THE POWER OF COMPASSION IN LEADERSHIP

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As we celebrate Chinese New Year next Saturday, there’ll be no print edition from us, but check us out anyway at bit.ly/ldrEmag for a special digital edition and more online content!

If you would like your organisation to be featured in this pullout, contact us at editor@leaderonomics.com
START WITH THE HEART
L-O-V-E IS A WAY TO WIN YOUR EMPLOYEES OVER TO STICK WITH THE COMPANY LONG-TERM.

By MARK C CROWLEY
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W HAT are the real drivers of human engagement in the workplace? What are those things that consistently inspire people to fully commit themselves to their jobs and willingly scale mountains for their bosses and organisations?

For the past years, I’ve been singularly focused on answering these big questions, and boiling those answers down to a true bottom-line.

In the service of organisations everywhere, my sole mission has been to identify the few critical leadership practices that affect people so deeply that they become uncommonly loyal, committed and productive.

To distill all I’ve discovered down to just one word, what workers across the globe need in order to thrive and exceptionally perform in their jobs is — love.

The use of the word ‘love’ is, of course, a huge taboo in the context of business and management. But as you read on, you’ll soon see that the love I’m referring to has nothing to do with romance, sex or religion.

The love I’m speaking of relates to the experience of positive emotions — the foundation of human motivation.

WHY WE WANT MORE

We have long believed that a job and a pay cheque provide sufficient motivation for people to remain fully committed at work.

But as levels of engagement fall alarmingly low all over the world, the evidence is clear that people today want — and need — much more in exchange for their dedication.

Here’s how we know:

For nearly three decades, Gallup Research and The Conference Board have each been independently monitoring employee satisfaction and engagement in more than 100 countries. The lead scientists at both organisations personally share all of their dominant findings with me.

I also visited the two organisations — recognised for being the best in the world at driving employee engagement.

At software analytics firm, SAS, and at Google, I met with the executive leaders who created the enlightened systems — and care for its employees.

I also shared all of their dominant findings with me.

Regarding the broadest possible insight into current views on workplace management, I interviewed the founder of the Great Place to Work Institute, Robert Levering, positive psychology author Shawn Achor, and many leadership luminaries including John Kotter, Ken Blanchard, Spencer Johnson and Adam Grant.

Drawing upon all I learnt, my conclusions as to what will have the greatest impact on reversing our worldwide engagement crisis come down to just a few profoundly important revelations.

As you might imagine, many of these directly challenge traditional managerial thinking.

THE VALUE OF ENGAGEMENT

We hear a lot about employee perks and are led to believe that the more extravagant they are, the better they are in stimulating performance. With the exception of health care and on-site daycare (which make people feel valued), few other perks significantly influence engagement.

While it used to be that people derived their greatest sense of happiness from time spent with family and hobbies, how satisfied workers feel in their jobs now determines their overall happiness with life. This monumental shift means that job fulfillment has become essential to people everywhere.

The decision to be engaged is made in workers’ hearts, not minds. We now know that feelings and emotions drive human behaviour — what people care about most and commit themselves to in their lives.

Consequently, how leaders and organisations make people feel in their jobs has the greatest impact on their performance.

EMOTIONAL CURRENCY

For centuries, most people went to work to get a pay cheque, in order to put a roof over their heads and food on their table.

But as a driver of engagement, pay ranks no higher than fifth in importance to people in every industrialised country.

What truly inspires worker engagement in the 21st century can best be described as emotional currency.

Here’s what it means:

1. **Having a supervisor who cares about our personal growth**

   Without exception, bosses who are predominantly concerned about their own needs create the lowest levels of employee engagement.

   Having an authentic advocacy for the development and success of others should be a prerequisite for selection into all leadership roles.

2. **Doing work we enjoy and have the talents for**

   Selecting people who display passion for the work they do is perhaps the most important step toward building a highly engaged team. People can’t ever be fully engaged if their hearts aren’t in the work.

3. ** Routinely feeling appreciated**

   It’s highly destructive to people to have them strive and achieve, and to then have those contributions go unrecognized.

   Any company focused exclusively on driving profits — without a compelling mission — will inherently neutralize

4. **Strong bonds with others on the team, especially with our supervisors.**

   Feeling connected with, and genuinely supported by others at work, is a surprisingly significant driver of engagement and loyalty.

WHAT IT ALL COMES DOWN TO LOVE

It was Gallup’s chairman and chief executive officer Jim Clifton who first suggested that employee engagement is ultimately driven by something deeper: ‘I think you’re going to find that what people really are seeking in return for work is love,’ he said.

