.

THE PRICE of TECHNOLOGY

Sometimes, effective technology investment and enabling culture can be found. It just takes practice and organisational structure flattened to account for speedier collaboration and transparency.

This dramatic change would require employees to take charge of their learning and develop a change-oriented mindset and collaborative skills to succeed.

Like their CEOs, employees must become more digitally literate and abandon the “not invented here” paranoia. Instead, they need to adopt a “learn anywhere, share everywhere” mentality.

Employees need to change how they think about their jobs and their roles. They must focus on how each part of the value chain comes together to create and protect the company’s competitive advantage.

To succeed in a digital environment, employees must recognise that soft skills trump technology in driving digital transformation.

They must also focus on exercising ownership and demonstrate their commitment to facilitate learning, sharing, and developing a resilient digital organisation.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

In summary, only those who are prepared to commit to a journey of reinvention have strategic risk appetite on where they invest their time and money.

For this to happen, it requires them to set strategic ambition for digital and reinvention have strategic risk appetite on where they invest their time and money.

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By SARAH LIM
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**DIGITAL CODE OF CONDUCT**

**HOW ARE WE BEHAVING IN THE DIGITAL SPACE?**

They were always around to guide us to ensure that a generation of great citizens is being made out of us. We had the support needed to become great world citizens. As technology advances, so do we. Our world has been extended to a non-physical space – the digital realm. We now get our news online, we buy and sell online, we socialise and rely on digital technology to make our lives easier.

Those who played the role of ‘parent’ or ‘teacher’ to us may not have been very present in these spaces when the information age started. Our digital existence calls for a new set of best practices for simply being a digital citizen.

Without it, we would continue to see what is already taking place.

**A RUTHLESS DIGITAL SPACE**

Keyboard warriors have a huge effect on brands and businesses, breaking news is often blown out of proportion causing nationwide panic, and personal security is compromised every time someone shares too much online. Cyberbullying prevails too, not just in school setting, but also among adults. Just scroll through the social media comments of any beauty pageant candidate for a clear example.

In Malaysia, cyberbullying is considered the third most dangerous threat after fraud and intrusion. We had news of a 20-year-old student who committed suicide due to cyberbullying in Penang last year. People forget that the person on the other side of the network is still a person – with feelings and a reputation to uphold.

**KEY PLAYERS**

There are key players taking responsibility for upholding moral behaviour in the digital realm. Twitter are Facebook are doing their part to champion better use of technology in terms of social etiquette, safety, and best practices.

On home ground, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (or MCMC) has also created a general hotline where anyone can lodge a report on cyberbullying (at 1800-188-030 or WhatsApp at 016-220 6262).

Many awareness efforts have been made by non-governmental organisations and the private sectors, but we’ve yet to see a new social normality being accepted in the digital space.

**How do we go from subconsciously categorising this as just another ‘social issue’ to something that we live and breathe?** We’ve never really needed an awareness campaign on respecting our elders, or talking when our mouths aren’t full and that’s because we’re living and breathing these accepted norms (well, most people are). Hopefully, we’ll start to see more emphasis on a shared ‘best practice’ guideline made available by governing authorities for youth and adults.

The English and ICT (short for information and communication technology) subjects in our public school curriculum briefly cover ‘Safety Issues’ and ‘The Digital Age’ aspects, where teachers find various opportunities to address behaviours in a digital world.

**Our parents and teachers were our ‘digital age’ aspects, where teachers find various opportunities to address behaviours in a digital world.**

*Sarah manages content marketing at Leaderonomics. She loves the art of good storytelling in all kinds of ways and wants to make a difference wherever she goes. When she’s not at her desk, you’ll find her behind the lens, exploring a new country, or just in her front yard, trying to keep her plants alive. To share your thoughts on this topic, email us at editor@leaderonomics.com.***
BIG PICTURE THINKING
AS A LEADERSHIP TOOL

By Dr Immanuel Joseph
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COMPASSION is a powerful anchor for successful leadership. Compassion is simply caring in action. In the workplace context, compassion is the ability to perceive when you or your colleagues are going through challenges, and respond with an intent to make things better.

Receiving compassion is a basic human need. When you provide compassion to your colleagues, they feel secure, valued and connected. When this happens, people are inspired to show up as their best selves in the workplace. It is a win-win situation for people and their organizations – creating happier work cultures and better business outcomes.

CULTIVATING WORKPLACE COMPASSION

Big picture thinking is one of the nine pillars of workplace compassion. Given that leadership roles place enormous demands on time, attention and resources, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and fatigued.

Big picture thinking is the ability to keep the bigger vision of successful leadership without getting caught up in negative dialogues and excuses that rise with challenges at work. It is the skill to see the forest for the trees and the challenges at work. It has two essential facets. One is having a clearly defined strategy and the other is the ability to think in perspective. Let’s explore both.

1. Perspective thinking

This facet allows us to see challenges in context. To think in perspective is to be able to contrast and reframe your current challenge against a bigger universal reality. We value experiences by contrasting them to expectations created by our environment and past experiences.

Perspective thinking may seem like a philosophical exercise at first, but the value of understanding the scale against which we ultimately measure our personal realities cannot be underestimated.

We have a very finite presence in space and time. Yet, inside us, we are infinite nested layers of complexities. Here’s how I work with perspective thinking. When I face challenging situations, I dig into my secret treasure box of questions. This box contains questions that can help you look at challenges you encounter in a different light.

Perspective thinking not only can help reframe our personal challenges; it also helps reframe the challenges of those we lead. It helps provide latitude for the mistakes of others, extend understanding to those who are struggling and make meaningful decisions in dealing with them.

When our employees fail, for example, instead of reacting with disappointment or anger, what if we consciously step back to ask:

“What does this failure mean in the bigger picture of the organization?”

“What does it mean in the context of this employee’s life cycle with the company?”

“What can I do that can enable this person’s growth, while still meeting work objectives?”

“In the 10,000-feet view of things, how devastating is this mistake?”

I find my clients always come out of this line of perspective thinking with more compassion, grace and clarity.

FOR YOU TO DO

Here are two exercises you can do to help build the perspective thinking habit:

1. Create your personal ‘treasure-box’ of perspective questions. This is your personal collection of all the questions that can help you look at challenges you encounter in a different light.

2. Think of a challenge from your past that seemed insurmountable at that time, but which you have now overcome. Reflect on how the biggest challenges in your life have found closure with time.

3. Reflect on how the biggest challenges in your life have found closure with time.

4. How can you release unnecessary conflict at work and create emotional resilience.

5. Cultivating as a habit, big picture thinking can help manage people and time with grace, and help turn challenges into opportunities.

I find that taking time to reflect and compare my problems against my bigger vision of life and leadership helps me make meaningful choices.

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To read the rest of the article, head over to leaderonomics.com or key in: bh.3y/2zW3Zk

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