There was no question on my mind that Clifton meant this in the most grown-up, truth-telling kind of way, and I was immediately determined to find the proof.

Fifteen years ago, University of North Carolina psychology professor, Barbara Lee Fredrickson, began a formal study of emotion.

Her conclusion today is that love, as the supreme emotion, affects everything that human beings feel, think, do, and become. But it’s her meaning of love that provides the needed clarity:

The definition that someone in business needs to understand is the simplest definition to start with,” she told me.

“They have emotions that range from unpleasant to pleasant. Positive emotions are on that pleasant side.

We misunderstood love to be one of the positive emotions that range from joy, inspiration, interest, pride, and hope. But love is the feeling of any of those emotions co-experienced with another person or group.”

What workers across the globe need in order to thrive and exceptionally perform in their jobs is — love.

Fredrickson, who won the American Psychological Association’s Templeton Prize for Positive Psychology, and who authored _Love 2.0: How Our Supreme Emotion Affects Everything We Feel, Think, Do, and Become_, insists that the human body was designed to thrive on love — to live off it — and that it changes how the brain works.

“Love transforms people into making them more positive, resilient, optimistic, persistent, healthier, and happier,” she says.

Conversely, “the body’s biochemistry is very negatively affected when it’s not consistently received.”

FREQUENT POSITIVE EMOTIONS

In relating her work to how it affects our understanding of employee engagement at work is both established and sustained by feelings of love, she insisted it’s true.

“When people are made to feel cared for, nurtured, and growing, that will serve the organisation well. Because those feelings drive commitment and loyalty just like it would in any relationship.

“If you feel uniquely seen, understood, valued and appreciated, then that will hook you into being committed to that team, leader and organisation. This is how positive engagement works.”

So, for any company or leader who dreams of building an exceptionally committed and productive team, I offer you my most informed advice: Love your people.
I n leadership, few things are more destructive to an organisation than low morale among employees, and research by Gallup shows that between 70–80% of people consider themselves to be disengaged at work.

Disengagement is detrimental to every- one involved: the organisation, leaders, employees, customers and shareholders all feel the brunt of a workplace that fires on few cylinders.

And while much has been written about the direct problems of leadership in relation to low levels of engagement, it’s just as important — if not more so — to consider how the work itself is seen by employees, how they think about and interact with their roles.

This, of course, falls under the remit of leaders to articulate the purpose behind each role in the workplace. Having a motivated staff is a boon for all concerned, as research by the University of California has shown. According to researchers, engaged workers produced 37% higher sales, were 31% more productive, and were three times more creative than their disen-gaged colleagues.

They were also 87% less likely to quit, due in no small part to their ability to understand how their efforts contribute to their organisation and its customers.

In a fascinating New York Times article from 2007, we get an insight into the so-called “Sludge Olympics”, which is a competition that highlights the skill and passion of the city’s sewage treatment workers.

Despite the tough, unpleasant and anonymous work done daily by these incredible workers, it’s interesting to note the pride with which they carry out their role. As one worker notes, “It’s all about providing a valuable service to the public — that’s where the purpose is rooted.”

In December 1962, United States President John F. Kennedy met a janitor during a visit to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) centre. He said, “Hi, I’m Jack Kennedy. What are you doing?”

To which the janitor replied, “Well, Mr. President, I’m helping to put a man on the moon.”

This famous story demonstrates one universal truth in business: no matter how big or small your role is within an organisation, whatever you do counts as a great deal towards the bigger picture.

THE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

Imagine what an organisation could achieve if its leaders could instil that kind of mindset in their employees. Or, better still, imagine what people could do if they themselves could see the ultimate importance of their role in light of the bigger picture.

From many conversations I’ve had with employees over the years in both formal and informal capacities, often their biggest source of frustration has been a lack of information or concern about the organisation’s leadership. Needless to say, it’s important that any issues relating to leadership be heard, listened to and addressed.

I’ve also noticed another major issue when it comes to people being disen-gaged at work. Even when they’ve been told the purpose of their role and how it contributes to the organisation and its customers, many people nevertheless have felt unable to translate that commitment into an emotional commitment. In short, they’re just not feeling it.

While there are numerous issues relating directly to leadership, we must also never neglect our own responsibility for cultivating a purpose in what we do.

As one employee told me some years ago, “I’ve no real issues with my boss or the company… I just struggle to connect what I’m doing with the idea that it’s making any kind of impact or differ- ence.”

If you’re someone who feels disen-gaged in the workplace, some shifts in perspective can help to reignite a sense of meaning in the role you play and lead you to see how your contributions truly make an impact.

While there might be other issues that factor in to your disengagement, consider bringing the following points could help to ease your burden and reconnect you to the why of the work you do.

1. **Whatever role you’re performing, it’s a valuable service to more people than you realise.**

   If we’re being honest, most of us wouldn’t immediately think that a janitor could help to put a man on the moon. However, if we change our perspec-tives, we can see that his role at NASA played a vital part in helping to make sure that everyone else was able to do their job in a clean and safe working environment.

   If you think about the many ways in which your role serves others, it can offer a valuable insight into how much differ- ence the work you carry out every day really makes.

2. **How you interact with people at work matters a lot.**

   Studies have shown that people who are ‘toxic’ in the workplace can actually spread their negativity throughout the organisation in what’s known as ‘emo-tional contagion’.

   We’re all affected by the people we interact with, whether they are positive or otherwise. Far from being an anonym- ous cog in the wheel, we each con- tribute to the successes and failures of an organisation simply by the way we present ourselves.

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4. **The work you do can be transformed into a craft.**

   Disengagement can arise partly due to the fact that we become familiar with our role in a relatively short space of time.

   One of the main reasons people dread going back to work on a Monday is hav- ing the same-old, same-old feeling of routine. In any role — and we can take the New York sewage workers as our inspira- tion — the skills we bring to our work can always be improved, and there is always something new to learn.

   By actively looking for ways in which you can improve the work you do, it serves as a powerful driver that encour- ages you to pursue excellence within your role.

   Be it the best cleaner, the most effi- cient administrative assistant, a helpful bank clerk, the greatest manager, or the most inspiring chief executive officer… there is pride and value to be striving to be the best you can be, whatever it is that you do.

MAKE THE BEST OPPORTUNITIES

Assuming a lifespan of 80 years, it is estimated that on average, we spend 12 years’ worth of our time at work — that’s a lot of time wasted if it’s spent being unhappy and unproductive.

As organisations are led by people, there will never be such a thing as the “perfect working environment”, although most companies do their best to ensure that the needs and wellbeing of their employees are taken care of across many areas.

It’s encouraging to see continued progress in terms of best work practices, particularly here in Malaysia, and leaders should take regular stock of how their employees are interacting with their roles and organisation as a whole.

This can help to ensure that engage- ment in the workplace improves, and that employees come to work looking forward to the day ahead, whether it be a Monday or a Friday.

On the flipside, employees can also help their organisations to flourish by recognising that they play the central role in what they do. How it’s done and how they approach their work impacts those around them.

While it might not be immediately obvious, we each make much more of an impact in the workplace than we realise, which is why it’s vital to think about and connect to the purpose of what we do and to recognise the valuable contribu- tion that we make every single day.
By PRETHIBA ESVARY
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F you’re a large organisation and would like to assess 700 employees to see if they are fit for a promotion, how long would it take if you used a traditional assessment centre (AC)?

Six months, said long-time human resources (HR) professional and CEO of Accendo, Sharma KSK Lachu.

If you’re looking at managing the logistics for a very large group and putting together 700 reports manually, this process is just not viable, he added.

“A big challenge is that by the time the senior management team or board members request for the results, it would be a few months after the assessments were conducted and the data — by then — would have become outdated.”

In the previous article, we mentioned that traditional ACs fall short in terms of generating forward-looking data and in meeting an organisation’s need for speed, scale and analytics.

The virtual assessment centre (VAC) is a good example of a platform that leverages technology to resolve this.

A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

The VAC is similar to a traditional AC in that it comes equipped with multiple tools which are mapped to behavioural competencies. It has game-based assessments, cognitive assessments, psychometric and case studies, to name a few. One obvious difference is that these tools are administered online and reports are generated automatically.

With the VAC, assessing and generating reports for 700 employees would take just two weeks, according to Sharma.

IMPACT ON DECISIONS

How do you know if your employees are competent enough to meet the organisation’s new strategy?

Predictive analytics is able to tell you. The VAC by Accendo for instance, comes with a predictive analytics solution — the IBM Watson Talent Insight.

Watson Talent Insights co-founder James Hewitt explained: “You start by building a success profile — reviewing skills, competence, personal and experiential data of the kind of person who will be successful in the role. You then map potential employees to that success profile.

“We leverage vast volumes of data and analyse all possible correlations between the data points and deliver shortlisted candidates in mere seconds rather than weeks.”

Sharma added that one of the biggest challenges HR leaders face is in determining how to move the performance bell curve to the right.

With the VAC, he said HR professionals now get “to see the decisions that you need to eventually make.”

“You get to see how many [employees] are ready for a promotion, how many require development and what sort of development is needed.”

Through the use of such a tool, Hewitt gave an example on how organisations in ASEAN have discovered that younger hires tend to perform better. “They found that people aged under 29 were 33% less likely to be promoted than those above 30, yet they performed up to 32% better.”

DO WE STILL NEED TRADITIONAL AC?

One might ask, how can machines accurately study facial expressions, tonality, vocabulary and body language?

Through the use of facial recognition technology, machine learning and behavioural science of course.

Take negotiation skills as an example. “An individual goes through an online simulation. The machine is constantly learning from the way he/she responds, and constantly gives them challenges based on their skills,” Sharma shared.

In fact, according to Accendo’s head of product design, Danny foo, the system is able to do things like measure one’s pupillary dilation, the number of times they mention certain key terms and even detect their emotions.

However, the team at Accendo believes that no matter how engaging and convenient the technology is, a real-life, face-to-face interaction is still necessary, especially when it comes to measuring nuanced behaviours and assessing candidates for more senior or critical roles.

A blended approach is something Accendo and IBM would recommend. Accendo’s strategic account manager Ashvin Nair suggested that for the first phase, candidates can be evaluated using the VAC. In the next phase, once the cream of the crop have been selected, they can be further evaluated using a blend of tools, both virtual and physical.

Ultimately, it boils down to the needs and goals of the organisation. From there, HR technology experts such as Accendo can come in to help determine what sort of assessment and tools are the best fit for your organisation.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP, VISITED

IS THIS YOUR CUP OF TEA?

By LIM LAY NSLIAN
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At a dinner table, a waiter comes up to you and takes your order. He ensures he gets your order right, your food arrives timely, and precisely — just the way you wanted the steak cooked. He pops by occasionally to ask if you are doing okay.

Throughout the evening, he is there to serve patrons like you, and make you feel comfortable dining at the restaurant.

He is attentive to the sight of you raising your hand, which could mean you want to order desserts, complain about the food or pay the bill. The waiter becomes your ‘servant’ for the evening while you dine. With such great service and ‘wow’ experience, you would definitely come by again.

‘SERVE ME.’

In a dog-eat-dog corporate world, no one wants to become a ‘servant’. It’s considered a lowly position, sometimes even frowned upon. To maintain our status, we prefer to be served more than to serve others.

Being at the top, you find yourself being chauffeured around, whenever and wherever you want. You have people serving your every need, whether important meetings. You have the tea lady making coffee for you every morning. You have many people serving your needs, whims and fancy.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN THE MARKETPLACE

Historically, the modern servant leadership movement was launched by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970, when he published his essay, “The Servant as Leader”. He popularised the terms ‘servant-leader’ and “servant leadership.”

Particularly in Asia, the concept of servant leadership is alien, and maybe even a put-off, to many. We have the misconception that servant leadership is only reserved for leaders in religious establishments, social works or non-governmental organisations.

Many still wonder how servant leaders can thrive in a real business environment where emphasis is really about taking and grabbing (the power model) every opportunity out there, for themselves.

THE FACE OF A SERVANT LEADER

Servant leaders are servants first, i.e. they want to serve in whichever capacity they can. It’s not about being doormats to please people, but about wanting to help others (the service model) by meeting the needs (not feelings) of colleagues, clients and communities, purposefully.

They are also good stewards of the people under their care, and will stand by their people when their aligned values are served by their actions.

Servant leadership elevates a job into a calling, and acknowledges the way that businesses make life better for the community.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

An example of a servant leader in the marketplace is Square chief executive officer (CEO) Jack Dorsey (yes, the same guy behind Twitter) who picks up San Francisco trash on Fridays, as an extension of what this digital payments company does, i.e. to help small businesses grow, which then improves communities.

Close to home, one leader I know who once used his business cards to who pick up San Francisco trash on Fridays, as an extension of what this digital payments company does, i.e. to help small businesses grow, which then improves communities.

Close to home, one leader I know who once used his business cards to

used for official business networking functions.

Back to a serious question: As business leaders in Malaysia, do you believe you can serve and lead at the same time?

Share your answer and thoughts about servant leadership with us at editor@leaderonomics.com.

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Do you understand what all that data is telling you? To know what you need to change, read the previous article at bit.ly/databechange.

Accendo is a technology solutions company with two decades of industry know-how. They are firm believers of re-engineering people performance at work. Their award-winning tools and solutions enable their customers to adapt, effectively and complement the fast-changing ASEAN market.
By LISANNE YEONG
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LOST IN TRANSLATION?

5 REASONS IT’S IMPORTANT TO SPEAK A COMMON LANGUAGE AT WORK

This is useful for refocusing, especially when times get tough. It also helps with decision-making and identifying the next course of action.

Take, for example, when I used to work for Ikea, whatever your personal preference is, the reference point is always, "Is this the IKEA way?"

Talk about creativity within boundaries. It constantly challenges you to think outside of the box but within the blue box! Many new joiners struggle to understand what the IKEA way is, and that is exactly what they need to find out and embrace for themselves.

1. A COMMON LANGUAGE SETS THE CULTURE

People do not just leave companies or leaders, they leave organisational cultures. It doesn’t matter where or what background, industry or organisational culture you were previously from, it is important to learn a new language and culture within your current organisation.

Following the organisation’s culture, different teams can also create useful mantras that express the principles they want to follow towards achieving the organisation’s short-term or/and long-term goals.

2. IT IS THE BASIS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is the building block of any organisation. Imagine all your employees come from different backgrounds and speak different languages. It would be very difficult to communicate effectively.

But if we invented a new language that all of us agreed to speak while we are at work, we would be able to communicate far more clearly and easily. This also ensures everyone within the organisation understands what the expectations are.

3. IT BRINGS ABOUT A SENSE OF IDENTITY

Someone once told me, "First, we shape our language, then our language shapes us."

Have you been amongst people who are from the same organisation and you have no idea what some words and abbreviations meant because they seem to be speaking a different 'language'? They often cause outsiders to feel a little lost listening to jargons that only make sense to themselves.

When we speak the same language, we understand each other. This builds stronger relationships and brings about a sense of belonging and identity.

4. IT BRINGS ABOUT CONSISTENCY

Consistency is one of the keys to organisational success. Managers need to communicate understandable instructions to their staff, while staff members need to understand ideas and concepts to properly communicate with clients. Some simple examples would be: co-worker vs staff; a doctor attends to his patients; and a designer services his clients.

When there is consistency throughout an organisation, its employees and clients will also experience a sense of reliability which enhances the organisation’s credibility.

In 1976, IKEA founder Ingvar Kamprad wrote The Testament of a Furniture Dealer, a message for his co-workers.

That has since been the bible for all IKEA employees. I have never personally met the man, but it feels like I know him to a certain extent.

When he passed away just two weeks ago at the age of 91, there were many Facebook posts and sharing by my former colleagues, some who are still working there today. One common attribute here was how his influence penetrated the entire IKEA world. His legacy lives on, for sure.

5. IT INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY

When misunderstandings are minimised, time spent on correcting errors can be used on actual work that brings about productivity. This will also indirectly increase employee morale and motivation as people’s energy is focused towards achieving success and moving forward, not on rework.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

It is said that unity is strength, and the start of unity is speaking the same language. Only when the entire organisation speaks the same ‘language’ will the message resonate and trickle down to every level in the organisation.

To ensure an organisation is aligned from top to bottom in order to achieve its business goals, we need to communicate in a consistent and effective manner. Training allows us to achieve this – when it is used as a strategic tool and designed intentionally to support the organisation’s business strategy.

American civil rights activist Cesar Chavez once quoted, “Our language is an exact reflection of the character and growth of its speakers.”

So, I urge everyone to ask yourself this question: “What does your corporate language say about your culture, goals and alignment?”

Contact us at info@leaderonomics.com to start charting a Learning Calendar for your employees today!
Emotional empathy is an extraordinary gift, but it has its limits. It can lead us to be inconsiderate, cold and unfeeling towards others – particularly when they're in need. We need our doctors to understand that we are entitled clients who are costing them over USD4 million per year. Some people are selfish in all of their considerations to the team and the company, not just their narrow self-interest. Moneyball author Michael Lewis has written in the moment of truth: “We need our doctors to understand that we are entitled clients who are costing them over USD4 million per year. Some people are selfish in all of their considerations to the team and the company, not just their narrow self-interest. Moneyball author Michael Lewis has written in the moment of truth: “We need our doctors to understand that we are entitled clients who are costing them over USD4 million per year. 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Employees as brand advocates

Let your people take the lead in brand advocacy

By Pravin Nair and Sheerin Kaur

By PRAVIN NAI R and SHEERIN KAUR
editor@leaderonomics.com

B RAND advocacy, known as posi-
tive word-of-mouth, is widely
recognised as an effective tool
for organisational branding.
Numerous studies have identi-
fied brand advocacy practices that
can replicate the results of traditional adver-
tising at much lower costs.

A common form of brand advocacy
especially in Malaysia is the use of well-
known personalities as brand ambas-
dadors. However, this practice comes at a
hefty price, especially for many start-ups
and small-scale organisations.

In a saturated social network land-
scape, organisations should leverage their
raw, yet high-potential marketing asset:
their own employees.

Cisco Systems noted that from a social
media marketing perspective, employ-
ees’s social posts conjure eight times
more engagement than posts from their
employers.

WeRSM, a digital marketing firm
specialising in social media, states that
only 15% of users trust recommenda-
tions from a brand ambassador or the
organisation, while 89% of users trust testimonialsl from their network.

A research conducted by Hinge
Marketing revealed that 86% of its
respondents had experienced positive
impacts on their career through advocacy,
as it enabled them to expand their pro-
fessional network and keep abreast with
the latest trends.

Hence, it had been proven that
brand advocacy through employees can
increase brand awareness, build trust
with various stakeholders and produce
higher quality performance from employ-
ees.

Everyone in your organisation is an
ambassador, so here are ways how lead-
ers can facilitate employees to become
advocates for their organisation voluntar-
ily and sincerely.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE
It all stems from your attitude
around your employees.
Do you spend
enough time going to the ground
and engaging in honest conversations
with junior executives?

1. Millennials today are looking to work
in places where there is less bureaucracy
and better engagement with the senior
management as young talents are always
seeking opportunities to share their ideas
with you.

Another valuable technique is to
involve your employees in matters con-
cerning your organisation.

For example, if the company is not
doing well, organise a town hall session
and promptly update them. Use that
opportunity to address their concerns.

Your employees will appreciate your trust
in them, and they will not hesitate to
advocate for the organisation.

It’s a norm that, when discussing work
among friends and family, the topic of
management as young talents are always
seeking opportunities to share their ideas

2. Employees in the limelight
Organisations are defined by the prod-
ucts and/or services they provide, but
employees play a pivotal role in shaping
the organisation’s brand. Encourage your
employees to be creative in how they
express themselves through their work,
and to share it within their network.

Be honest with your employees that
they are the most reliable brand advo-
cates your organisation possesses.

In the latest trends.

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Giving due recognition to your employ-
ees for their hard work also gains their
respect towards your leadership.

Have a look at your organisation’s
practices. Do you reward your people
for their persistence? Are you providing
greater access to personal development
through upskilling courses or promo-
tions?

Take a look at your organisation’s
social media accounts. Are you credited
much of your employees’ efforts and
accomplishments via your social media
posts?

More importantly, how you respond
to mistakes by employees can also deter-
mine their advocacy for the organisation.

3. Skills development
Your employees have the motiva-
tion to actively brand your organisation,
but how can you sharpen their advocacy
skills? No, we are not recommending a
five-hour workshop on how to advocate
your organisation’s brand based on a
set of key performance indicators and
structure.

Instead, focus on the key skills that will
improve the way your employees express
themselves at work and when meeting
clients.

Furthermore, copywriting and pho-
ography skills are necessary to capture
moments and translate them into mem-
orable posts on social media. Personal
branding is also useful when they are
meeting their respective stakeholders in
portraying the brand image of your
organisation.

FINAL THOUGHTS
As leaders, you should place your
employees at the centre of your brand
advocacy programmes, as there is huge
potential to tap into.

For starters, you could encourage your
employees to actively advocate through
the three ways highlighted, while not
running astray from the organisation’s
core values.

If the baby steps you take are effec-
tive, you would soon find your employees
naturally motivated to express your
organisation’s brand and its products
and/or services.
By JERRY ACUFF
editor@leaderonomics.com

W

What intimate interactions.

To develop a business relationship is to develop a friendship.

without friendship.

the same results.

tion is important because you won't get business relationship – and that distinction is not the same as building a meaningful business relationship.

with customers. Developing a friendship is not the same as building a meaningful business relationship.

Our relationships with friends is distinctively different than being in a business relationship.

One sales representative, Sue, learnt this the hard way. She worked to develop a friendship with one of her key customers and they would often play tennis together.

However, Sue soon discovered that being a friend didn’t lead to getting more business. When she was brave enough to ask why her ‘friend’ wasn’t using more of the product she was selling, her ‘friend’ explained that he makes business decisions based on the merits of the product, not on friendship. That was Sue’s ‘aha’ moment.

Now if she had put the same amount of effort into building a meaningful business relationship that she put into developing a friendship, she undoubtedly would have seen the difference in her sales results.

PROVIDING VALUE TO OTHERS

Both friendships and business relationships take time and effort. The difference is that business remains at the heart of a business relationship – and the sales results reflect that focus.

So yes, we need to be friendly. We need to be welcoming, sociable, open and pleasant. That’s usually the first requirement to building that valuable business relationship that has business needs as its foundation.

It might make sense to take a moment and consider how you approach your customers. Are you focusing too much on the friendship aspect? Have you been trying to be friends with your customers and expecting them to buy your product based on your friendship?

It just might be the right time to change your focus on work building business relationships. Focus on how you can provide value and make a difference in how they do their job.

When you help your customers improve their business and/or their patients’ lives, you are no longer just a sales person. You become a trusted colleague.

FRIENDSHIP VS BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

WHICH ONE SHOULD YOU BE WORKING ON?

When Harvard Business School professor Noam Wasserman studied nearly 10,000 founders of technology and life sciences start-ups, the least stable founding teams were friends. According to a research, starting a company with your friends is a risky endeavour. Why? Find out from this article by Adam Grant on Leaderonomics.com at bit.ly/AGfriends

Jerry Acuff is the founder of Delta Point, Inc, a corporate consulting firm that focuses on building relationship with customers and employees and improving the effectiveness of sales professionals. He is the author of multiple books and has consulted the White House on health care reform. Care to share your experience in building business relationships? Write in to editor@leaderonomics.com.

GOT A BAD BOSS?

FIND yourself struggling to get through your day at work? Wishing you had a different boss to report to? You’re definitely not alone. In fact, three out of four employees report disliking their boss – and that distressing statistic is important because you won’t get the same results.

The challenges they’re dealing with are particularly grounding are great for work, make time to do the things you like to do – look beyond the irritating person, something very few people do.

The author of multiple books and has consulted the White House on health care reform. Care to share your experience in building business relationships? Write in to editor@leaderonomics.com.

4 MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

Regardless of what’s going on at work, make time to do the things that ground you so that you can maintain your sanity at the office. Meditation, exercise, reading, and any other hobbies that you find particularly grounding are great for bringing you peace of mind. Don’t be afraid to keep them up.

5 LEARN BY (BAD) EXAMPLE

Now that you know what a bad boss does, you also know what kind of impact your boss’s behaviour has on you and your teammates.

whenever you get the opportunity to lead yourself, take pride in knowing that you’re not carrying yourself in the same way professionally.

Peter Economy has written more than 80 books on a variety of business and leadership topics. You can read more of his leadership articles here: www.inc.com/author/peter-economy

Some of our best bosses were inspiring, yet controlling. They knew how to switch their leadership hats to seamlessly move from authoritative to inspirational at just the right moment.

So, what determines if your boss is good or bad? Does your unhappiness equate to you having a bad boss? Check out this insightful article by Boshim Thiran at bit.ly/Kgodaboss
With so many solid business entries, the competition has become a testament to the great minds of business leaders across Malaysia, and our esteemed panel of judges have chosen the Top 15 Finalists. As we get closer to the final leg of this journey, the Top 15 will experience a series of executive development programmes and coaching sessions designed to propel their leadership skills and business growth.

Well done to everyone who has taken part, and we thank you for journeying with us in the first ever AmBank BizRACE.

A Job Thing
Linkk Busway System
Plus Solar Systems
Akyu (Malaysia)
My Aone Learning
SalesCandy™
BuildEasy
Peoplender
Segamat Panel Boards
IGL Coatings
Persafe Engineering
Supplycart.my
IJ Pharmacy (M)
Pertama Crane & Engineering
The Boom Beverage
MAKING IT WORK

Is there a way to bring opposites together productively in the workplace? Or is it doomed to failure?

McLain Smith believes it is possible but it requires patience and a willingness to look closely at ourselves. “There’s not a person on the face of the earth who is not partly a captive of their history,” she says.

And that’s not a Freudian psychoanalytic notion—it’s simply about where we learn how to operate. We learn in our families, in our schools, with our peers as kids.

“We figure out how the world works, and it becomes second nature as how we make sense of the world.” But when things become second nature, they often go unquestioned. It may seem comforting to executives to embrace labels (such as those from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) in the workplace.

“But once you’ve labeled someone,” says McLain Smith, “any interest in what makes that person tick or how the relationship works goes out the window: you’ve got your answer.”

That oversimplifies complex human beings, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflict. So what’s the solution?

McLain Smith says that every professional needs to ask themselves three questions:

- How do I behave as a leader?
- What leads me to behave this way in the moment?
- And what gave rise to that?

That self-awareness allows you to master yourself and hopefully look beyond easy categories.

Additionally, you have to take responsibility for how your own behaviours affect other people. “You may be focusing on another person’s downside and then behave in ways that exacerbate it,” she says, citing the example of an energetic, charismatic person who may feel compelled to ‘fill the vacuum’ left by a quieter, more cerebral colleague.

Instead of complementing each other, they drive each other into more exaggerated roles, with the quieter person backing off, assuming her colleague will take over, anyway.

“Rather than expanding their repertoire or learning from the other person, they’re taking even less initiative.”

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

The answer, says McLain Smith, is “to look at it from a more relational perspective. You can anticipate this is a pattern we might fall into, so let’s negotiate upfront how we’re going to try to minimise it and support each other in doing new things.” Having this kind of “meta-conversation” may not be common in the workplace, but it should be, she argues. Otherwise, we’re likely to keep repeating old patterns, instead of becoming the leaders we want to be.

Do you want to be a professional leader? To get some tips that’ll help you get that angry colleague back on your team, check this out: bit.ly/CMrsShip

Online Exclusive

Did you know that first impressions are formed in our brains within seven seconds of meeting a person? And not just that, the impression also stays there for a long time. Prema Jayabalan shares 3 significant standards by which she lives by that have helped her make the right lasting impression. Read to bit.ly/rightfirstimpression

If your leadership is truly grounded in love, you’ll always land in the category of a good leader.” — Glenn C Stewart

For other great leadership insights, including those by John Maxwell, visit www.leaderonomics.com. If you missed any of our past issues, go to www.leaderonomics.com/publications and download for FREE!
By DR STAN AMALADAS
editor@leaderonomics.com

S
o, some of you may have seen, heard, or read Oprah Winfrey’s stirring and soul-inspiring “Time’s Up” speech when she was honoured with the Cecil B. DeMille Award for lifetime achievement at the 75th Golden Globes awards last week.

In 1982, Sidney Poitier became the first black man to receive the same award at the Golden Globes. Thirty-six years later, Winfrey would be the first black woman to receive it. What can her speech teach us about what it means to raise one’s leadership game? What do we need to raise ourselves from?

Let’s make sense of her speech by providing its context.

Today, the entertainment industry is reeling with a series of male actors and directors who are being charged with sexual harassment.

Today, women are risking their own reputations and careers by speaking up. This has given rise to the #MeToo movement.

Today, the male locker-room mentality and chatter are spilling into our everyday lives, and it is not limited to the entertainment industry only. It is, as Winfrey said, one that “transcends… culture, geography, race, religion, politics, or the workplace.”

How did she raise her leadership game especially when she was in the middle of abuse, open violence, and a widespread disregard of treating people as people, rather than as things or objects to be used and manipulated? Here are four courageous ways as offered by Winfrey.

1. COURAGE TO BEGIN WITH AN ATTITUDE OF CELEBRATION
Winfrey did not miss a beat. She began her speech by recalling that day in 1964 when she was a little girl. She watched how Sidney Poitier, the first black man to win the Oscar for best actor, being celebrated with such applause when he received the award from Anne Bancroft on the stage.

While in the middle of challenging times, she did not begin with an attitude of blame, reproach or condemnation that stands as an antonym to celebration. It would have been easier to begin with the latter tone. But she did not. She raised her game. She chose to begin with an attitude of celebration. Her attitude of celebration enabled her to choose her focus.

Blame, reproach and condemnation come from a place of rage, anger and pain. Celebration comes from a place of tranquility, peace and honour.

In the middle of your troubles and frustrations, raise your game by asking the question: “What is here to celebrate?” Allow that celebratory energy to resolve your challenges!

2. COURAGE TO BE THANKFUL
Winfrey raised her game by acknowledging the support that she had received over the years. It was not an ego-centric approach to leadership. She thanked the “incredible men and women who’ve inspired, who challenged me, who sustain me, and who made my journey to this stage possible.”

She publicly named a few. “Dennis Swanson who took a chance on me for ‘MA Chicago’. Quincy Jones who saw me on that show and said to Steven Spielberg, ‘Yes, she is Sofia from The Color Purple’, Gayle [King] who is the definition of what a friend is and Stedman [Graham] who is my rock.”

Want to know what Winfrey’s fourth courageous point was? Check out: bit.ly/2mGrJHc

3. COURAGE TO SPEAK YOUR TRUTH
It is never easy for abused women to tell their personal stories. They risked their reputations and careers. They risked being treated as pariahs in their community. They could have chosen to live in fear and remained silent, but they did not.

Winfrey raised her game by choosing to remain silent. They “felt strong enough, and empowered enough to speak up and share their personal stories.”

What is your truth? What are the risks of speaking your truth or telling your story? What would the implications be if you chose to remain silent?

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